1979

Melville and the Art of Satire: Perspective Through Parody and Caricature.

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MELVILLE AND THE ART OF SATIRE: PERSPECTIVE THROUGH PARODY AND CARICATURE.

THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND
AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COL., PH.D., 1979

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MELVILLE AND THE ART OF SATIRE:
PERSPECTIVE THROUGH
PARODY AND CARICATURE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in
The Department of English

by
Shannon Louise Antoine
M.A., University of New Orleans, 1973
May 1979
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to thank Dr. Darwin H. Shrell, Dr. James L. Babin, and Dr. Jack Gilbert for their assistance in the preparation of this work.
ABSTRACT

Throughout his fictional works, Melville makes extensive and varied use of satiric techniques. In particular, he is a skillful practitioner of the methods of imitative satire, parody and caricature, which become important narrative tools in virtually every novel and short story he produces.

It is possible to trace the development of an increasingly complex approach to satire in the canon of Melville's fiction. In his earliest works, Melville adopts the traditional goals and methods of satire: he exposes vice and folly in the world outside of his fiction and thereby suggests a need for various reforms. In Typee and Omoo, Melville demonstrates the failings of his own culture by contrasting it with primitive societies which do not share its weaknesses, and in Mardi, the best illustration of his use of the traditional methods and purposes of satire, Melville develops elaborate parodies of his society by presenting to his reader a "fantastic voyage" into a world which is a travesty of his contemporary world. But attacks on abuses in the world outside the novel represent only one possible variety of satiric methodology; increasingly in later novels, Melville's satire becomes more complex. Though
it is still possible to find occasional attacks on specific abuses in these later works, satiric techniques more often become narrative tools used by Melville to manipulate his reader's reactions to the characters and events he presents. In the sea novels, Melville uses satiric techniques to demonstrate the effects of evil in the world: in Redburn, a youthful protagonist confronts the problem of the existence of that evil, and Melville controls the responses of his reader to that character and that evil by mocking the character's naivety; in White-Jacket, Melville uses the mock heroic as a way of demonstrating the failure of heroism in a brutal, man-of-war world; and, in Moby-Dick, Melville presents an extensive examination of man's role in the universe through burlesques of several Biblical paradigms which serve as a key to understanding man's limitations and lack of insight.

Critics have focused most on the satiric techniques found in the works which follow Moby-Dick; in these works, satire assumes ever-increasing importance. Melville's short fiction exhibits a wide range of satiric methods and purposes; especially, his three experimental dip­tyches demonstrate his elaborate use of structural parody. Israel Potter explores satirically the limitations of American ideals. Finally, Pierre and The Confidence-Man represent Melville's most extensive use of satiric techniques; in both these novels, Melville explores through satire man's confrontations with the "ambiguities."
In *Pierre*, Melville uses a number of different types of parody, including Christian parody, to present a psychological study of a well-intentioned man who becomes a destructive force in the lives of his family and friends because of his inability to grasp these ambiguities; Melville uses satiric methods in this novel to control the reader's sympathies and responses. In *The Confidence-Man*, his most extensively satiric work, methods of parody turn an allegorical fiction into an elaborate literary game through which Melville explores in a mocking way the ethical and moral problems faced by man in an unknowable and "sharkish" world.

Thus, throughout his fiction, Melville uses satiric techniques for varying purposes: to expose specific failings, to establish metaphysical dilemmas which confront man in his life, and, especially in his later works, as a literary tool to control rhetorically the reader's responses to characters and events. Satiric techniques are structural and narrative devices as well as thematic devices, employed by a skillful craftsman to present the conflicts faced by man in a complex ambiguous universe.
INTRODUCTION

Since the revival of the reputation of Herman Melville in the 1920's, it would seem that his fiction has been examined from every possible perspective. However, though virtually every critic has commented in passing on the presence of important satiric elements in Melville's work, his skillful and often quite complicated craftsmanship in the practice of satiric methods has been for the most part neglected. Even works dealing with related topics, such as Joseph Flibbert's *Melville and the Art of Burlesque* and Edward Rosenberry's *Melville and the Comic Spirit*, have focused on Melville's intentions in using satire and his various ideas about his society rather than on the actual methods he employs. This lack of consideration given to Melville's skill as a satirist is somewhat surprising, since elements of satire are found in just about all of his short stories and novels, even those not usually regarded as satiric or even humorous. In particular, Melville uses the techniques of imitative satire, parody and caricature, as important rhetorical tools for exposing vice and folly throughout his work.

As a literary form, satire has been the subject of a considerable amount of critical supposition and debate. Because of such controversy, it is necessary to begin by
establishing some basic characteristics of the "satiric attitude" as found in literature.\(^1\) Whatever the theoretical problems associated with the term,\(^2\) the basic goal of satire is clear: to present an attack on a specific or general human failing. The satirist attempts to produce in his reader a recognition of some defect or abuse in society, in a particular institution, or in human nature itself. The most elementary function of satire is thus to provide critical insights into the weaknesses and limitations of human nature.

Since satire is a highly fluid genre, the satirist finds that the approaches available to him are complex and varied. He may, for example, adopt some elaborate


\(^2\) These theoretical problems are fairly complex. Is satire a separate genre, or does it cut across genres, a method of literary composition which is a procedure rather than a distinct form? What is the relationship between comedy and satire; is satire a sub-category of comedy, or is satire the parent type of all literature, as anthropological studies of the power of travesty might suggest? The purpose of satire may be to persuade or simply to punish; it often seems to have a moral purpose, but, if so, what standards can the satirist assume to hold in common with his readers? These and other related critical questions illustrate the difficulties associated with satire and similar concepts. For discussions of some of these problems, see Gilbert Highet, \textit{The Anatomy of Satire} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), David Worcester, \textit{The Art of Satire} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), Matthew Hodgart, \textit{Satire} (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), and especially \textit{Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism}, edited by Ronald Paulson (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1971).
metaphorical structure, such as an imaginary voyage or utopian dream vision, or he may chose to depend not on a full-scale fiction but simply on the pleasure of wordplay and verbal manipulation. In any case, one basic characteristic of all satiric methods is so essential that it becomes a part of the definition of satire itself: that characteristic is indirection. Since critical attacks on human failings are apt to be more painful than pleasurable to his readers, the satirist is seldom satisfied with presenting didactically the weaknesses of his targets; instead, he enhances his critical exposure with a demonstration of these failings through some sort of artistic manipulation. By presenting his criticism through some fiction or similar literary device, the satirist evokes in his reader a dual response: discomfort due to his awareness of a particular human failing and pleasure due to a recognition of the skill of the satirist in depicting that failing and the satisfaction of seeing a weakness in society exposed and possibly corrected. This delicately balanced reader response is the final test of good satire; in order to achieve this dual effect, the satirist must both make his objections very clear and make his presentation of these objections enjoyable to the reader. Out of these two required elements, it is possible to devise a working definition of a complex and open-ended genre: satire can be defined as criticism which is presented through indirect methods which are entertaining as well as enlightening.
Most of Melville's critics would agree that satire as it has been here defined is important to an understanding of just about all of his major works. Moreover, since these works vary greatly in form and in intention, it is not surprising to find in them a wide variety of satiric approaches. In the earlier novels, in which Melville deals with both social issues and the ethical problems of the struggling individual, satiric techniques are most often tools of social criticism through which Melville presents attacks on abuses and on occasion even practical suggestions for social reform. As metaphysical issues become increasingly important in his later novels, Melville uses more complicated methods of satire to manipulate his readers' expectations and to control their responses to characters, attitudes, and problems. In any case, whether Melville's use of satiric methods is as simple as a direct attack on the follies of an American political figure or as complicated as the literary game which is played through satire in *The Confidence-Man*, a full understanding of the meaning and structure of a work by Melville is impossible without a recognition of the function of satire in that work. This will be the general approach I will use in this study: to examine Melville's practice of satiric devices as a way of identifying the different perspectives found in his work and the skillful craftsmanship he employs in forming and framing them.

In addition to some short satires, Melville produced three works which virtually all critics agree are
predominantly satiric: Mardi, Pierre, and The Confidence-Man. In his other works, Melville uses satiric techniques as secondary tools which have varying degrees of importance depending on the work in question. Throughout virtually all of his works, however, even in those not usually regarded as overtly satiric, his willingness to adopt some of the more common satiric themes and approaches suggests important affinities with the satiric attitude. A discussion of a few of these characteristics may better illustrate these affinities.

Melville's choice of themes and subject matter is one demonstration of his willingness to adopt the "satiric attitude." Most critics agree that in order for a satirist to function effectively he must be a critical and perceptive observer of his age and of his culture. Although he does not limit his work to social criticism, Melville was such an observer. The importance of Moby-Dick as universal human drama has perhaps obscured the extent to which Melville dealt with specific issues in his fiction, and the uninitiated reader of Melville's works is apt to be struck by a surprising amount of topicality. In all of his works, events of the day become quite prominent.

There is, for example, a considerable amount of criticism of the various social injustices of his time in Melville's fiction and poetry. The paired stories "The Paradise of Bachelors" and "The Tartarus of Maids" and "Poor Man's Pudding" and "Rich Man's Crumbs" expose social abuses in
America and Europe, including the subjection of man to the machine and the ever-present poverty and want, and *White-Jacket* deals quite specifically with naval abuses, so much so that, rightly or wrongly, at least one commentator has given Melville credit for initiating the naval reform movement.\(^3\) He also wrote a number of works attacking slavery directly or indirectly, perhaps the best of which is *Benito Cereno*. *Pierre* deals at some length with the problems faced by artists in America. And his volume of poetry, *Battle Pieces*, was written in direct response to the unsatisfactory social climate which existed in America after the Civil War. Melville's willingness to look critically at the problems which confronted the thinking man of his day makes his practice of satire in some ways a natural consequence. Although in his more ambitious works, his satire moves outward to broader human issues, Melville certainly fulfills the requirement that the satirist have an acute sense of time and place.

Furthermore, Melville's topicality includes difficult issues like religion and ethics. Like all good satirists, he treated nothing as too sacred to be satirized, and the implications of his attacks are often highly controversial. In fact, religious hypocrisy is one of his favorite satiric subjects, and mocking exposes of "false gods" are found

throughout his work. His tendency to be a bit subversive in his attacks on abuses is very much within the satiric tradition; there are suggestions of Melville's potential subversiveness in the highly critical reviews which the various partisan journals gave to Typee and Omoo and perhaps indirectly in the difficulties which some of Melville's contemporaries had in understanding Pierre and The Confidence-Man.

A great part of the subversiveness of Melville's themes, particularly in his early novels, is derived from his willingness to judge critically the political entities of his day, another characteristic concern of the satirist. Melville was considerably involved in political issues. Besides providing examples of his earliest satiric practices, his popular comic articles on Zachary Taylor in a journal of satire, Yankee Doodle, are perhaps the first demonstration of his active political involvement, which continued throughout the first stages of his career; generally, the early period of Melville's writing is dominated by works which focus on societies of various sorts, their similarities and differences, their interplay and mutual influences. In Mardi, especially, Melville offers some pointed political satire, including caricatures of Calhoun and

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4 In fact, it may be, as Joseph Flibbert suggests, that Melville took advantage of the inherent indirectness of satire to deal with various taboo subjects. Joseph Flibbert, Melville and the Art of Burlesque (Amsterdam: Edition Rodopi, 1974), p. 37.
Webster and a gallery-like series of portraits of nations so clearly aimed at political figures and individual nations that one critic has claimed that these parts of Mardi do not have to be interpreted, but merely decoded.  

As might be expected from such a political emphasis, Melville is also particularly concerned with the failings of the American nation; his willingness to deal specifically with uniquely American problems such as slavery and ram­
antly unrealistic idealism establishes—even more clearly than his general political interests—his acute sense of time and place. There is little provincialism in Melville's satire; he recognizes American braggadocio and is particularly critical of the hypocrisy which enabled Americans to ignore the evils of slavery and poverty while glorifying unabashedly the strengths of their country. In fact, Melville's attacks on American inconsistencies, as in the chapters devoted to the description of Vivenza in Mardi, introduce another popular satiric theme, the contrast between the "real" and the "ideal." Lofty American ideal­
ism is often deflated in Melville's works by the sudden juxtaposition of a harsh and uncompromising reality. The most highly developed instance of this contrast is found in The Confidence-Man, which contains attacks on the idealistic American philosophy of transcendentalism and a scathing

indictment of the hypocrisy so often found in American culture. American optimism and rhetoric not infrequently are seen to cover a multitude of inadequacies.

The painful disparity between the real and the ideal in fact becomes Melville's most frequently explored theme. It can be found in such diverse works as "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo," Mardi, and Redburn; it is probably the theme Melville develops most consistently in The Confidence-Man and Pierre. Whether limited to specific American questions or extending beyond them to universal issues, the contrast between reality and the false views of reality projected by the mind is perhaps the one human problem which appears almost universally in Melville's canon. His awareness of this contrast keeps Melville from losing his hold on the real, sensory experiences of the world, and in turn enables him to describe what is base in Pierre's Christ-like enthusiasm and to point out the suffering which exists behind the colorful "povertiresque" in "Rich Man's Crumbs."

Melville's preoccupation with this contrast also inclines him to the practice of satire, since the desire to penetrate hypocrisy and confront harsh realities is a major concern of the satirist.

Throughout his fiction, Melville thus focuses on subjects which are important ones in satire--social abuses, politics, "false gods," the weaknesses of cultural entities, and above all hypocrisy. It is partly because of his interest in these subjects that we so frequently find
Melville adopting the forms and patterns of satire and assuming a mockingly critical "satiric attitude" towards his characters and their experiences.

Although satire is a very loose and flexible genre, it is possible to identify some major forms which recur throughout its history; he chooses to employ those satiric forms which are most appropriate for the purposes of fiction. He does not, for example, use the monologue of classical satire, the mainstay of seventeenth and eighteenth century poetry,6 because it is not particularly suited to the practice of the novel, an extensive work in which characterization and plot development usually take precedence over more direct attacks on the follies of the world. Nor does he choose to adopt the lampoon, another important satiric form in which an individual is subjected to direct personal attack.7 Although satirists have frequently used this form and although Jay Leyda presents details of a personal lampoon campaign conducted by Melville in his early life,8 the lampoon is also far too restrictive for use in the novel. Instead of such rigid and didactic forms,


7 Hodgart, p. 18.

he chooses to work within a third satiric tradition, that of the travesty, or "fantastic vision of the world transformed." Melville's most common satiric method is to create a fictional world which is a mirror image of the real world; in this fictional world, vice and folly appear in exaggerated comic form and are therefore readily apparent to the discerning reader.

In creating these fictional worlds, a variety of methods of indirection, based on distortion, ironic juxtaposition, reduction, and exaggeration, are available. Though at one time or another almost all of these methods can be found in Melville's fiction, the narrative tools he most often employs in developing his satire are humor, the primitive "innocent eye" point of view, the various satiric personae, and especially the techniques of imitative satire, parody and caricature, which become his most important means of producing travesties.

The most obvious tool of the satirist is humor, through which he can make his targets appear ridiculous; indeed, for some critics, humor and satire are mutually dependent and cannot even be treated as separate entities. Although it is not easy to determine the exact relationship between them, it is obvious that humor of some kind is almost

9 Hodgart, p. 112.

10 The main issue seems to be whether comedy or satire is the parent form. Some critics see comedy as a general attitude, with satire representing a particular form that
always present if satire is to succeed fully as entertainment. In general, Melville uses humor skillfully throughout his fiction to control reader response. Though modern criticism has generally emphasized Melville's metaphysics more than his humor, Melville's contemporaries saw him as a "humorist," and Melville's career was begun in the comic tradition. His very first literary endeavors included his articles on Zachary Taylor, published anonymously in 1843, which exhibit a number of common comic approaches, not in finished form, perhaps, but nonetheless quite apparent. In fact, these Yankee Doodle articles illustrate Melville's use of such important comic techniques as reduction, incongruity, and physical farce, to achieve a satiric end—the comic denigration of Zachary Taylor. For example, one of these articles focuses on an incident in which old Zack is forced attitude may take. Other critics see satire as the parent form, with comedy representing a particular sub-category, for some a lesser one, because less concerned with moral significance. The third approach is to see these two forms as completely separate, in purpose and in method, evoking responses that are as different as the reader's different responses to tragedy and comedy. Unless this last rather extreme position is taken, the problems then multiply: if satire and comedy are interrelated, then the effects and causes of the psychological phenomenon of laughter also become important in understanding satire, and theories about laughter are notoriously complex and difficult to verify.

to ride a horse with a tack planted in the saddle: this incident leads to comic mishaps which are heavily farcical, and eventually old Zack's famous pants are purchased by Barnum and Bailey to be exhibited to the public for its edification. The advertisement of this exhibition contains examples of the humor of incongruity, as items of varying importance are combined in random fashion. Another article describes with a mock heroic tone old Zack's dinner manners; again, the earthy habits of this extraordinary hero contrast with the lofty and pretentious style of the narrative. In another segment, Melville adopts the persona of a physician and describes in detail the appearance of his subject: here a minute microscopic examination becomes a tool for reduction, as old Zack's features are ruthless exaggerated and distorted to produce a comic "portrait" which is an early Melvillean caricature. Whatever the faults of these articles, and one critic has called their publication "unkind," they are a fine illustration of Melville's familiarity with the use of low humor as a satiric tool even early in his career.

Of course, the humorous tone established in these articles appears in subsequent works as well. Melville's first novels, Typee, Omoo, and Mardi, use humor with greater subtlety to enhance the effectiveness of satiric attacks. Moreover, in later novels, this humor becomes increasingly what Constance Rourke has characterized as "black humor,"
the humor of irony and subversion;\textsuperscript{12} this form of humor is particularly useful in the practice of satire, since the reader is led into a rather uncomfortable awareness of an implied attack while simultaneously being presented with a basically humorous episode. Even in his most tragic works, Melville introduces a touch of black humor, a bit of mockery which undercut the tragic dimension of his characters—Ahab's war with God is after all fought with a whale, a big, lumbering, not entirely godlike creature, and Pierre's suicide/murder is so extravagant and melodramatic that when Pierre marches off "Hate-shod" and in the pose of Christ, the reader is apt to see him more as an object of ridicule than as an object of pity.

Another source of indirection available to the satirist is his ability to manipulate point of view, and in particular to use the point of view of a primitive "innocent eye." In treating political subjects, Melville employs, particularly in his first two major works, a primitive perspective to measure and analyze more sophisticated civilized societies. In particular, Melville exposes the failures of his own Western culture when he describes his world in caricature within an uncivilized society, or when he presents the two societies simultaneously, with the radically different second one serving as a "foil" to the more familiar one.

because its members are unwilling or unable to make the kind of assumptions that make the evils practiced by the civilized inhabitants of the western culture seem natural. This contrast is developed extensively in *Typee* and *Omoo*. Adopting this age-old satiric procedure, Melville presents a critique of his own world through a second perspective: in *Typee*, the "civilized" man describes a "primitive" society, but the critical reader is acutely aware of the false standards of the civilized world which Tommo sometimes uses to measure the island world. In *Omoo*, the standards of the civilized world are ruthlessly exposed as materialistic and life-negating when they are superimposed on a native culture like ill-fitting clothes, and Melville indeed makes use of that very metaphor. Melville thus criticizes the vice and folly found in his civilization through a second primitive perspective and presents a critical exposé of his world.

Another of Melville's most important methods of indirection is the use of satiric personae to convey his tone. Critics have distinguished three major types of satiric personae: the "plain, good man," who is a great believer in common sense, confident, self-assertive, practical, and quick to see the real behind the abstract; the naive observer, whose innocence is a variant of the outsider looking in on a world he neither understands nor is able to cope with; and the "knight of virtue," compelled to expose hypocrisy.
and evil at all costs. All three of these personae appear in Melville's work: the man of common sense perhaps most clearly illustrated by Amasa Delano and the narrator of "Bartleby the Scrivener," the naive observer most evident in The Confidence-Man and indirectly in Typee, and the "rebel knight" in Pierre and Omoo.

More significant than a mere listing of satiric personae is the recognition of the importance of reader-response in Melville's narrative plan, particularly in his later works. Melville's attitude toward fiction is clearly that it is a "thing made." He often lets the reader see him in the process of creation, as for example in the discussion of Lombardo's Koztanza in Mardi and the several chapters on literary creation in The Confidence-Man. Melville seldom if ever allows his reader to forget that he is in the midst of a work of fiction, and he often holds his "fictiveness" up before the reader for examination. The best illustration of this self-conscious approach to literary creation is contained in The Confidence-Man, which is almost entirely dependent on the reader's ability to seek critically and observantly for its meaning; unless the reader is aware of Melville's rhetorical techniques, the novel is confusing and its indirectness becomes a major source of difficulty;

if the reader is aware of the need for a skeptical, critical response to the characters and events found in that novel, he is apt to find the indirection a source of delight and a source of multiple meaning. The ultimate effect of this overt "fictiveness" is thus to place the reader in the role of an interpreter, not as a passive observer but as an active participant.

This rhetorical orientation in Melville's writing adapts very well to the purposes and methods of satire, and especially makes possible Melville's favorite methods of satire, parody and caricature. As might be expected, these methods are part of the tradition of the travesty. Perhaps the most rhetorical methods of an already highly rhetorical form of composition, they are imitative techniques which depend entirely on the reader's perceptive response. He must compare one version of an event or character or situation with a second version, and from the disparity between the two draw inferences about the meaning of the event or situation or character. Of course, the two versions are not printed side by side, so the reader is forced to provide one half of the comparison from his own memory, be it of a passage from the Bible, a historical event or personage, or another scene or character within the novel or short story itself. The satire then results from the reader's recognition of the other version, the second term of an

14 Worcester, p. 22.
implied comparison which could not exist without such a perceptive reader. A comparison between the two passages, one usually serious, the other usually comic, provides an additional perspective on the situation or character. Whether gained through paired scenes, a favorite technique of Melville's, or some other type of forced comparison, this perspective causes the reader to contrast a serious idea with a mock version of that idea or to contrast a comic character or event with a serious model which is mimicked. Such a comparison, whether implied or direct, becomes a form of satiric imitation which is an example of parody or an example of caricature.

Like satire itself, parody is an elusive term; its etymological origin is the Greek para ter oder, meaning "against a common melody." This definition suggests one of the essential requirements of parody: it is imitative, and there must of necessity be a model, either literary or non-literary, against which a parody must be read. Its comic effect as well as its value as satire is derived from the reader's recognition of a disparity between the model and its imitation. This disparity creates a sense of incongruity, which is of course one source of the humor of parody; it also forces the reader to participate in the

discovery of certain aspects of the theme. In the process of recognizing these aspects, the reader has to provide much of the thematic "message" of the passage through his own perceptions. Melville's rhetorical use of parody thus shifts the meaning of the novel away from didactic statements of an omniscient narrator and toward reader participation.

There are in general usage two definitions of parody. One of these is the fairly restricted one adopted by Kitchin in his anthology. For him, parody is a device through which literary artists criticize their fellow literary artists, a predominantly stylistic mockery of a serious piece of fiction which attempts to expose incongruities in the thought or manner of that serious model. As such, it is a rather specialized form of literary criticism. A second, broader definition identifies parody as any imitation which is done for the purposes of criticism. Since most satire, with the exception of a few specialized forms, is imitative, this definition differs from the first one in that it makes parody not a literary curiosity but an almost essential procedure regularly used by the practicing satirist.


This second definition of parody is most useful in describing the way Melville uses the device. A target in the world outside of Melville's fiction is exposed as foolish when it is reproduced in ridiculous form within a fictional construct, as when the United States is mockingly reproduced in *Mardi* as Vivenza. Or, a character within Melville's fiction is comically denigrated through his ironic resemblance to other characters, as when Pierre's pretensions are mockingly echoed by Plotinus Plinlimmon. Through a study of Melville's use of the technique of parody, the reader can analyze Melville's attitudes toward religion, society, and even metaphysical issues. Moreover, the reader can also gain a more thorough understanding of Melville's characters by comparing them to satiric "mirror" characters. In addition, since parody done on a large scale is closely related to form, the reader can also view parody as a structural tool which Melville uses to create order in his fiction; in *The Confidence-Man*, it is Melville's most important source of order.

Melville's use of caricature is very similar to his use of parody, except that caricature is static rather than

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18 Edgar Johnson sees this emphasis on form as a distinction between travesty and parody, which other critics treat as nearly synonymous. For Johnson, a travesty is an imitation of meaning, while a parody is an imitation of form. In any case, whether this distinction is maintained or not, all critics would agree that parody depends heavily on a recognizable similarity to some formal model. Cited in Leonard Feinburg, *Introduction to Satire* (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1962), p. 187.
dynamic in form, involving mimicry in single "pictures" which are repeated in distorted comic forms rather than mimicry which is developed throughout an extended narrative. Just as Melville mockingly repeats scenes and episodes in presenting the plots of his novels, so he also presents ridiculous "copies" of faces and caricatured embodiments of attitudes and vices. This is one explanation for the importance of portraits and images in much of Melville's work. From Typee to The Confidence-Man, portrait caricatures abound--the grotesque idols of Mardi and Pierre's various pictures are the most obvious examples. Most of these images are physically as well as psychologically distorted, burlesques of serious forms. Caricature becomes a useful satiric method because it enables Melville to embody in concrete forms weaknesses which can easily be portrayed as exaggerated or ridiculous.

Caricature is also related to symbolism, which virtually all critics have recognized as a favorite technique of Melville's. A symbol is an object which can be used to represent an idea; normally, symbols add meaning to the ideas they represent by associating them with larger concepts. When the purpose of Melville's fiction is critical, however, these symbols become caricatures which are designed to reveal the inadequacies of various ideas and attitudes. This technique is related to a familiar satiric method, the "undressing" of symbols which are usually very positive;19

19 Hodgart, p. 123.
for example, the cock in "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" is both a sym­bol of the inadequacy of false optimism in the cold, harsh world of the Merrymusks and at the same time a caricature of the ideas of transcendentalism, the philosophy of optimism present in nineteenth century America. This kind of grotesque symbol is found often in Melville's fiction, and occurs even in Moby-Dick; in which the whale may be thought of as a kind of caricature, an embodiment of Ahab's distorted view of self and God. 20Given the extended identification between theology and cetology in that novel, the critical interpretation of the whale as a symbol of some religious presence is justified; however, there is also something incongruous about such an identification. Perhaps a study of the elements of caricature found in the use of the whale as symbol can resolve some of these difficulties.

Two types of parody and caricature are found in Melville's work. In his early fiction, the models for satiric imitation are usually found in the outside world: mocking copies of these models appear in Melville's fiction, and the satire is directed outward against social abuses or injustices. For example, the parody of Typee and Omoo is aimed at the hypocrisy and greed of the "Christianizing"

20 Elements of the grotesque have often been associated with satire; Constance Rourke has labelled the grotesque as a form halfway between comedy and tragedy, and satire also shares the characteristics of both comedy and tragedy. The symbolic pictures which function as caricatures in Melville's fiction are often horrifying illustrations of vices and fol­lies present in the individuals they represent.
world of civilization, in Omoo particularly at the evils practiced by the missionaries. In Mardi, which is Melville's most obvious example of this form of satire, he parodies and caricatures people, countries, attitudes, and events in a mock reproduction of the world. A study of this kind of parody is revealing in that it helps the reader to gain a better understanding of the author's ideas and attitudes; it also provides some good, preliminary examples of Melville's basic structural techniques.

Increasingly, however, Melville's use of these techniques becomes more complicated as the parody and caricature in his fiction become more and more closely related to the internal structure of his works. In his later works, the satire is often directed against models found in the work of fiction itself, rather than outside of it, so that it becomes a tool of characterization and a structural device as well as a thematic device: the extensive parallelism required when an original model is parodied within a single work provides Melville with a source of structure, and his presentation of satiric "copies" of his characters helps the reader to attain additional perspectives on their actions and attitudes. This use of imitative satire is far more original than the other variety; it is sometimes highly experimental and is found particularly in Melville's difficult later novels, Pierre and The Confidence-Man. The most obvious example of this form of parody is contained in the diptyches, his three very experimental stories.
Melville coined that term himself, from a two-sided tableau portrait found in Medieval art; the diptyches consist of paired stories, which parody each other structurally and thematically. In these stories, Melville's intent is to satirize abuses and inhumane attitudes found in his society, as in his earlier works of satire, but methodologically this parody is aimed not at outside models but at the events and characters of the other half of the diptych, in particular at the narrator and his reactions to the two experiences. A study of Melville's use of this second type of satiric parody is useful in the analysis of the structure of his most complex works, and it also provides some important insights into his views of the function of art.

Thus, satire is thematically and technically an important element of Melville's diverse canon. In particular, the satiric devices of parody and caricature provide Melville with a methodology which enables him to present multiple perspectives and complex issues and with structural tools which make possible some interesting and unique patterns in his short stories and novels.
CHAPTER 1

TYPEE, OMoo, AND MARDI

Melville's first three novels, Typee (1846), Omoo (1847) and Mardi (1849), made his reputation as an author in the 1840's. They also established themes which were to reappear in later works and employed a number of the techniques which he was to use repeatedly throughout his work. They contain a considerable amount of satire, and illustrate in a preliminary way his use of the complex techniques of parody and caricature.

Although these three novels are not limited to socio-political themes, in all three Melville's ideas are advanced in the context of descriptions of various societies. Typee and Omoo are recognizably part of the mid-nineteenth century tradition of travel literature, deriving much of their appeal from exoticism and the lure of the romance and satisfying a thirst in the American psyche for the unusual and strikingly different. Yet, in these two quasi-realistic novels and more particularly in Mardi, where the travel narrative becomes little more than a framing device, the novels are not only descriptive but also interpretive: Melville creates quasi-exotic fictional societies which are provocatively suggestive of the reader's own world; a comparison of these different societies with the reader's society is
unavoidable, and the reader is forced into a critical analysis of his culture and his culture's ideals. In *Typee*, Tommo the "civilized" man describes a radically different uncivilized society, but his comments and observations always seem to recoil on him, a comic critique of the manners and morals of his own world. In *Omoo*, the narrator is a "civilized" man who has rejected civilization, a rebel: he is openly critical of the influences of his civilization on the once Typeean-like, now corrupt society he mockingly describes. Finally, in *Mardi*, Melville presents an elaborate description of a fantastic world which represents his own world in caricature. In the tradition of Swift and Rabelais, Melville makes use of an "imaginary voyage" which contains satiric comments on virtually every aspect of society, from art to politics to religion.

The novel *Typee* is structured around a comparative presentation of two cultures, the civilized world from which Tommo flees and the uncivilized society into which he seeks to escape. Although there is a loose plot framework detailing Tommo's attempts to escape from his ship and then to re-escape from the valley, most of the novel is devoted to a fairly detailed description of the Typeean lifestyle, presented in such a way so as to force the reader to compare that culture with the culture of his own world, as the narrator analyzes, sometimes perceptively, other times in a rather patronizing way, that radically different one. The result of this process is a novel which
satirically exposes the vices and failings of Tommo's world by portraying a society which is noticeably lacking in these vices. Although the Typees are not exemplars of every virtue, and although Melville does not choose to portray them as flawless Rousseauistic natural men, the highly idealized society of the Typees, an unfallen world of carefree happiness and sensual delights, illustrates by omission much of the vice and folly present in the Western world.

The description of an Edenic island culture as a world of sensory delights would seem to be a natural and expected procedure. Significantly, however, Melville goes further than just acknowledging the existence of pleasure in Typee. The happiness of the islanders in some way results in workable and individually satisfying ethical values. The Typees value highly friendship and love: the children play happily together, Tommo points out, while a comparable group of "civilized" children would be squabbling and fighting. There is no need for locked doors in the valley, for the Typees respect each other and do not steal. Pride and pretension are unknown in the valley: Mehevi the chief is so unassuming and friendly that Tommo does not realize his great power until the Feast of the Calabashes. The wars, crimes, and other sources of instability which plague civilization are unknown in the valley: the islanders live out their lives in comparative peace and security, and their "war" with the Happars is limited to a great deal
of noise and a very few real injuries. Pain and suffering are almost unknown; most of the Typees are incredibly healthy. Their religion is guilt-free, and they view the afterlife as a simple continuation of the pleasures of the world. In contrast to the life of the civilized man, their way of life is tranquil, satisfying, and humane.

The reader's admiration of the inhabitants of the "Happy Valley" is heightened by a comparison with the representatives of the civilized world which appear in the novel. Apart from Tom and Toby, they are Jimmy, a "heartless villain," the unscrupulous sailor who appears in the sequel, the two-faced tyrant captain of Tommo's ship, "a lying old son of a sea cook," and the rescuer Karakoe who makes a brief appearance at the end of the novel trying to cheat the natives out of the beads he has brought to purchase the narrator's freedom. These figures all share to a greater or lesser degree the vices of civilization—cruelty, selfishness, greed, and hypocrisy; these are of course the same vices so noticeably lacking in the Typees.

Melville sums up the vices of civilization in his satiric description of a missionary's wife. In a scene which is ludicrous and pathetic at the same time, she exploits cruelly the natives in her charge: the narrator says:

Among a multitude of similar exhibitions that I saw, I shall never forget a robust, red-faced and very lady-like personage, a missionary's spouse, who day after day for months together took her regular airings in a little go-cart drawn by two
of the islanders, one an old grey-headed man, and the other a rogueish stripling, both being, with the exception of the fig-leaf, as naked as when they were born. Over a level piece of ground this pair of draught bipeds would go with a shambling, unsightly trot, the youngster hanging back all the time like a knowing horse, while the old hack plodded on and did all the work. (196)

When the go-cart gets stuck in the mud,

...will she think a little about their bodies and get out, and ease the wretched old man until the ascent is mounted? Not she; she could not dream of it...she retains her seat and bawls out, "Hookee! hookee!" (pull, pull.)...at last the good lady loses all patience; "Hookee! hookee!" and rap goes the heavy handle of her huge fan over the naked skull of the old savage; while the young one shies to one side and keeps beyond its range. (197)

In this comic scene, Melville embodies the patronizing, exploitative attitude of the white missionaries: it is at once a parody of the relationship between the white man and the islander once Christianity has arrived on the islands and an illustration of all the civilized vices which the Typees have not adopted.

Judged by their representatives, then, the two cultures appear very different, with the Typees emerging as clearly the moral superiors of the supposedly superior white men: while the Typees keep their word and are kind, the representatives of civilization are cruel, intolerant, and greedy.

Perhaps the most noteworthy demonstration of the limitations of the civilized world is an analysis of the narrator's motives and actions. In fact, Tommo as spokesman for the Western culture is himself subjected to satiric attack within *Typee*: within the rhetorical structure of the novel, he becomes increasingly less reliable as a narrator, and his character and insight are at times highly questionable. Whatever his justification for leaving the ship may be (and, despite his elaborate legalistic rationalization, it seems to be based largely on a desire for fresh fruit and the pleasures of the land), once he joins the Typees, his own inadequacies become painfully apparent. Treated with the greatest kindness and tolerance, he remains suspicious and at a moment's notice will change his whole perspective on the island culture. He is sometimes selfish; although he criticizes his captain's disdain for the native taboos, he himself initiates a change in a taboo which is equally drastic, simply because he desires the pleasure of Fayaway's company in the canoe with him. He can be pompous; the reader is sometimes uncomfortably aware that many of his favorable impressions of the world of the Typees spring at least partly from the extraordinary amount of attention he receives there. This fact is clearly illustrated in his reactions to the visit of the taboo Marnoo; his childish resentment of Marnoo at first makes him an almost ludicrous figure, as he reports: "The glory of Tommo is departed, thought I, and the sooner he removes from the valley the
better. These were my feelings at the moment, and they were prompted by that glorious principle inherent in all heroic natures--the strong-rooted determination to have the biggest share of the pudding or go without any of it" (p. 137).

Finally, he performs at least one act, the attack on Mow-Mow, which is in his own mind a "horrible" act: he betrays the Typees by returning violence for their kindness to him: "Even at the moment I felt horror at the act I was about to commit; but it was no time for pity or compunction, and with a true aim, and exerting all my strength, I dashed the boat hook at him" (p. 252).

Tommo's comments on the native culture are also given with a touch of pretentiousness and a slight pose of superiority. Although he is generally a perceptive observer and can be as critical of his own prejudices and limitations as of those he sees in others, he is also sometimes guilty of "putting on airs." While he is wholeheartedly sympathetic with the natives, he cannot entirely avoid the arrogance which too-often characterizes his race, and on occasion his admiration of the Typees is tinged with surprise that a tribe of "uneducated savages" could lead such happy, fulfilled lives. Since Melville's purpose is as much to satirize the culture that Tommo represents as it is to describe an exotic, alternative society, it is necessary that the reader recognize Tommo's potential limitations as a narrator; he must become aware that Tommo's judgments are only partially reliable in order to evaluate correctly the
comparative strengths and weaknesses of the different societies in question.

The limitations in Tommo's maturity and insight are established by means of a metaphorical identification. This identification is basically a reversal of one of the white man's stereotypes of the islander: many a pompous white man has chosen to regard the uncivilized primitive man as "childlike" in his innocence, but Melville's metaphorical structure in this novel reverses that association and places Tom and Toby in the position of children, naive, backward, and hopelessly inexperienced in attaining the basic necessities of life, food, shelter, and security. There are many examples of this metaphorical structure. Toby makes absurd faces trying to explain to the natives what he and Tommo are doing in the valley; on the other hand, the priests of Typee engage in learned conversations which are gibberish to the young sailors, who are unable to understand their language: they stand about like bemused children, listening to a conversation that they do not understand. In fact, Tommo is treated by the natives as a child throughout the novel, smearing his face with poee-poee while eating it with his fingers, being held down forcibly while his leg is being treated, and having to be carried about on Kory-Kory's back and bathed against his will "like a froward, inexperienced child" (p. 89).  

He is constantly being washed, fed, and babied: he is fed sweets and given treats; he is given lessons and systematically humored and petted throughout the book.

When this ineffective and babied young man then becomes the spokesman for his society and offers a sometimes pretentious critique of the "child-like" Typees, the reader is apt to remember this ineffectiveness and helplessness and be amused at his arrogance. Against every criticism of the primitive valley the white man advances stand the island civilization's very solid accomplishments--its happy, comparatively efficient, disorderly but somehow still orderly society. The Typees lack industriousness and ambition, says Tommo, which is the reason for their lack of progress and their failure to achieve lasting accomplishments; then his own descriptions of their money-less self-sufficiency belie that criticism. Their religion is loosely organized and places few demands on its participants, but it is humanly satisfying and if highly sensory still a source of comfort: the islanders do not fear death, and their beliefs do not lead to bigotry and persecution. They lack such comforts of society as medicine, but they are very healthy and almost never need them. They are naively innocent, but their innocence protects them from cynicism and suspicion and makes the "pop-guns" in their hands harmless toys rather than weapons.

As a vehicle for criticizing the civilized world, Typee is thus an excellent choice. The satiric attitude as it
appears in this novel is comparatively subtle; not all of Melville's readers recognized his implied attacks on their culture. Yet, the contrast between a happy primitive society and a self-deceiving society weighed down with its own complexities and cares is carefully sustained throughout the novel, and, through a systematic playful undercutting of the spokesman for civilization, the narrator Tommo, Melville creates a contrast between innocence and guilt, true values and false values, and cruelty and kindness which demonstrates the inadequacies of his own culture through the vantage point of primitivism.

However, there is considerably more to the satiric structure of Typee than such a simple contrast between an all-good primitive world and an all-bad civilized world. For one thing, the island society is a "fiction" chosen for its potential as a tool of satire; when a satirist selects such a metaphoric vehicle, he chooses one which will best illustrate the inadequacies of his satiric target; in this case, the one which can best point out the "vice" and "folly" found in the Western culture of Melville's day. Because of his desire to exploit fully the satiric potential of the island world of the Typees, Melville does not limit his descriptions only to differences between the two cultures. Instead, he also has the Typees unconsciously parody the

customs and ideals of the civilized society in their rituals. This parody has a dual purpose: the satirist is able to make fun of certain absurdities found in his own society, and at the same time to contrast the harmless rituals of the Typees with the more insidious ones they resemble.

Tommo's descriptions of the native culture are significantly presented entirely in terms of things he has seen in his own culture, forcing comparisons at every turn. For example, Melville pokes fun at the pretentious orators of his day in his description of Kory-Kory as, "in emulation of our more polished orators," he "began to launch out rather diffusely into other branches of his subject [religion], enlarging, probably, upon the moral reflections it suggested; and proceeded in such a strain of unintelligible and stunning gibberish, that he actually gave me the headache for the rest of the day" (p. 103). Significantly, since his listener does not understand a word he says, the speech is "gibberish" in every sense of the word: Melville thus criticizes the "enthusiast" who fails to communicate anything but his enthusiasm. There are other examples of passages which link civilized foibles with primitive ones. The Typees' idea of Heaven is that it is a land of "bliss and breadfruit." The "gay young blades" of Typee do not work, but sit around telling stories, and the young ladies chatter and giggle, like their counterparts in civilization. The Ti in Typee is a jolly "bachelors' hall," where men of the village go to talk and drink; it is suggestively
similar to other Bachelors' Halls found in Melville's literature, with the same implied criticisms: the Ti is an enjoyable place, but it is also a place where men can go to avoid commitment and active responsibility. And the wearing of Tommo's shoes around Marheyo's neck is an illustration of a "strange freak" of one islander, but it is also a gentle parody of the human fondness for unnecessary and sometimes ludicrous ornaments which in the civilized world becomes sometimes all consuming.

Perhaps the most interesting example of the use of parody to reveal the folly of the civilized world is the episode of the pop-gun war. This war is of course only a mock war, fought with toy guns fashioned by Tommo; it is harmless child's play. Yet, the same scene, enacted in the civilized world which has lost its innocence and "childlikeness," would be devastatingly tragic and cruel. There is even an ominous suggestion in this scene of the potential effects of the civilized skills and abilities on the natives (a theme which Melville will develop at length in Omoo): the reader sees Tommo in the role of the bringer of weapons to a society lacking in such destructive and potentially powerful "playthings." In fact, this "gift" of civilization, the gun, is almost the archetypal example of the danger of culture shock--although the Typees possess primitive weapons, the impersonal effectiveness of the gun is a symbol of the "forbidden knowledge" which civilization brings to the paradise of the noble savage. Tommo himself
is blissfully unaware of the implications of his "gift" to the young native child and the potential suffering his invention could cause in a culture less isolated and insulated from the notions of war and acquisitiveness. The "pop-gun" war thus becomes a mock heroic contest parodying the civil wars and desperate battles of the civilized world.

Equally devastating are the parodies of Western religion. Tommo comments on the variety of gods worshipped by the Typees:

An unbounded liberty of conscience seemed to prevail. Those who pleased to do so were allowed to repose implicit faith in an ill-favored god with a large bottle nose and fat shapeless arms crossed upon his breast; whilst others worshipped an image which, having no likeness either in heaven or on earth, could hardly be called an idol. (171)

The worshipping of "false gods" is a favorite Melvillean theme, one which appears at length in Omoo, Mardi, Moby-Dick, Pierre, and The Confidence-Man; this passage is one of Melville's first satiric thrusts at the various confusions which misdirect man in his attempts to fathom and cope with religious and metaphysical meaning.

The identification between the religious practices of the Typees and the religious practices of Melville's society is further developed in the novel. For example, Tommo says, "I regard the Typees as a back-slidden generation. They are sunk in religious sloth, and require a spiritual revival. A long prosperity of bread-fruit and cocoa-nuts has rendered them remiss in the performance of their higher obligations."
The wood-rot malady is spreading among the idols—the fruit upon their altars is becoming offensive—the temples themselves need re-thatching—the tattooed clergy are altogether too light-hearted and lazy—and their flocks are going astray" (p. 179). Whether this passage is a parody of the revivalism movement which was dominating the religious movements of Melville's day or simply a comment about the casualness of the practice of religion in Typee, the tone of these observations clearly establishes connections between the religious customs of the Typees and the religious customs of Melville's contemporaries, another clear demonstration of the use of an apparently innocent description of native practices to make critical comments about the Western society which Tommo has temporarily abandoned.

The problem of the difficulties involved in communicating with the metaphysical world is also explored at length in Typee; this is of course the same problem which figures prominently in Moby-Dick. How can limited man gain the perspective and insight required to transcend his earthbound nature and understand forces which go beyond the physical confines of the world? For Melville, this is always a difficult issue; in Typee, mocking parodies of the errors made by man in the search for metaphysical knowledge appear repeatedly. For example, Moa Artua, the suggestively symbolic "head god" of the Typees, refuses to give the priest Kolory information which Kolory requests from him; after being stripped, beaten, and placed in a
box, the "'crack' god of the island" (p. 175) is finally abused into revealing what Kolory chooses to believe is the Truth; significantly, however, it is a Truth which only Kolory can hear. Melville ridicules through this ritual of the Typees the idea of a chosen spokesman for God. Similarly, in an entertaining episode in which Tommo's protector Kory-Kory acts as a guide in explaining the religious mysteries of the island, Melville mocks man's feeble attempts to cope with his gods: Kory-Kory receives the weight of his unstable god on his "own half-crushed back" (p. 178), then attempts to talk with that god and even beats it with a stick, but the decayed idol remains a mute, unresponsive lump of wood. Equipped only with the limited tools of human reason, man cannot hope to really "know" the mysteries of the world beyond nature, and his attempts to understand that world and to act on his understanding are generally foolish and unsatisfactory.

Thus, Melville's choice of the Typees as a vehicle for satirizing and characterizing his society is based on implied comparisons as well as contrasts. Typee contains comic assaults on civilization which result from the reader's discovery of some of its more foolish practices and prejudices in suggestively similar rituals of the native culture. However, Melville does not limit his description of the Typees to a Rousseauistic glorification of the primitive society over the civilized one. He never suggests that Tommo would be wise to abandon his society,
symbolically or literally, and become a member of the alternative society to live out his life in the peace and security of that community. Moreover, he clearly implies that Tommo's glorification of the Typees as "perfect" is based on oversimplification and a false knowledge of the islanders. In order to mature in the novel, Tommo must reject the simplistic idea that civilization is bad and the primitive is good, as he gains further insight into the culture he has discovered.

During the first part of the novel, Tommo's perspective shifts back and forth: are the natives good, virtuous people, kind and peaceful and gentle, as they appear? Or is this virtue a mask, hiding the most sinister characteristics and dual purposes? Both views are of course oversimplified, but one of Tommo's limitations is his inability to judge except in extreme terms. As the novel progresses, Tommo realizes more and more that his simplistic view of the Typees as ideal men is unjustified, as the threat of cannibalism becomes a stronger and stronger force in his imagination. Unfortunately, he never really fully makes the discovery that the reader does: Melville's specific satire against the civilized Western world is broadened in this novel to include a satiric commentary on the nature of man, a critique of all human nature. This broadening of the satiric base of the novel is accomplished largely through the idea of cannibalism.

The choice of cannibalism to reveal the inadequacies
of Tommo's view of the Typees and by extension the inadequacies of the unrestrained "natural" man is a highly workable one, because it is so fully incorporated into the novel. In a work crowded with references to food and feasting, cannibalism is a logical extension of a common subject. The name Typee means "eater of meat." In the beginning, Tommo emphasizes that the Typees are a tribe of cannibals. As the story progresses, he chooses to ignore that fact, but it is always present just under the surface, in their emphasis on eating, in the secret banquets, and in Fayaway's unladylike way of consuming raw fish. The discovery that they are indeed cannibals forces Tommo to face the reality which he has been denying in his pleasure-oriented sensory existence among the islanders and to attempt to escape.

Melville's familiar technique of using paired scenes to demonstrate dual implications is used to reveal that the Typees are indeed cannibals; moreover, these paired scenes serve as an early example of an internalized, structural form of parody, a comic imitation designed to reveal meaning. Before Toby's departure, the two young sailors awaken in the Ti to find "a large trencher of wood," and to hear the admonition, "Ki! Ki!" (eat, eat). Toby exclaims, "'A baked baby, I dare say!'" and then further says, "'I tell you you are bolting down mouthfuls from a dead Happar's carcass, as sure as you live, and no mistake!'" (p. 95). Almost at once, the suspense is relieved when they discover that they are eating "puarkee" (pig). The effect of the scene is comic,
due to Toby’s use of wit and understatement and due to the outrageousness of their mistake.

The effect becomes satiric rather than comic, in a rather horrifying way, when a similar scene is re-enacted later on. After Toby’s departure, Tommo encounters another trencher, this time with very different contents: a major religious celebration has just occurred, and Tommo has disturbing fears about the nature of that feast; he says, “I concluded that the inhuman feast was terminated; and feeling a kind of morbid curiosity to discover whether the Ti might furnish any evidence of what had taken place there, I proposed to Kory-Kory to walk there...” Once he arrives at the Ti, Tommo spots a “curiously carved vessel of wood, of considerable size, with a cover placed over it.” This second trencher resembles the first in almost every way, but when Tommo, “prompted by a curiosity [he] could not repress,” looks into the trencher, he sees “the disordered members of a human skeleton, the bones still fresh with moisture, and with particles of flesh clinging to them here and there” (p. 238). The similarity between the two scenes is heightened when Kory-Kory begins “exclaiming rapidly, ‘Puarkee! puarkee!’ (Pig, pig)” (p. 238). Immediately after this discovery, Tommo makes his decision to leave the valley. These paired scenes thus suggest through the device of parody Tommo’s limited insight into the Typees: Toby’s suggestion earlier that they were eating a “baked baby” was not nearly as unreasonable and absurd as
it first appeared; after his discovery of the cannibal feast, Tommo even has unhappy suspicions about the bundles in Mehevi's house. He must revise his simplistic view of the Typees as all-good to allow for the existence of the evil of cannibalism in their world.

So Melville's satire in Typee is two-sided. He subjects his complacent Western audience to criticism when he portrays a primitive society which seems refreshingly free of its vices. Similarly, he exploits the innocent rituals of that society to make fun of certain civilized customs and beliefs. At the same time, he rejects the idea that civilization has corrupted man; Melville's view of the "natural" man is not that of the innocent Adam, but the fallen Adam. Tommo's too-easy assumption that primitive societies are virtuous and civilized societies corrupt is also undermined in the novel. Just as the civilized world has its vices (greed, hypocrisy, and cruelty), so the primitive world has its vices (savagery and lack of restraint). Without the ordering influences of civilized society, natural man is apt to become uncomfortably animal-like.

Another set of paired scenes clearly sums up these respective vices and virtues. These scenes occur early in the novel, and they focus on two women, a missionary's wife and the island queen Pomaree who plays a major role in Melville's next novel Omoo. In these satiric scenes, the thematic and metaphoric device of "unmasking" reveals
the strengths and weaknesses of the two worlds the women represent.

The reductive satire directed against the missionary's wife is an obvious form of satiric "stripping." Dressed in her finest attire, the missionary's wife is described with mock religious imagery. Then, she is unmasked by the natives to expose her true nature, which is no different from that of a naked savage. Throughout Melville's fiction, such unmasking is the major satiric method used to reveal the false fronts of civilization, as the civilized man's outer coverings--the effects of his society--are taken away, and raw human nature appears naked, both literally and metaphorically.

The corresponding "unmasking" of the savage world is more complicated. Pomaree, the island queen, on a visit to a French ship, raises her skirts to display her tatoos; Melville satirizes the artificial sensibilities of the members of the civilized world as he mockingly describes the French sailors, who "flee" from "the scene of so shocking a catastrophe" (p. 8). Yet, in this scene, the queen herself is also a comic figure, acting inappropriately by exposing her own nakedness and behaving in a self-humiliating way. The savage virtues of honesty and simplicity are here seen as limitations; the lack of self-consciousness which protects the natives from greed and exploitative manipulation

4 Flibbert, p. 18.
by others is also an important limitation, since it prevents them from consciously striving for progress and causes them to appear foolish.

In this second satiric episode, the situation is further complicated by the fact that Pomaree and her husband are hybrid creatures, both civilized and savage. In their absurd attire, they appear at first glance ludicrous: the king is stunningly dressed in a military uniform, but his tattooing makes him look as though he is wearing goggles, "and royalty in goggles suggested some ludicrous ideas" (p. 8). This comic encounter with the rulers of the native world foreshadows Melville's explorations of the influences of the civilized world on the uncivilized world in *Omoo*, as well as emphasizing once more the stripping motif which is found frequently in Melville's satire.

Although it contains a number of satiric elements, *Typee* is not a full-fledged satire. Melville's targets are too general—either the civilized or the savage man, as opposed to some particular society or persons. Yet, Melville's critical objections to his society and to its effects become the basis for a number of early satiric techniques: in particular, the use of ridicule to reveal inadequacies represents Melville's first tentative experiments with the device of parody, as he uses paired scenes and characters for satiric purposes. In *Omoo*, Melville's next novel, this device becomes more important, and satire is obviously a part of the meaning of the work, as Melville's targets
become more pronounced.

In *Omoo*, a shift of emphasis occurs. Whereas in *Typee* the uncivilized islanders are seen as ideals against which civilized man is satirically measured and found lacking, in *Omoo* virtually every individual is a hybrid, semi-civilized, semi-primitive. As such, the emphasis is no longer on a glorification of native happiness and innocence, but on the second technique found in *Typee*, the parody of civilized manners and morals by an apparently uncivilized people. In *Typee*, there is a sustained separation between the two cultures; in *Omoo*, except for a brief sequence in Tanai, where Christianity has scarcely touched, the two societies exist together, and the primitive one engages in imperfect imitations of the civilized world. The inadequacies of the Western civilization are then revealed when the natives comically distort the manners and morals they emulate.

In general, the structure of *Omoo* resembles that of *Typee* in that the narrators both describe exotic societies. The narrator presents to his readers the inhabitants of the Society Islands much as he presents in detail the Marquesans of *Typee*. However, there are a number of striking differences. Apart from such obvious distinctions as the fact that the plot of *Omoo* is more picaresque than that of *Typee*, the novel *Omoo* is different in that here the two worlds are not in open conflict, but exist side by side, influencing each other mutually and exposing each other mercilessly.

In some ways, *Omoo* is a more didactic novel than *Typee*. 
Much more explicitly than in *Typee*, Melville makes the point that it is civilization and especially Christianity that has undone the island society. He does this by setting up a close correlation between the influence of Western society on the native population and the increase of disease, wickedness, and poverty among them. The message is clear: whether it be because of abuses of the system or because of the more far-reaching problem of culture clash, the Christian society wreaks havoc on the primitive one. As the narrator says at one point in the novel, commenting on the future of the islanders after their contact with the white man's world: "Their prospects are hopeless. Nor can the most devoted efforts, now exempt them from furnishing a marked illustration of a principle, which history has always exemplified. Years ago brought to a stand, where all that is corrupt in barbarism and civilization unite, to the exclusion of the virtues of either state; like other uncivilized beings, brought into contact with Europeans, they must here remain stationary until utterly extinct" (p. 192).5

*Omoo* thus becomes a devastating portrait of the vices of civilization, blind acquisitiveness, hypocrisy, and exploitation. Melville's satiric method is to make these vices apparent by their ready transfer to the uncivilized

peoples, usually in exaggerated comic forms. Melville discusses each of these vices directly, offering as proof of the corrupting influence of civilization the dramatic deterioration of the island culture under the influence of Christianity.

Several major characteristics of civilization are targets for attack in *Omoo*. One of these is materialism. The tendency to value material objects is a perfectly reasonable aspect of a world in which money is a necessity, and the possession of material things is not in itself reprehensible in *Omoo*. For example, Melville's narrator rejoices in the generosity of Jermin in sending over his chest, a natural and expected reaction founded on a notion of the desirability of material possessions. However, Melville sees the valuing of material things over everything else as a vice which all too often grows out of this natural, not unhealthy tendency.

Melville illustrates the unfortunate effects of excessive materialism by describing the changes which have occurred in the Polynesians' idea of friendship as a result of their increasing contact with Western values; the natives parody civilized man in their exploitative desire to make friends with the richest sailor they know. The heroically extravagant idea of friendship once held by the islanders has been vitiated by a self-seeking, blind acquisitiveness, and the obviousness of the natives' "false" friendships illustrates in parody the effect of false
values on an important relationship. Melville emphasizes this point by a contrast: he describes for his readers his friend Poky, an uncorrupted islander, who is very Typeean. There are echoes of Kory-Kory in the narrator's memories of this person. Then, he describes the contrasting Koloo, a fickle, faithless youth who, "after sponging me well," "one morning played the part of a retrograde lover; informing me, that his affections had undergone a change; he had fallen in love at first sight with a smart sailor, who had just stepped ashore quite flush from a lucky whaling whaling-cruise" (p. 158). The effect of the comparison is clear—the islanders reveal the false values of the Christians by showing moral deterioration once they adopt their manners and patterns of behavior. They become mercenary and self-seeking; the possessiveness of civilized man is mocked by the absurd and incongruous valuation which the natives place on material objects, and Koloo's selfish notion of friendship becomes a parody of blind materialism.

As in Typee, imagery associated with clothing is frequently used in Omoo to heighten such incongruities.⁶ The islanders adapt to civilization only superficially, as revealed by their clothing; they imitate the white man with comic results, wearing whatever they can get and often appearing ludicrous; in contrast to the native garb

"graceful in the extreme, modest to all but the prudish, and peculiarly adapted to the climate" (p. 182), the semi-European garb worn by many of the islanders makes them appear foolish; for example,

A bachelor friend of Captain Bob rejoiced in the possession of a full European suit; in which he often stormed the ladies' hearts. Having a military leaning, he ornamented the coat with a great scarlet patch on the breast; and mounted it also, here and there, with several regimental buttons, slyly cut from the uniform of a parcel of drunken marines, sent ashore on a holyday from a man-of-war. But, in spite of the ornaments, the dress was not exactly the thing. From the tightness of the cloth across the shoulders, his elbows projected from his sides, like an ungainly rider's; and his ponderous legs were jammed so hard into his slim, nether garments, that the threads of every seam showed; and, at every step, you looked for a catastrophe" (182)

Likewise, other European influences are superimposed on the native population like ill-fitting clothes, and the falsehood of many of the European values is revealed when they are imperfectly aped by the inexperienced islanders.

Another target of Melville's satire is hypocrisy; this vice is treated most thoroughly in conjunction with the discussions of the practice of religion in the islands. Melville is always fascinated by the religious customs of any people, and he is always critical of Christians who use the rhetoric of religion to mask secular desires. One example is the mass Christianization of the islanders; Melville condemns this mass conversion directly in the novel; he also condemns it through parody, when, to the
distress of Captain Bob, the narrator and his companions "turn Catholic" in order to win the friendship of the bluff Irish priest, Father Murphy. Both conversions are false and insincere; neither means a thing.

In fact, insincerity is one characteristic of the civilized man's practice of religion which the natives imitate readily and with considerable ease. For the most part, the islanders' practice of their new religion is summed up by Ideea, who, when questioned about her religious beliefs, claims to be a "mickonaree" on the outside but very different at heart; the same charges can be made against the French priests who keep a number of native damsels ready at hand for their own pleasure. The only difference is that in their case the deception is more polished and therefore more accomplished. The vice of hypocrisy is learned by the natives and practiced in rather obvious ways. When they willingly say things they do not mean and profess things they do not believe, they parody the hypocrisy of the white man, as the narrator and his friends parody their mass conversion.

Melville develops his description of the type of Christianity practiced on the islands extensively in the chapters about the Church of the Cocoanuts, which seems more like an assembly hall than a religious establishment, with noisy, bickering participants and people being prodded and shoved. The Christianity the reader encounters in these passages is very much a secular force. Melville
even includes a sample sermon which sums up very well the practice of missionary activity on the islands; it consists of the following elements: politically motivated attacks on the French by the English missionaries, a high-sounding exhortation for the girls to avoid sailors, a comparison of England and the islands which has as its purpose a patriotic glorification of the missionaries' homeland, and finally a request for donations. There is no mention of religious beliefs, no plea for the practice of Christian virtues, no offer of help and encouragement. Under the influence of the missionaries, religion is more a political system than a moral and ethical one, as suggested by the existence of the missionaries' police force, the "kannakippers," who pry into the personal lives of the natives unmercifully, subjecting violators of religious rules to peculiar punishments, like building roads and paying fines. Melville attacks the missionaries and their "kannakippers" as nurturing hypocrisy in religion, and he is highly critical of their secularity. Throughout the novel, the religious rhetoric of the missionaries serves as a mask to hide their true concerns, which are this-worldly rather than spiritual.

*Omoo* is a novel about the islanders, but, as in *Typee*, there are also a number of representatives of the civilized world of the white man. As in *Typee*, also, most of these characters are portrayed as fools or knaves. The crew of the *Julia*, for example, is an undisciplined lot whose
unrestrained and selfish actions belie the civilized "virtues" of restraint and lawfulness. Wilson, the British consul, and Captain Guy, the representatives of lawful authority in the novel, are both ineffectual fools; the captain's inability to control his men is illustrated when he receives a bowl of soup in his face, and the reader's most vivid memory of Wilson is the memorable scene in which he is berated by the feeble Mother Tot. The islanders are persecuted by the French, the "evil-minded wee-wees." And the English missionaries, as we have seen, are not much better. In fact, the representatives of the civilized world provide a catalogue of vices. Dr. Johnson is a hypocrite, and the French priests are profligates. The political rulers of the islands are cruel, self-seeking, and exploitative. And the civilized men who are not openly corrupt are simply fools.

Most of the descriptions of these representatives of the civilized world are brief and sketchy. But at least two characters receive fairly extensive examination. These characters are the two farmers, Zeke and Shorty, who receive the most detailed descriptions of any white men in the novel besides the narrator and Long-Ghost. While the other white men exemplify the vices of civilization, these two characters are parodies of the virtues of civilization—industry, ambition, and restraint.

Zeke and Shorty are comic exaggerations of the good characteristics of Western culture. Industrious to the
extreme, they engage in a continuous and utterly ineffect-ive war with nature:

...the Yankee jerked one of the roots, this way and that, twisting it round and round, and then tugging at it horizontally.

"Come! lend us a hand!" he cried, at last; and, running up, we all four strained away in concert. The tough obstacle convulsed the sur-face with throes and spasms; but stuck fast, not withstand-ing.

"Dumn it!" cried Zeke, "we'll have to get a rope; run to the house, Shorty, and fetch one."

The end of this being attached, we took plenty of room, and strained away once more... until, with a jerk, that made every elbow hum, the root dragged out; and, most inelegantly, we all landed on the ground... "Rayther a hard customer, that, Peter," observed the Yankee, going up to him: "but's it's no use for any on 'em to hang back; for, I'm dummed if they haint got to come out, whether or no. Hurrah! let's get at it agin!" (206)

Zeke and Shorty nurture absurd ambitions of becoming rich and powerful, and, in every way, they embody the "Puritan ethic"--"But, as no two men were ever united in any enter prise, without one getting the upper hand of the other; so, in most matters, Zeke had his own way. Shorty, too, had imbibed from him a spirit of invincible industry; and Heaven only knows what ideas of making a fortune on their plantation" (pp. 205-6). Yet, they are also comic figures, at times likeable fools who are easy prey to the doctor's tricks, and at least to a degree as insensitive in their treatment of the natives as any other white men in the book:

After making these fellows load their baskets together, the Yankee filled his own, and then drove them before him, down to the beach.
Probably he had seen the herd of panniered mules, driven in this way by mounted Indians, along the great road from Callao to Lima. (228)

Though Zeke and Shorty are perhaps the most favorably portrayed representatives of civilization that Long-Ghost and the narrator encounter, they are guilty of the same vices and failings that many of the white men of Omoo practice. And very quickly the narrator and Long-Ghost depart from their joyless, sterile world to the pleasures of the island culture which contrast so completely with the harsh, demanding life of the plantation.

The narrator of Omoo is a kind of rebel who is openly critical of his society. In the choice of this character as his narrator, Melville is working within the tradition of the "rebel knight" as satiric narrator. He and Long-Ghost are tricksters, anticipating the Confidence-Man in their practical jokes and in their ability to use the vices of others to their own advantage. They expose unmercifully as they travel through the islands, discussing and observing critically the effects of the missionaries on the native culture. Yet, at the same time, they are themselves guilty of all of the "civilized" vices—exploitation, hypocrisy, and materialism. And Melville subjects the

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7 One critic has called the practical joke a "parody in action," which suggests an interesting purpose for the practical jokes of the protagonists; though their intentions are usually selfish, the jokes generally satirically expose the preoccupations and weaknesses of their victims. Highet, p. 8.
narrator and Long-Ghost to satire as he subjects the other white men of the novel to satire.

The most interesting revelations of their moral failings come in the last chapters of the novel, when they attempt to gain an audience with Pomaree. Their purposes are clearly dubious: they want an easy life, free from responsibilities, with power, prestige, and the plenty of royalty. They want, in fact, to join the rather sordid lot of white renegades and scoundrels who collect around the royalty of the islands. They arrogantly expect that she will welcome them with open arms, because of their "superior talents" and "cleverness," a typical example of the arrogance of the white man on the island.

Of course, all these lofty ambitions are comically ridiculed when they finally manage to wheedle their way into the queen's presence. After reaching the royal quarters of Pomaree, they are "summarily dismissed" and ejected without dignity from the premises. After this rejection, the protagonist-narrator decides to return to civilization and responsibility. Although Omoo, with its picaresque plot, does not contain the kind of character development found in Typee, as in all of Melville's novels, the most revealing insights into the inadequacy of a particular lifestyle come when the narrator chooses to reject it. The protagonist returns to a ship which is stable, orderly, and restrained; in doing so, he rejects the hybrid civilization of the islands and returns to his own culture.
Omoo is thus a systematic critique of the values of Western civilization through the satiric device of parody. The islanders parody these values when they adopt them without the assumptions and qualifications that make them seem reasonable, and then imitate their practice without necessarily their theory. Hypocrisy as practiced by the white man may seem more reasonable, but then the observant reader is forced to reduce his willingness to accept such lies when he sees the incongruous results and devastating effects which they have on the natives. The same is true for the Puritan ethic: this attitude places inordinate value on ambition and possessions, amply illustrated in the mockery of the ideas of Zeke and Shorty, as well as in passages such as the description of the deserted creations of the architect in Polynesia. Perhaps most obviously, cruelty and exploitation when practiced by the natives reflect poorly on the influences of the Christians in the islands, since without their presence such ideas are lacking. Although the islanders may be capable of brutality and cannibalism, they are essentially kind and honest, and the manipulation of other human beings for materialistic and self-seeking purposes is virtually unknown to them without the disastrous influences of civilization.

Omoo is more clearly satire than is Typee, an attack on the missionary endeavors of the islands, through the "grafting" of hypocrisy, greed, and cruelty on the native population which practices these vices overtly and without
restraint (inexperienced as they are in the subtler forms of these failings), so much so that the effect is often comic.

Mardi, the third of Melville's island novels, is the first of Melville's novels in which satire dominates the narrative. It is distinctly different from Typee and Omoo in that in Mardi Melville chooses to abandon the carefully established verisimilitude of the other two "travel" narratives and produce a "romance," in which fantasy and the supernatural play an important role. Because the novel is "fantastic" rather than realistic, Mardi becomes Melville's first full-scale fiction, an often satiric work in which Melville's extensive reading and the influences of satirists like Swift and Rabelais are easily apparent.

A comparison of Mardi with Typee and Omoo is revealing, both in the similarities and in the differences. While all three novels have as their protagonist a young sailor who with at least one companion deserts his ship and finds adventure among the exotic islands of the Pacific, that basic resemblance only makes more striking the very different ways that Melville chooses to develop his themes in Mardi. However accurate Melville's portrayal of the situations in the novels may be, Typee and Omoo are clearly not wholly biographical; yet, if these first novels are not strictly and simply factual, Melville does strive for and achieve a sense of reality--they are quasi-realistic at least. In Mardi, on the other hand, Melville abandons realism, at least after the sea chapters which make up
the first third of the book. It is in the long central part of the novel, the satiric voyage through the islands of Mardi, Melville's metaphor for the world, that most of the themes are developed. And the island societies that Melville describes in this section of the novel are totally fantastic—there are no descriptions of exotic cultures with customs, attitudes, and ideas different from those of the civilized world; rather, these island societies Melville presents to us in this "romance" could only exist in the imagination. In fact, they are not exotic societies at all but cartoon versions of the things which occur familiarly in the civilized world. Media, Yoomy, Babbalanja, and Mohi are not islanders like Kory-Kory and Jeremiah Po-Po and Marheyo. Instead, they are spokesmen for the most sophisticated ideas of Melville's day, and the novel is about issues not related to culture clash at all, but to the moral, ethical, and social problems of Melville's society. They do not speak like Melville's other islanders, for example, no imperfect English or exotic terminology here—Babbalanja especially speaks in long, complex periodic sentences. Nor do they think or act like the primitives in Typee or Omoo, nor do the island societies Taji visits in any way resemble the exotic civilizations of the other two novels.

Instead, clear similarities and resemblances force the reader to see elements of his society in almost every island of Mardi: the central section actually is composed of
elaborate parodies of Melville's own world. Melville's satire in Mardi may be specific, directed against human nations, people, and ideas, or it may be general, directed against human nature and its limitations. In either case, the reader's awareness of the inadequacies of his society results from his recognition of the uncomfortable similarities between his own system of beliefs and the beliefs of the inhabitants of a mock island world.

Within the travel section of Mardi, the satiric subjects explored range widely over the possibilities of human experiences. Melville's target in much of the novel is human nature itself. The various forms which vice and folly may assume in the human personality are embodied as "islands" which represent various states of existence and various characteristics of the human personality.

The first part of the novel is devoted to encounters with four kings whose kingdoms surround the homeland of Media. These encounters serve several functions; since the four kings which figure within them, Peepi, Donjololo, Borabolla, and Uhia, represent virtually every vice which man can fall victim to, Melville presents his readers with a catalogue of moral failings—including lust, covetousness, pride, gluttony, sloth, anger, and envy. The targets in these chapters are not specific; they contain critical exposés of all of man's vices. They thus become a key to interpreting the rest of the narrative; after such a catalogue, it is easy to see how knavery and folly can dominate
human life. The effects of these vices are explored later in the novel.

The first group of chapters thus establishes the various techniques which Melville employs in the rest of the novel. Physical distortion is the most important of these: for example, Peepi's subjects show their respect for the boy-king who is a Melvillean caricature of indecision, dominated alternately by the various spirits of his many ancestors, by walking away from him backward with their heads tucked between their thighs: the result of this behavior is that they all have flattened noses. Similarly, Borabolla, the pleasure-seeking glutton, is a physically comic figure, awkward and ungainly, with legs "but small for his body," staggering about and roaring with pain when the gout-fiend takes over his body. The moral failings which Mardi depicts produce comic physical distortion in the characters who people this satiric work.

Another important technique found throughout Mardi is also illustrated in these early "key" chapters, the technique of presenting "false gods" which are caricature versions of certain vices. The grotesque god, Keevi, is an excellent illustration of this satiric technique. An exaggerated comic emblem of blind acquisitiveness, he is described by the narrator as having, "five eyes, ten hands, and three pair of legs, equipped at all points for the vocation over which he presided [thievery]. Of mighty girth, his arms terminated in hands, every finger a limb,
spreading in multiplied digits: palms twice five, and fifty fingers" (p. 277).  

In this passage, a grotesque physical appearance becomes a device for revealing vice; the technique is clearly satiric distortion through caricature. Such false gods abound throughout Mardi; they embody vices and failings in concrete forms. Through Keevi, Melville can describe in a particularly vivid, entertaining way the effects of pride and greed and ambition gone wild in the human personality—a grasping, multi-handed but ridiculous acquisitiveness which is the fit image for the island of thieves and its grasping, land-hungry monarch.

After these first "key" chapters, Melville explores more specific satiric targets, especially religion and politics, the traditional targets of the satirist. A large part of the central section of Mardi is devoted to an elaborate critique of religious practices which Melville encountered in his society. The travellers visit two worlds in which religious issues are a major concern, Maramma and later in the novel Serenia; the second of these two worlds comes as near as any other episode in this episodic novel to offering a resolution of the action of the voyage.

In the Maramma section, Melville treats satirically organized religion as a guide in attempting to understand

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God and the supernatural world. The section is introduced with a discussion of the folly of man's attempt to scale Ofo, a metaphor for attaining religious enlightenment. The difficult task of climbing Ofo faces man throughout his search for metaphysical meaning; the satiric Maramma chapters demonstrate the abuses which characterize organized attempts to lead man to a knowledge of Oro (God).

As Merrell Davis points out, Maramma is Melville's first island world which physically reflects its inadequacies. The island is "one fertile waste" (p. 325), a desolate, murky world of shadow and fogs, where no breadfruit trees grow. It is a harsh, frigid land which is filled with miserable men who are denied relief in the life-denying and unsatisfying world. The world which represents organized religion offers man nothing but lifelessness and suffering.

There are many reasons for the sterile lifelessness of Maramma. First, there is the secularity which belies the other-worldly concerns of the priests and rulers. As in all of Melville's fiction, attacks on the abuse of religious power tend to become attacks on secularity and hypocrisy. Just as in Omoo it is the secular, this-worldly interests of the priests who deny their this-worldliness that most condemn them, so in Maramma religion becomes the servant of Mammon, a way of gaining wealth for the inhabitants of the

island; the names Mammon and Maramma are even suggestively similar. This idea is first introduced early in this section, when Babbalanja suggests that the legends of Ofo may be inventions of the Marammians designed to attract tourists. Pani, the blind guide, is also an illustration of materialistic secularity in a supposedly self-sacrificing religious devotee: he dwells in a "large and lofty" home, spacious and comfortable, near "many miserable hovels with squalid inmates," and he attempts to swindle the pilgrims by asking an excessively high fee for his guidance. In his greed, he takes all the money the "scantily clad" young girl has in her possession and even takes the rag and staff of another blind man. Finally, the secularity of Marammian religion is demonstrated in the episodes in which the travellers visit Hevaneva, who runs a flourishing business making canoes and gods, "a trade more reliable than a baker's." The "business" of religion is carried on unashamedly in Maramma, and Melville attacks the greed and hypocrisy of the Marammians repeatedly.

This section of the novel also develops the motif of metaphoric and literal blindness as a way of demonstrating the reasons for the failure of Maramma to lead the pilgrims to religious truth. The clearest demonstration of this theme is found in the person of Pani, an ironically blind guide who cannot distinguish between the sacred tree Ahanna and the cannibal god Keevi, a rather horrifying image who demands human sacrifice and recalls the cannibalism motif.
of Typee. With Pani as their guide, the pilgrims have little chance of attaining religious understanding; the literal blindness of the guide is a symbol for the limitations of man's vision.

Similarly, other examples of the blindness motif are found in the Maramma section. At the great temple of Oro, "Spreader-of-the-Sky, and deity supreme" (p. 346), thick smoke prevents the pilgrims from seeing their god; "'We see naught but a cloud'" (p. 346), one pilgrim exclaims. In fact, throughout the Maramma section, only one character seems able to see beyond that symbolic "cloud" of limited insight--the courageous boy, who is prevented from seeing Oro by the crowd. It is, ironically, at this place, as the pilgrims struggle to see God through the murk of the temple, that the pure-hearted boy is seized and destroyed. Man's quest for religious knowledge through institutional religions is thus potentially destructive--it leads to suffering and death: trapped within the confines of his own limited vision, man lacks the capacity to attain wisdom and act on that wisdom.

The most important structural device employed in this section of Mardi and the one which best illustrates Melville's practice of satire is the presentation of the various images of Maramma, "false gods" which parody the blindness and selfishness which hamper man in his quest for understanding. In particular, two scenes present these false gods, which are effective as caricatures of man's
failings—the travellers' visit to the Lake of Yammo and their visit to Hevaneva.

As numerous examples of these false gods appear in Mardi, it may be useful to examine this technique in more detail. Oloo, the god of suicides, illustrates clearly the way in which these caricatures work. He is an image with "a long anaconda-like posterior development, wound round and round its own neck" (p. 344). As in the description of the god Keevi of Ohoo, the characteristics of a human weakness are embodied in this physical grotesque who through exaggeration illustrates the folly and unreasonable-ness of man's self-destructiveness—the tentacle-like limbs of Oloo are his most striking feature, and he appears in the description of the Lake of Yammo, where self-destruction and mayhem clearly rule.

At the Lake of Yammo, the travellers encounter a "great gallery" of similarly described gods. The scene is chaotic: the "images" are moved about frequently, and in a parody of creation, new ones are continuously being spawned, as suggested by the description of Mujo, the nursing mother: "...its scores of hillock-breasts were carved over with legions of baby deities, frog-like sprawling; while, within, were secreted whole litters of infant idols, there placed, to imbibe divinity from the knots of the wood" (p. 344). In fact, the description of this place is a description of a madhouse world, an illustration of comic pandemonium. Each pilgrim prays for different things; sometimes these
desires contradict each other. Each nation has its own gods, and the result of these differences is that some of the gods have been defaced by the devotees of another. The result of this rampant jealousy is that, as Babbalanja observes, "'there seems not a single image unmutilated'" (p. 345). Man's perverse ability to create false gods and his jealous refusal to recognize the gods of other men are thus satirized in the defaced and multitudinous images of the Lake of Yammo.

The second episode which illustrates the technique of using "images" to describe man's beliefs and notions is the description of the island of Hevaneva, "who, assisted by many journeymen, carried on the lucrative business of making idols for the surrounding isles" (p. 353). There the travellers find "all manner of idols, in every imaginary state of statuary development" (p. 353). Melville pokes fun at the idols through the device of comic reduction; seen disassembled in parts, the gods appear foolish and false. Some artisans are producing ears for the earless idols, and Babbalanja "taking a sight through one of the heads," says, "'How easily they are seen through'" (p. 353). Second-hand images are common: old idols are reworked into new idols, a detail that suggests that the gods are temporary and unstable, and it is always necessary to redo their legs, "where they always decay first." The idols have, quite literally, feet of clay.

Because of the episodic structure of *Mardi*, each unit
of chapters must function as an artistically complete unit, so that Melville's themes can be readily understood amidst the confusion of a complex storyline. The scene which dominates the Maramma section of the novel and which serves as a climax of sorts is Yoomy's visit to Hivohitee the pontiff (who is representative of Catholicism but also stands for the impossibility of achieving absolute enlightenment on metaphysical matters). This episode is essentially comic—seeking out the "god of all gods" on the island, the pilgrims journey through the woodland which has produced the images of Maramma; comically posing as the three proverbial monkeys who "see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil," they come across a complex bamboo edifice inhabited by "an old, old man; with steel-gray eyes, hair and beard, and a horrible necklace of jaw-bones" (p. 360). This person asks Yoomy to come up to a murky room recalling the blindness of Pani and his followers, a room which is at first "ghastly" and then completely dark. There a cryptic interview occurs:

"What see you, mortal?"
"Chiefly darkness," said Yoomy, wondering at the audacity of the question.
"I dwell in it. But what else see you, mortal?"
"The dim gleaming of thy gorget."
"But that is not me. What else dost thou see?"
"Nothing."
"Then thou hast found me out, and seen all! Descend." (360-61)

Yoomy returns to earth, unenlightened and puzzled, and the pilgrims depart. Their trip through the woodland brings
them back again in a gigantic circle. Melville's point is clear: the darkness and mystery associated with God and religion cannot be overcome through man-made symbols and constructs; man's attempts to fathom the unknown lead him in pointless circles, and he does not have the insight to recognize "Truth" when he encounters it--Yoomy must be told that he has talked to Hivohitee in order to know it.

Thus, human metaphysical pursuits become blind and hypocritical when they are institutionalized and systematized. Melville does not maintain, however, that a life limited to the sensory experiences of this world is a satisfactory alternative; as a matter of fact, the criticism of the four kings in the first section of the travelogue suggests that such a life is equally sterile and unsatisfactory. Just as paired scenes in Typee and Omoo provide necessary perspectives on reality, so Melville provides his readers with a "sister" world for Maramma, the much more satisfactory and idealized Serenia.

Again, parallel details suggest important contrasts. The blind Pani is reproduced in Serenia as "a mild old man; a palm-bough in his hand: a bird's beak, holding amaranth and myrtles, his slender prow" (p. 622); unlike Pani, this old man is a true guide, with vision and insight. Instead of a dead sterile world, Serenia is lush and verdant. Whereas Maramma is dominated by images of spiritual blindness, Serenia is dominated by images of spiritual vision: Babbalanja says, "'Some black cloud seems floating from me.
I begin to see'' (p. 629). There are no false gods in Serenia, no persecutions, no suffering, no hypocrisy, no evil. It is everything that Maramma is not and represents the one chance of happiness available to the pilgrims: Babbalanja, Yoomy, Media, and Mohi all find in Serenia their one hope of salvation. If there is a resolution in Mardi, that resolution comes in Serenia, where the pilgrims become participants in moral decisions rather than mere observers, where Babbalanja's fiend is at last silenced, where Media arrives at a political philosophy which is humane and just, and where Yoomy and Mohi find their fulfillment. It is only Taji who resists the peace of Serenia, and it is only Taji who at the end of the novel fails to attain happiness.

Of course, Serenia could not exist in the real world; although it is a part of Mardi, it is still somehow on the outside too. It is an ideal, an efficient world which embodies the tenets of Christianity and acts on them. There is little theorizing in Serenia; the emphasis instead is on action. In a novel which is a "fantastic voyage," Serenia is the one utopian vision Melville presents, the one alternative to the chaos that reigns in the rest of the novel. It serves as a standard; amidst the satire of the novel, it is the alternative to vice and folly, a valuable measuring device in the novel as a whole.

After religion, the second major satiric target found in Mardi is politics. This subject includes the most
obvious examples of direct parody to be found in *Mardi*, perhaps the most obvious examples of parody in all of Melville's works. Primary focus is placed on the kingdoms of Dominora (England) and Vivenza (the United States), with side views of Porpheero (Europe), Kaneeda (Canada), Hamo (Africa), and Kolombo (South America). Again, the techniques are familiar ones. By exaggerating national tendencies and distorting physical and psychological characteristics, Melville criticizes his world by means of comic parody.

An analysis of Melville's description of Dominora ruled by King Bello (Melville's parody of England) can serve as an example of the way the technique works. England's willingness to extend its "Dominion," suggested in Melville's name for the island, is mocked by Bello's rather absurd acquisitiveness: "Another anecdote was this: that to Dominora there came a rumor, that in a distant island dwelt a man with an uncommonly large nose...Bello forthwith dispatched an agent, to discover whether this huge promontory of a nose was geographically available; if so, to secure the same, by bringing the proprietor back" (p. 471). British imperialism is parodied by Bello's "numerous fleets of war canoes" and by his determination to "own" the lagoon and all the paddlers who venture into it. These references are of course satiric in nature; they are examples of what Hodgart calls "low burlesque," since the lofty ambitions of England are reproduced in forms which are not entirely respectable, like giant noses and war canoes.
Bello himself also embodies the "character" of England. Weighed down with a hump which causes him to lean and which represents the Empire and its complexities, he is warlike and proud but also wealthy and affable, likeable but also foolish. In fact, the narrator compares him to King Borabolla, the gout-riddled glutton of the first part of the journey; he shares the same vices. Likewise, Bello's acquisitiveness recalls the earlier description of Uhia. Once again, paired characters and scenes add perspective to the reader's insight into later scenes and characters. By the end of Mardi, Melville has built a fairly complex structure of associations and suggestions which provide a thematic unity in the episodic structure of the novel.

As might be expected, Vivenza, Melville's caricature of the United States, receives the most attention in Melville's gallery of satiric portraits of nations. The characteristics which Melville observes in his own country are embodied in his parody of Vivenza. Major traits emerge: Vivenza, as its name implies, is a life-seeking world, the "last and newest hope" of all Mardi. If Yillah can be found anywhere in Mardi, it will be in Vivenza. Hopeful, freedom-oriented, seeking to escape the tyranny of despotism, Vivenza has much to be proud of. Yet, elements of criticism are also important in Melville's portrait of the United States: although it is not a totally negative view, Melville satirically highlights the limitations of his own society.

Vices emerge: pride, hypocrisy, the tyranny of the mob.
Deriving most of their laws and traditions from the mother country Dominora, the inhabitants of Vivenza still believe themselves superior to other men. Vivenza is an exciting world, new and fresh but it is also the heir of King Bello's acquisitiveness, a grasping world where hypocrisy is commonplace and democracy creates havoc. The braggadocio quality of Vivenza is punctured by Melville's descriptions of failings within the society.

In particular, slavery is a major limitation of the land of freedom. Entering the island, the visitor sees an arch with an inscription welcoming all the tribes of the world to Vivenza, "Except-the-tribe-of-Hamo," the black man, whose existence in Vivenza is a blot on the lofty idealism the country professes. When the travellers go down to Southern Vivenza, they encounter one Nulli (as Davis points out, Calhoun, named for his policy of Nullification\(^{10}\)), driving a pack of slaves—Melville commits himself strongly in this scene on the slavery issue, as each pilgrim speaks out against the evils of slavery. As long as slavery exists, the idealistic rhetoric of Vivenza is meaningless.

Melville also aims some keen-edged satire at democracy itself. His presentation of the Senate has often been cited as an example of his skill in satiric portraiture. It is a disorderly, frenzied scene: democracy, as well as tyranny,

\(^{10}\) Davis, p. 158.
creates confusion in Mardi, and again the image of a madhouse world is used to create that effect. Melville also takes up the issue of freedom in his portrait of the President, an unassuming little man whom Media at first scoffs at, then comes to respect when he sees that the tyranny of the mob is the power exploited by the egalitarian ruler of Vivenza; freedom and openness are fraudulent in this mob scene.

Melville's skill in satire is amply illustrated in these few chapters devoted to describing the world as he knows it. It is a kind of nightmare view, with Porpheero afire in the background and the loud-talking Vivenza glorious in its hypocrisy and disorder. It is a world of energy and promise, but it is also a world with a great deal of undirected potentiality. Melville's lecture on society, suggestively associated with both Babbalanja and Media, reflects both this madhouse activity and the potential which lies unexplored within it, as Media-Babbalanja exhorts the people of Vivenza to create the kind of world a sensitive, thinking man might want. There is little doubt that in this episode at least Melville's satire has a corrective goal.

A few more brief portraits follow--the gold hunters of Kolombo seeking a "gilded guise" (p. 547), the Isle of Palms, an untouched world of primitive beauty where the travellers' breath "must prove a blight" (p. 549), Orienda, where the Opium Wars rage, and Hamora, land of darkness
"curst of men." Few details are given in these brief descriptions, but few are needed; once the reader has "decoded" the satire, which process is easily accomplished through the transparent pseudonyms which Melville employs throughout this section, the most extravagant distortions can function effectively as satire. Melville sets up basic identifications and leaves the rest up to his reader's imagination.

Although religion and politics are perhaps the most important satiric targets in Mardi, there are numerous other episodes which mock miscellaneous failings and abuses; the range and intent of Mardi, if not the actual writing, are equal to that of Swift in Gulliver's Travels. The Tapparians, for example, are ridiculous caricatures of the effects of social foibles on the human personality. The sorcerers of Minda who create havoc with spells and counter-spells parody the legal profession, with their formulaic, cabalistic "spells" designed to protect or damage. Also interesting is the parody of language and philosophy which appears in the person of the oracle Doxodox, whose circular terminology leads him, as his name implies, right back into

11 David Worcester points out that the more extravagant the comparison, the greater the incongruity and the more effective the attack. Worcester, p. 49.

12 Popkin, p. 550.
himself. The satiric portrait of Diranda contains one of the best examples of black comedy in the novel, as Hello and Piko roll dice to decide the fate of human lives. In this madhouse kingdom, the rulers solve the overpopulation problem by sadistic war-games which are destructive and cruel; Melville satirizes the horrors of war in this episode as Hello and Piko, two absurd little cowards, in the disorder of their skull-riddled room, play with human life.

_Mardi_ also introduces the issue of the purpose of literature, an issue which will figure significantly in later works as well. The visit to Abrazza gives Melville an opportunity to discuss in a serio-comic way the function and method of art, as Babbalanja explores the episodic _Koztanza_, a parody of _Mardi_ itself. This scene is an example of Melville's willingness to practice romantic irony, as he subjects his own art to playful ridicule.

Melville answers the critics of _Mardi_ and of his other novels in this chapter, which includes a discussion of the poet Lombardo and his _Koztanza_ (Melville and _Mardi_). The connections are apparent: in his attempts to fully characterize the world (_Mardi_), Lombardo chooses the "grand Koztanza," "a very curious work" and a "vehicle so crazy" (p. 592), as Melville also chose a "crazy" vehicle, the episodic, extravagant _Mardi_, to describe his world. Lombardo's two motives for writing are to express his "full heart" and "to procure his yams"—in this dual purpose, Melville explores again the relationship between the ideal
and the real, as earthly needs impinge on the spiritual quality of the novelist's art. In fact, in this description, Melville's view of the artist emerges as both realistic and idealistic: Lombardo is moved to write by both spiritual and this-worldly desires. Moreover, if we can accept these chapters as true, Melville's theory of art is mimetic and flexible: Lombardo is not afraid of digressions and an episodic structure because such digressions reflect the orderly chaos of Mardi itself: "'And so is Mardi itself:—nothing but episodes; valleys and hills; rivers, digressing from plains; vines, roving all over; boulders and diamonds; flowers and thistles; forests and thickets; and, here and there, fens and moors. And so, the world in the Koztanza'" (p. 597). While this chapter can hardly be considered Melville's final say on the function of the novel, it does represent an attempt in a very self-conscious novel to give the reader a critical glimpse of the author at work, undermining inspirational notions and substituting a view of art grounded in the real and the practical. This is accomplished through satire, in the form of a serio-comic critique of the author Lombardo.

Although Mardi is a satiric novel which explores a large number of different themes, there is one unifying subject which relates all of the various episodes to each other. This theme is the all-important one of knowledge-seeking, the issue which Melville was to explore from Typee to The Confidence-Man. The search for knowledge is
a secondary motivation for the voyage, and since Babbananja rather than Taji dominates much of the travelogue, it is a theme which recurs in numerous forms. It is found in the sections devoted to religious satire, where spiritual blindness prevents the characters from attaining insight into metaphysical questions. It is found in the political sections of the novel, as Media matures from a despotic ruler to an enlightened one by means of knowledge gained through his explorations of various political entities. It is present in the early chapters, as Donjalolo attempts desperately to "see" the world beyond Juam through his envoys. It is a significant element of the satiric descriptions of Minda, Doxodox, and the chapters about Lombardo.

Because of the importance of this theme, it may be useful to look in some detail at the episodes describing the "knowledge-collector" Oh-Oh and the questions of truth and wisdom which are explored by the narrator in these descriptions. Like every character encountered in Mardi, Oh-Oh is a grotesque, a caricature who is physically as well as psychologically a distortion: "Not to enter at large upon the topography of Oh-Oh's nasal organ, all must be content with this; that it was of a singular magnitude, and boldly aspiring at the end; an exclamation point in the face of the wearer, forever wondering at the visible universe. The eyes of Oh-Oh were like the creature's that the Jew abhors: placed slanting in his head, and converging their their rays toward the mouth; which was no mouth, but a
Melville's description of Oh-Oh is also stylistically pompous, like the elaborate labyrinthine world the "knowledge-collector" has created. Oh-Oh embodies man's circuitous attempts to "know" his world.

In fact, Oh-Oh's tools for discovery are symbols of the satiric method Melville uses to portray him. He has a telescope with which he can see "an anthill on the moon," and a microscope with which he has discovered that a flea can leap two-hundred times its own length. These extraordinarily useless but wonderful discoveries demonstrate the effects of these tools in studying man: Babbalanja says, "'The microscope disgusts us with our Mardi; and the telescope sets us longing for some other world'" (p. 381). These devices exaggerate and distort, as the satirist exaggerates and distorts; the result is the exposure of vice and ugliness in this world and a desire for a new and better one, the method and goal of satire.

In addition to emphasizing the satiric methodology of Mardi, however, Oh-Oh the knowledge-seeker and his magnifying tools for discovery demonstrate the difficulties which man faces in his attempt to find meaning. Limited by his own nature and by the imperfections which are built into his world of Mardi, man is very poor at the necessary work of discovering meaning in his life. Neither faith, nor literature, nor science, nor reason is really an accurate and trustworthy tool which he can depend on in his quest for truth, and Melville suggests satirically that though it
is easy to expose inadequacies, it is far more difficult to achieve certain knowledge in any field.

Once again, Melville uses paired scenes to provide perspective which reveals the difficulty of knowledge-seeking. The sterility of Oh-Oh's collections is suggested by a comparison between him and Jiji, another collector, a miser who hoards money. Like Oh-Oh, Jiji is an unhappy collector who fails to live his life fully; the sterility of Oh-Oh's collecting is suggested by its similarity to Jiji's pointless collecting of wealth. The miser is a wealthy pauper who is starving and must be "tossed a yam" to satisfy his hunger; ironically, the richest man in Mardi is a beggar; so also, by extension, the wisdom of Oh-Oh, who possesses the fullest store of knowledge on the islands, is seen as foolishness rather than insight.

Thus, Mardi contains a considerable range of satiric attacks and mocking exposures of the various failings of humanity. Within these very different episodes, a few dominant themes emerge--the issue of knowledge-seeking in particular. These themes and concerns are very clearly summed up in one of the final visits of the travellers, as they meet Yoky, king of the Isle of Cripples; this episode represents an excellent conclusion for the novel. Here the physical distortion which dominates much of the parody and caricature found in other parts of Mardi creates a completely false reality:
Here, helping himself along with two crotched roots, hobbled a dwarf without legs; another stalked before, one arm fixed in the air, like a lightning rod; a third, more active than any, seal-like, flirted a pair of flippers, and went skipping along; a fourth hopped on a solitary pin, at every bound, spinning round like a top, to gaze; while still another, furnished with feelers or fins, rolled himself up in a ball, bowling over the ground in advance. (570)

As the narrator says, "Discord wedded deformity" (p. 570). In the Isle of Cripples, physical deformity is the norm rather than the exception, so it is the travellers who are hailed as "monsters." The Isle of Cripples is a parody of man's limited insight; the inhabitants are so much victims of their own distortions that they cannot distinguish order from disorder. This confusion results in absurdity and incongruity. The "cripples" are occupied with a ridiculous problem: they cannot separate the bones of their late ruler from the bones of his pet chimpanzee. In fact, there is little difference, in this nightmarish depiction of man's potential for distortion, between man and ape. Everything in Hooloomooloo is characterized by this distorted chaos: the islanders live on "hunchbacked roots of the Taro-plant" and "plantains, perversely curling at the end, like the inveterate tails of pertinacious pigs; and for dessert, ill-shaped melons, huge as idiots' heads, plainly suffering from water in the brain" (p. 573). This island, fit symbol of man's failings which are the targets of the narrator of Mardi, is dominated by confusion and mayhem: it is "an idiot's world," as well, a symbol of the satiric view of
man as fallible and ridiculous. In this episode, Melville creates a nightmarish view of the distortion and confusion which are found throughout the novel.

*Mardi* is probably Melville's most problematic work. Other books are difficult: still, the difficulties of a work like *Pierre* or *The Confidence-Man* or *Clarel* come from the complexity of Melville's purposes and the difficulties of the subject rather than from structural or methodological problems. In *Mardi*, it is the intent and the format which create the problems. And the relationship of the satiric travelogue to the rest of the novel is perhaps the most difficult of these problems to resolve.

The point of view of *Mardi* shifts in the course of the novel. Taji is the controlling intelligence of the first part. When he joins Samoa, his character and personality still dominate the narrative. Once the travelogue which is the central structural device of the story is introduced, however, he fades more and more into the background. There seems to be a moral purpose in the quest for Media and Bab-balanka who dominate the travel section (the discovery of "Truth"), but although the stated purpose of the journey is a search for Taji's lost love Yillah, Taji himself seems to gain no knowledge at all from their experiences. His reactions are never recorded and never asked, in a structure dominated by discussions and debates. In fact, Taji actually seems to disappear from the narrative throughout that "satiric center" -- the only mention of his quest comes when
one of the other characters notes that Yillah is not to be found in some particular world, suggesting that it is a "false" world, which would be unfavorable for Yillah, the symbol of the ideal. Only in those episodes in which Taji's followers—the three vengeance-seeking sons of Aleema and the three messengers of Hautia—reappear does Taji figure in the action at all.

Yet, Melville does achieve a thematic unity in the different sections of the novel, if not an entirely workable structural unity. Although much of Mardi is fragmented and the reader is apt to find satiric chapters aimed at particular targets interspersed with "serious" romantic chapters focusing on Yillah, Melville achieves a thematic fusion through the emphasis on the search for an "Ideal" that dominates the book. The same quest which is explored through the techniques of satire in the travelogue section is treated also with pseudoseriousness in the romantic plot; the search for Yillah becomes a search for the spiritual in contrast with the world of the flesh represented by Hautia—another quest for an unattainable ideal. Meanwhile, throughout the satiric voyages, Melville catalogues man's attempts to achieve happiness through "false gods" or distorted views of reality; these distortions are usually comic, and the comparison of these "errors" committed by questers after "Truth" with what is in fact "True" and ideal, the standard implied in the Utopian Serenia and in Babbalanja's yellowed old book, results in satire.
For example, as has been demonstrated earlier, one of the dominant metaphors of the novel is the metaphor of blindness. In all the various sections of the novel, blindness becomes a symbol of the limitations in vision which result from man's prejudices and preoccupations. Donjalolo cannot view the world of Mardi first-hand, but has to rely on inadequate samples of that world and on second-hand reports: the closed world of his experiences limits his ability to "see" the world as it is. The blind Pani of the Maramma sections is contrasted with the honest young pilgrim who can see; the guide's blindness results in a lack of understanding of Oro (God) which becomes ominous when the result is the sacrifice of the young man. And the Ban-yan tree fable told by Babbalanja is another version of the same theme: the "one true root" cannot be found because it is being sought by blind men. In fact, just about every character in the novel is limited by his own perspective, resulting in a kind of spiritual blindness; the theme recurs repeatedly. So also, Taji is a victim of his own spiritual blindness in the quest for Yillah. He is blind to his own guilt as far as the death of Aleema is concerned and as far as his responsibility for the deaths of Jarl and Samoa is concerned and to his equivocal motives, the possibility that his desire for Yillah may be selfish passion not much different from Hautia's desire for him. Moreover, Taji never has this "cloud" lifted for him (as does Babbalanja); appropriately, he plunges into oblivion at the end of the
novel, unseeing and unknowing.

Likewise, the many examples of "false gods" found in Mardi are related to the romantic Taji-Yillah plot, thematically at least. Taji is himself one of these "false gods": he is posing as a demi-god, engaging in an elaborate masquerade he seems to half-believe himself; in this way, Taji foreshadows the blind Pierre playing Christ in Melville's later novel. Moreover, he also transforms Yillah into a "false god"—she is beautiful, and Taji's search for her seems to be motivated less by a desire for spiritual enlightenment than by his love for her as a desirable object of his passion; yet, he chooses to think of her as an almost religious "ideal" being. This "pose" of Taji's is treated comically early in the novel, as Taji mourns Yillah's loss; although the reader has plenty of clues that his love for her is this-worldly rather than ideal and this chapter in fact parodies the sentimental romances of Melville's day much as do the early chapters of Pierre, Taji persists in claiming "the quest for spiritual goodness and beauty" as his intention. The true "Ideal" in Mardi is Serenia with its unassuming love of Oro and Alma (Christ). Although Taji may be sincere in his love for Yillah, she is nonetheless a "false god" who causes him to commit murder and to sacrifice Jarl and Samoa for his own ends. The romantic plot thus contains a serious reworking of the comic motif of the "false image" which causes destruction and death.

Finally, the two plots merge in the Serenia section,
as Taji is the only character to resist the salvation of a "true" life, and in the final visit which occurs in the novel, Taji's long-awaited meeting with Hautia, whose island "Flozilla" is another example of a "false world." Like Oh-Oh and Jiji, Hautia and Yillah are ironically paired characters, as is suggested by Mohi's story about the "fair maiden" imprisoned in the "dark lady." The parallelism between the Hautia segment and the Yillah segment of Mardi suggests a disturbing "falseness in Taji's quest for the Ideal. Hautia, associated with loss of identity and complete submersion in the sensual, has by the end of the novel completely overcome the mock spiritual Yillah, suggesting that Taji's "quest" is this-worldly rather than metaphysical and that his desires are base rather than noble.

Despite such thematic connections, however, Mardi still remains an enigmatic and difficult work, with very different parts not wholly fused. Yet, whatever problems the attempt to relate the Taji-Yillah plot with the rest of the novel may create (and even for the most sympathetic critic it does create problems), the satiric travelogue remains as a highly-developed illustration of the various methods of satire and of Melville's willingness to treat his world in a satiric manner. Mardi is the clearest example of Melville's use of the traditional variety of satire, directed outward against "vice" and "folly" in the world, and the most obvious illustration of socio-political
burlesque found in Melville's fiction.
CHAPTER 2

REDBURN, WHITE-JACKET, AND MOBY-DICK

After Mardi, Melville altered the setting of his fiction, and his next three works, Redburn, White-Jacket, and Moby-Dick, take place at sea rather than in exotic lands. This shift in setting signaled other changes as well. The emphasis on problems of culture clash and social interaction which appears in the island novels shifts to difficult metaphysical discoveries which introduce complex themes. This shift required a new set of literary conventions and a correspondingly different use of satiric techniques.

This is not to say that the novels Melville produced after Mardi are unrelated to his first three books. In some ways, they are very similar. The same dangers confront the protagonists: blind idealism, unexplained evil, and insidious hypocrisy. There are also recurrent subjects: for example, religion is a topic of discussion in all six of the novels. Yet, whatever continuity in themes and strategems exists between them, the sea novels and the island novels are still very different, and the differences between them are important in distinguishing Melville's use of satire in his second major narrative type.
Melville's metaphoric interpretation of the symbolism of land and sea may be useful in understanding this difference. For Melville, the sea is a "mighty" force which accurately reveals the true characters of the men who confront it; it is a powerful, potentially destructive element which leads a person into the unknown and into some of the most profound insights available to man: "In landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God" (p. 98), as Ishmael says at one point. In contrast, the land represents "safety, comfort, hearthstone, supper, warm blankets, friends, all that's kind to our mortalities" (p. 97), the known, controllable elements of life. While the shore is associated with security and comparatively superficial activities, the sea is associated with the "extreme situation," with danger both physical and spiritual, with isolation, introspection, and the encounter with what is profound in human experience.

This metaphoric distinction between land and sea results in a key contrast: although Melville's island novels introduce some metaphysical issues which will become important in later works, they are primarily novels of social criticism which deal with the problems produced

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1 Herman Melville, Moby-Dick (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1967). Hereafter all quotations are taken from this edition.
by man's interactions with other men. The sea novels which follow them, on the other hand, are novels about man's attempt to understand his position in the universe. The theme of self-discovery becomes more important in this second group of novels, and there is increasing emphasis on the protagonist as a developing character. While it is possible to see growth in the central characters of the island novels as well, that development is almost always secondary to satiric descriptions of various societies. In the sea novels, on the other hand, greater focus is placed on the narrator's growing psychological insights, his gradual recognition of the danger of evil and the untrustworthy nature of human judgments. This change is indicated by a shift in Melville's choice of titles: instead of having names associated with places and societies and lifestyles, the first two sea novels are named after their young protagonists, and *Moby-Dick* is named after the symbolic whale which conditions the actions of every character in the novel.

As Melville's setting becomes the sea instead of the land, a new use of satiric techniques also emerges. His increasing interest in metaphysical themes and the psychological development of his protagonists overshadows satire for the purpose of simple social criticism. In general, after *Mardi*, Melville uses a satiric mode to control his reader's response to the narrative, rather than as an end in itself. Along with this shift in
emphasis, a number of changes occur in the nature of the satire itself.

First, the satiric background becomes narrower. In place of a varied world-picture involving several contrasting societies, the sea novels employ a monolithic background suggesting in its immensity and ambiguity the universal conflicts faced by man. In the island novels, the narrators present critical insights by comparing different societies, directly or indirectly; in the sea novels, the narrators do not make such comparisons. While the broad overview of different values which is presented in the island novels allows Melville to criticize by rhetorically manipulating his reader into seeing some actions and attitudes as positive and others as negative, the sea novels present only one society, based on the quasi-national, quasi-religious Judao-Christian ethics of Melville's own American nation. Melville probes the strengths and weaknesses of that society by delving deeply into its normative standards and its practical effects on various individuals, rather than by comparing it to other systems.

As Melville's subject area narrows in this second group of novels, his satiric targets become more general. Although in *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Mardi* the targets vary in how specific they may be, they are, with a few exceptions, still comparatively uncomplicated. Characters embody abuses which are held up to ridicule in the traditional
method of satire. But, because of his increasing emphasis on ambiguity as a problem faced by the thinking man and because of his increasing use of a point of view which features an only-partially-aware narrator, Melville's targets in the sea novels become less clearly defined and less tangible. Attacks are directed against theological miscalculations which lead to errors in the interpreting of reality rather than against particular vices. Except for a few memorable episodes, specific abuses in the outside world are seldom attacked in the novels after *Mardi*; though Melville includes a tremendous amount of direct criticism of such abuses, his criticism is presented as propaganda rather than as satire; for example, the purpose of Melville's direct attacks on the institution of flogging is simply reform. He reserves satiric techniques for complicated character presentation and for the clarification of complex themes.

From a technical standpoint, satire can only work if its targets are fully embodied forms which are susceptible to the various techniques of comic reduction, as enumerated in the various chapters. This broadening of targets, then, could conceivably have created problems for Melville as a satirist. He partially solves these problems by providing specific targets through his use of characterization. Even the most nebulous vice can be effectively attacked if it is made concrete, and Melville's targets in his novels after *Mardi* most often
are his own characters, rather than specific abuses or even specific ideologies. From Redburn onward, he develops a new method of satire: instead of attacking vice and folly in society, he attacks vices and follies manifest in the beliefs and actions of his own protagonists. The narrators carefully establish high standards, against which the reader judges these characters to be inadequate; this is a common satiric method, a variety of high burlesque.

Thus, in the sea novels, satire becomes for the most part secondary rather than primary; these novels are only partly satiric, and the rest of the work may be tragic or sublime or any combination of these and other qualities. Satiric techniques become narrative tools which work in combination with other non-satiric techniques to help develop plot and character. In particular, satire helps the reader judge characters accurately and critically.

Before considering Melville's use of satire in Redburn, I would like to deal briefly with the extent to which Mardi both foreshadows and clarifies Melville's later use of satiric devices in combination with other techniques. Mardi begins the shift away from the overt social analysis which dominates Typee and Omoo; it is both Melville's first original satire and his most derivative one. The central journey is very much in the tradition of the satiric travel narrative, an obvious
at times even heavy-handed example of social criticism. Yet, the multi-level structure of the novel suggests that for Melville such a straightforward satiric format was inadequate. *Mardi* includes not only a satiric part, the comic travelogue, but also two other largely non-satiric parts, a sea narrative and an allegorical romance.

Had Melville limited this novel to the travelogue, which is certainly the most fully developed of the three, the confusion which the joining of these different parts sometimes causes could have been avoided. Without the other parts, the chapters of *Mardi* in which Melville describes the fantastic voyage are unified and controlled. Melville shows himself an able, if not entirely original, craftsman in the art of exposing social abuses through ridicule.

Rather than limit *Mardi* to only the satiric travelogue, however, Melville introduces other dimensions, including the comparatively serious allegorical one which provides the framework for the story, the melodramatically tragic search of Taji for the ideal Yillah; in fact, although the satiric chapters are apt to be more memorable and more effective, the themes of the novel are focused on this allegorical "frame," and the travelogue is of secondary rather than primary importance in developing them. While the attempt to combine satire and tragedy in *Mardi* is not always successful, the combination of the satiric travelogue with the various
non-satiric or only partially satiric sections of *Mardi* is Melville's first step toward his later use of satiric techniques as secondary tools of composition. The satire of *Mardi* is for the most part obvious and unoriginal, but in his next three novels, Melville's use of satiric methods for secondary purposes becomes far more sophisticated.

In *Redburn*, the first of Melville's sea novels, satire is almost entirely a secondary tool for character presentation. *Redburn* is a novel about blind idealism and the disillusionment which man must face when he confronts malign forces at work in a universe he would like to believe is benign. The main thematic conflict is between the narrator's idealistic preconceptions of life at sea—symbolized by the glass ship and the old guidebook—and the real world which he encounters on board the *Highlander*. A standard narrative device is the destruction of the narrator's misconceptions as he experiences life in its brutal, unidealized reality. He flees to the world of the ship with a whole set of false expectations which are systematically shattered: he discovers only pain and suffering in Europe, his life on the *Highlander* is hard and friendless, and he is continually subjected to ridicule.

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Redburn is a bleak novel, and satire comprises only a small part of its meaning. Its mood is somber and sometimes nightmarish. There are such horrible images as the serpent-filled hotel room and the specter of the dead man which haunts Redburn through much of the novel. In Liverpool, the culmination of Redburn's "voyage of discovery," the ghastly description of the starving family and the unfeeling responses Redburn receives in his attempts to help them reveal the false, hateful values of humanity. Melville depends heavily on tableau-like scenes which evoke horror in the reader to convey the evil which the youthful protagonist must face.

Yet, the satire in the novel plays an important role in establishing the nature of that confrontation. It is limited to the first parts of the novel, in which Redburn's disillusionment and epiphanies are treated through techniques of comic reduction. Perhaps the best example of this method of satire is Redburn's behavior on the ferry-boat when, discovering that he lacks a dollar of his fee, he affects the pose of a scoundrel and would-be murderer, a pose which is comically incongruous, given his innocence and lack of guile: the picture of Redburn marching off to face the world, appropriately wearing his brother's shooting jacket and carrying an empty fowling piece, is satiric because it first suggests that the world when it is met on its own terms requires that man be well-armed to confront it and then undercuts the
warrior-protagonist by ridiculing his pretentious pose.

The key to the exposure of Redburn's misconceptions in the early parts of the novel is Melville's use of point of view. Older and more mature at the time of the writing of the novel, the narrator looks back on himself as naive and foolish and rather bitterly joins in the mockery the untried boy encounters at every turn. In this process of self-ridicule, satire is an important tool. The author reveals Redburn's foolishness through a variety of high burlesque: he has his youthful character assume a grandiose pose which is undercut by the realities of his position on the ship. The more mature Redburn recognizes the pretentiousness of his youthful self and reveals it to be foolish. For example, when he describes with exaggerated pomp his attempt to visit the captain, the reader is encouraged to join in the mockery to which the narrator subjects himself. Such ridicule is is an obvious kind of satire, the exposure of folly by making its proponent a subject of mockery.

3 The problem of Melville's point of view in this novel has always been a critical one for readers. As William Dillingham points out, there are three narrative voices in the novel: 1) the narrator as an inexperienced boy, 2) the narrator as a slightly more experienced boy, and 3) the mature narrator looking back on his "first voyage." The existence of this mature narrator enables Melville to mock the pretensions of Redburn the boy. An Artist in the Rigging: The Early Works of Herman Melville (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1971), pp. 31-34.
Since this satire is directed not against the evils which Redburn encounters but against Redburn himself, the reader is placed in the rather uncomfortable position of being the protagonist's enemy. Through his discomfort, the reader is led to recognize Melville's point: in a corrupt and heartless world, it is folly for man to deny reality. Faced with such a savage world, man must become aware of his own potentiality for evil actions. Then, having made that discovery, man must learn to cope with reality. Since this awareness can be destructive if it is complete, the only way to acknowledge the horrors of existence and still survive as a human being is to strike a compromise between complete consciousness of the "sharkishness" of the world and a false, deceptively bright view. One way to achieve such a compromise is by accepting life as a vast, practical joke with man as its victim. The "hyena" laugh which results from this acceptance involves a form of self-mockery, but it is still man's only way of coping with the reality of evil without destroying himself through that knowledge.

In Redburn, the hyena laugh is found in the first part of the novel when the narrator describes the jokes played on him as a boy, but as the narrative progresses, the importance of satire decreases. As might be expected, as soon as Redburn becomes a bit more seasoned a sailor, the effectiveness of this type of ridicule
diminishes. After those first comic scenes in which we see Redburn bungling about aboard the ship, getting seasick, missing out on his dinner because he has no utensils, blindly wondering what the orders he is given may mean, Redburn becomes less a comic target and more a developing person. At this point in the novel, Melville moves away from satire to a more direct presentation of his themes. The bleakness of the second half of Redburn is seldom tempered with satire, and the tone of the novel becomes increasingly dark. After using a mocking treatment of his boy protagonist to establish the existence of the "dark" side of reality, Melville for the most part abandons satire for a direct demonstration of the evils of the world, a demonstration which at times reaches almost surrealistic intensity.

Of course, satire and a particularly bleak view of life are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In particular, modern satire often assumes the form of black comedy, and there are many examples of this type of satire in Melville's later novels, but satiric presentation requires that this bleak view of life be tempered with laughter. In Redburn that dimension is largely absent after the first chapters. In the second half of the novel, in the lengthy descriptions of Harry Bolton and of Redburn's explorations of Europe, there is little satire.
On the other hand, Melville's next work, White-Jacket, is much more dependent on satire. Melville returns in this second sea novel to his use of parody, with particular emphasis on the use of one of the classic devices of the satirist, the mock heroic, to highlight vice and folly in an essentially non-heroic world.

In many ways, Redburn and White-Jacket are similar. Both are novels of initiation, in which a comparatively inexperienced character faces the harshness of the real world. Both are sea novels, which metaphorically identifies them in the Melville canon as works which explore metaphysical truths. Both are concerned with a similar problem: the existence of evil in the world, its causes and effects, and what can be done to alleviate them. In both novels the point of view is reasonably consistent: they are narrated by young protagonists, impressionable, perceptive, basically idealistic if a bit cynical, and, like Ishmael, observant interpreters of man's actions. And, in both of these novels, these basically innocent young characters are exposed to the indignities of oppression and suffering, and, more significantly, the danger of evil. Both novels are structured around the motif of a voyage; in both cases, the final chapters bring the narrators safely to homeport. In both Redburn and White-Jacket the ship is a microcosm for man's life on earth. With so many similarities, it would seem that these two works are in many ways reworkings of
similar themes, particularly when they are compared to the very different Mardi, which was published the same year as Redburn.

In fact, however, those novels are very different, particularly in the response which they are likely to evoke in the reader. Most of this difference is derived from a tonal shift: the conflicts which are treated seriously in Redburn are reproduced in mock heroic form in White-Jacket. Although White-Jacket does not assume a typical satiric form—certainly it is not as straightforward a satire as the comic travelogue in Mardi, for example—satiric devices are important in developing the themes which Melville explores in this novel.

Like many other satiric works, White-Jacket functions at two levels. On the one hand, Melville strives for realism and an accurate description of a sailor's life aboard an American man-of-war. At this level, his criticism is propaganda designed to correct abuses by revealing suffering as vividly and directly as possible, but it is not satire.\textsuperscript{4} White-Jacket is also, however, a carefully contrived fiction, an allegorical presentation of the world outside the limited world of the Neversink. To achieve this end, Melville abandons

\textsuperscript{4} There is of course a clear distinction between propaganda and satire: propaganda includes no ridicule but instead aims at accuracy of presentation. Hodgart, p. 216.
the realistic, almost naturalistic, shock techniques which are commonplaces of the novel as propaganda and chooses instead a mock heroic presentation. He uses a background of war to suggest the possibility of heroism; then, he subjects his potential heroes to reductive ridicule and mocks their poses and pretensions as a way of undercutting that heroic vision.

*White-Jacket* could easily have been, like *Omoo*, a novel criticizing social injustice. Indeed, there are episodes that even recall parts of *Omoo*: the Cadwallader Cuticle chapters are examples of the kind of satire found in the island novels. Melville's targets are hypocrisy, the arrogance of the scientist with limited vision who fails to recognize human values, man's insensitivity to pain and suffering. Moreover, the methods are those of social satire: exaggeration, type-casting, comic exposure, and physical farce. The doctor's quarters, for example, are described as so bizarre that they become grotesque: the pitiful head with the horn coming out of its forehead is used as a hatrack. The characters which appear along with Cuticle are exaggerated types, as their names suggest: Bandage of the Mohawk, Wedge of the Malay, Sawyer of the Buccaneer, and Patella of the Algerine are all medical pirates, and the attaching of such contrived labels to these characters is itself a form of satiric attack. The technique of exposure is also very important: As William Dillingham points out, Cuticle
illustrates his characteristic vice of falseness in his person—he is a melange of extra parts. At the time of the operation, he exposes his true identity—that of a grizzled, withered old man, when he removes these disguises: "These articles being removed, he snatched off his wig, placing it on the gun-deck capstan, then took out his set of false teeth, and placed it in the side of the wig; and, lastly, putting his forefinger to the inner angle of his blind eye, spirited out the glass optic with professional dexterity, and deposited that also next to the wig and false teeth" (p. 258). And the cancer episode, in which the doctor becomes a victim of a practical joke, recalls the practical jokes of the narrator and Long-Ghost in Omoo. These chapters contain some of Melville's best examples of the social satirist at work.

However, satire must by its own nature present criticism through indirect methods, and, more often than not, the social criticism of White-Jacket is direct rather than indirect—propaganda rather than satire. The narrator tells his readers of the suffering and injustice which exist on the Neversink in the hopes that he will

5 Dillingham, p. 73.

evoke responses which will lead to needed reforms. In the chapter entitled "A Flogging," for example, the narrator describes the floggings of three sailors, a ne'er-do-well, a conscientious man of honor, and a sensitive youth. The rhetoric of the chapter, which begins with the sentence, "If you begin the day with a laugh, you may, nevertheless, end it with a sob and a sigh" (p. 134), is designed to evoke sympathy and arouse indignation: that effect is not undercut by any form of mockery. The novel contains a considerable amount of such didactic social propaganda, so much that Plomer suggests that White-Jacket was an important influence leading to the abolition of flogging in the American navy.

In a way, Melville's limited use of social satire in White-Jacket is surprising. Clearly, satiric techniques could work together with denunciations of flogging, as, for example, in the Cuticle chapters we just looked at, attacks on abuses in the medical profession are advanced with satiric zest. Melville's decision not to present the abuses resulting from the institution of flogging and from the Articles of War satirically demonstrates Melville's changing use of satiric techniques as they become narrative tools rather than ends in themselves. Comic reduction is used less as a tool for

7 Plomer, p. vii.
social criticism and more as a tool of characterization and narrative technique. Melville's choice of didactic commentary instead of satiric exposure for presenting this material in the novel enables him to describe such abuses without the playfulness which a satiric approach would require. And, as the man-of-war becomes a micro-cosm for the outside world, Melville can use the horror of his realistic description of the abuses of sailors at sea as a way of dramatically emphasizing the brutality of the world.

The key to the understanding of the allegorical level of White-Jacket can be found in the basic metaphor of the subtitle: "The World in a Man-of-War." The narrator of the novel never allows his readers to forget that basic characteristic of the Neversink. It is a man-of-war, and the events and situations which are described in the novel are all influenced by a war-tempered world. Moreover, the identification of the Neversink as a micro-cosm for the world is also repeatedly emphasized. As Melville says in the last chapter, "As a man of war that sails through the sea, so this earth that sails through the air" (p. 398). The identification is detailed: the code by which man lives in this world is the inhumane Articles of War; the leaders of the world are cruel and hypocritical; individual lives are of little value. The negative view of human society which appears in Pierre and The Confidence-Man is fully foreshadowed in White-
Jacket. In all three of these works, the individual is a victim of the "sharkish" world. In this world, man's unstable position requires that he be forever "armed," with a rifle or shooting jacket or some other form of protection, against a dark reality which is always threatening to oppress and overcome him.

The world as battleship is thus a key metaphor in White-Jacket: given this fiction, the reader might expect to see the protagonist experience some resolution of this "battle of life," either a bleak resolution in annihilation or a successful triumph of right over evil. But Melville carefully denies this resolution to the reader; instead, he uses the battleship motif to present a world in which the heroic is systematically replaced by the mock heroic and in which satiric reduction limits the possibility of meaningful action. For, if one way of coping with a battleship existence is to resist and heroically attempt to change it (the solution of Ahab and Pierre and perhaps even Taji), and another way is to commit psychological suicide by withdrawing from it altogether (the solution of Bartleby and Benito Cereno), a third way of coping is to fall back on the hyena-like laughter of Ishmael in Moby-Dick. In general, this is the solution Melville chooses in White-Jacket, and the impracticality and danger of "overreaching" and withdrawal are revealed by a systematic satiric reduction of the heroic dimension in man's life.
As illustrated by the many allusions to heroes and heroic values in the novel, the epic model of behavior is part of the heritage of the thinking Westerner. One characteristic of this model is the belief that the individual man is capable of meaningful actions which can affect changes in his condition, and the heroic values are courage, tenacity, and honesty. But the heroic model is important only for purposes of contrast in this work, because such behavior is ineffectual in the harsh world represented by the microcosmic Neversink. Describing an environment which might be expected to demonstrate epic heroism, Melville violates the reader's expectations by disallowing the possibility of a saving redemption of man in the oppressive world of the novel and, thereby, acknowledges the difficulties which confront all thinking men.

Melville establishes the impossibility of heroic action in the world of the Neversink and, by allegorical extension, in the world outside the Neversink by means of the satiric device of the mock heroic. In White-Jacket,

8 Melville's critique of war in Mardi suggests a second level of ambiguity. Although war may offer opportunities for heroic valor, it is still a cruel, basically destructive activity.

9 The mock heroic is a very popular form of satire, which can work in two ways: 1) By contrasting the heroic age with a less satisfactory period of human existence, it can demonstrate the failure of a given society to sustain worthwhile values, and 2) By suggesting the ineffectualness of human activities, it can call into question the very
the mock heroic functions as a form of high burlesque. The possibility of heroism appears in the background of the novel, establishing high standards and worthwhile values. Then, Melville presents characters and episodes which fail to measure up to these high standards and, instead, mocks them. In the process, Melville offers a critical perspective on the characters and, by extension, on the world of the Neversink.

The heroic is established as an ideal in the novel in several ways. The most obvious of these is by definition—the Neversink (an appropriately extravagant name) is designed to function in a battle situation and emerge victorious, a basically heroic formula. Other heroic norms also appear in the novel—a projected account of a real battle, the pomp of naval ceremony which, although it has deteriorated into mere ritual, still suggests a larger-than-life view of human conduct, the theatricals in which officers and men alike applaud heroic defiance, even the race which the men try to win for the glory of their ship, and the potential rebellion over the massacre of the beards, a rebellion which of course never materializes.

idea of heroism itself and make fun of man's pretensions. Both of these effects are present in White-Jacket. Melville emphasizes the sterility of the man-of-war world and simultaneously suggests that man is incapable of meaningful action.
In particular, the character Jack Chase is associated with heroic ideals; in fact, Jack Chase is in this novel somewhat of a stillborn hero. It is Jack Chase who, as Percy Royal-Mast, presents a heroic rebellion against oppression in the play; crew members and officers alike cheer as Chase delivers the resounding heroic speeches, ignoring of course their applicability to their own condition. Likewise, Chase has fought in a war against tyranny: "Though bowing to naval discipline afloat; yet ashore, he was a stickler for the Rights of Man, and the liberties of the world" (p. 17). He tells exciting war stories: in one, for example, he fights on valiantly after losing a finger even though his trousers are soaked with blood, and these stories remind the reader that behind the everyday drudgery and oppression of the Neversink there are always the guns and the threat of war to suggest the need for heroic action.

It is important to note, however, that though heroic values are carefully established in the background of the novel, they are virtually absent on board the ship itself. The values of heroism and self-sacrifice may be plentiful on the man-of-war in stories, poems, anecdotes, and plays, but actual heroism is lacking, except for a few exceptions which will be discussed presently. The failure of any hero to redeem the oppressive world of the Neversink is an important theme which Melville develops in the novel. The Neversink is a rotten, nightmarish, cruel place, badly
in need of redemption, but its very structured, rigid society stifles the possibility of human courage and commitment. Against the heroic values in the background of the novel, the characters of White-Jacket emerge as generally inadequate. Its leaders are fools or villains: the captain is a coward, Selvagee a "paper officer," even Mad Jack is often drunk. The heroic adventures of the battleship deteriorate into travesties on the Neversink. There is no victor to the race; the only "battles" recounted are tiresome drills. Vice runs rampant: smuggling, pickpocketing, and the tyranny of boy over man described in the chapter on midshipmen. The climax of the novel consists of the heavily mock heroic description of the massacre of the beards.

No better proof of the failure of the heroic ideal on board the Neversink can be found than a descriptive analysis of White-Jacket's special friends. There are few people he admires; most of the crew is composed of a knavish lot of pickpockets and rascals. But he does present to the reader a few special companions: Lemsford the poet, the isolato Nord, the jolly Williams, and Jack Chase. In these four characters, the failure of the world of the Neversink is made manifest.

These four men are all essentially virtuous, admirable individuals. But not one of them is capable of the life-affirming actions which the inflexible world of the man-of-war seems to require, actions which would affect
necessary reforms and create a better society. Lemsford is a talented poet, but his poetry is only "published" when it is accidentally fired out of the guns: he fails in the necessary step of communication, and there is no hope that the fervor and insight of an artist will bring order and meaning to the life of a man-of-war man. The "laughing philosopher" Williams is another of White-Jacket's favorites, but he is mentioned in only a single paragraph. The Byronic Nord is a type of potential hero—taciturn, long-suffering, and silent, but his lack of communicativeness and his withdrawal are so complete that his actions go virtually unrecorded. But the failure of the most clearly potentially heroic character in the novel, Jack Chase, is most disheartening.

There is real admiration in White-Jacket's description

10 In White-Jacket, the artist is continually mocked for his inability to reform a false society. For example, Melville employs romantic irony to make fun of his own work in the following passage:
"...it having been rumored abroad that this journal was to be ominously entitled 'The Cruise of the Never-sink, or a Paixham Shot into Naval Abuses,' and it having also reached the ears of the Ward-room that the work contained reflections somewhat derogatory to the dignity of the officers, the volume was seized by the master-of-arms, armed with a warrant from the captain. A few days after, a large nail was driven straight through the two covers, and clinched on the other side, and thus everlastingly sealed, the book was committed to the deep. The ground taken by the authorities on this occasion was, perhaps, that the book was obnoxious to a certain clause in the Articles of War, forbidding any person in the navy to bring any other person in the Navy into contempt, which the suppressed volume undoubtedly did." (p. 43)
of this splendid, popular "handsome sailor"--the chapters describing him are filled with references to heroism, grace, and splendid achievements--and in both the play and the account of the South American rebellion, Chase emerges as an authentic hero, the one man with the personal appeal and insight required to replace the oppression and cruelty aboard the Neversink with right and justice. White-Jacket's praise of him is indeed so lavish that one commentator has suggested that the modern reader might find it embarrassing. 11

Yet, for all this lavish praise, Jack Chase is clearly inadequate against the heroic ideals in the background of the novel. Although he performs well in the play, the next day the officers "ship their quarter deck faces" and return to their oppression of the crew--the rebellion of Percy Royal-Mast affects no change in the Neversink. The flogging goes on full-strength, and Jack Chase cannot stop it. He participates in heroic actions off the Neversink; on board the ship these actions are nothing but stories. His one positive stand is to get the crew a day of liberty, from which they return drunken and penniless. Even in the dramatic scene in which White-Jacket is about to be flogged, it is Colbert who saves him, and Chase only speaks out rather anti-climatically "in a carefully respectful

11 Plomer, p. viii.
manner" (p. 281) after that unprecedented action. And finally in the episode of the massacre of the beards, Chase does not resist: "In his cooler moments, Jack was a wise man; he at last deemed it but wisdom to surrender" (p. 360).

This is not to say that Chase is not an admirable character; on the contrary, he is a favorite of men and officers both, a "splendid figure," verbally skilled, prudent, and tactful, appealing as a human being. The failure of such a man illustrates the destructive effect which the man-of-war world has on individual accomplishments rather than his own limitations. Melville thus reinforces his view of the battleship world as unsatisfactory and bleak when he shows his readers the inability of even a truly heroic man to affect positive changes in such a world.

In fact, the problem of White-Jacket is not that the Neversink is a hero-less community. There are heroes, but they are for the most part rendered ineffectual by the system under which they live. Jack Chase is one example; there are a few others as well. Mad Jack saves the ship in a gesture of heroic defiance, but it goes unnoticed and his power on the ship is counteracted by his own drinking and by the cowardly captain. Colbert is a "gentlemanly corporal of marines" (p. 280) who saves White-Jacket from punishment, but because he is a marine, his established position on the craft renders him nearly powerless. There is finally only one true hero who emerges from the novel, old Ushant, who bravely endures the cruelty of the system
to retain his personal integrity. In an almost purely mock heroic episode, old Ushant remains the one valiant man who is treated in a wholly sympathetic way. Unfortunately, he is an old man, and, though his triumph is complete, he suffers greatly for it. And after all his heroism is reduced to a gesture—he only manages to save his own beard—and his rebellion is not shared by the less daring, more prudent members of the crew: Jack Chase cannot bear to watch the flogging of Ushant, but he still accepts it as inevitable on board the Neversink.

Finally, the development of the protagonist's awareness and acceptance of this oppressive world is also an important issue in White-Jacket. Unlike Redburn, White-Jacket is aware from the start of the injustice which characterizes his life as a man-of-war man: for this reason, the novel does not emphasize his discovery of that reality but rather emphasizes his adaptation to it, his learning to cope with a battleship existence. At first, he attempts to shelter himself from the cruelty of life by donning a "white jacket," which is designed to protect him from the storms of Cape Horn—metaphorically representative of the dangers involved in living on this "world-ship." But the jacket itself becomes representative of the ambiguities of existence, from which no man can escape: its purpose is to protect White-Jacket, but it subjects him to countless discomforts and problems as well: he is so attached to it that it becomes a part of his identity, but he must discard
it eventually to survive. Since man can never resolve the problem of such ambiguities, White-Jacket's "Baptism" which takes place almost at the end of the novel is an ironic rebirth in which he is "delivered" out of the ambiguity of his assumed identity into the equally ambiguous real world. The ironies which characterize this world-portrait are inflexible, and the narrator can only evolve by becoming part of that world: he can do nothing to change or improve it. White-Jacket survives his ironic baptism; he may even mature and develop personally. However, he does not emerge from that experience capable of redeeming the corrupt world of the Neversink, which continues unchanged through the last chapters of the novel. The mock heroic tone is maintained all the way to the end; there is in White-Jacket no possibility of meaningful change. And, unfortunately, in the world of the man-of-war, the only "virtue" which the man-of-war man can achieve is endurance, as the protagonist discovers by the end of the work.

Moby-Dick obviously is not a satire in the traditional sense. Nevertheless, as in Redburn and White-Jacket, Melville uses the techniques of satire as important secondary tools. In particular, satiric methods serve to condition the reader's responses to Ahab. Allusions and patterns in the novel evoke a number of Biblical paradigms which are parodied by the characters; like the glass ship of Redburn and the heroic model in White-Jacket, these paradigms are ideal models against which the actions of Ahab
and the other characters of the work can be measured. The perceptive reader supplies from various internal clues the patterns against which actions and individuals must be evaluated. When these paradigms are then reproduced in distorted forms which parody the originals, the result is satire, usually a form of high burlesque.

One of the major concerns of *Moby-Dick* is metaphysics, man's attempts to cope with a world beyond his experiences. One critical judgment which virtually all commentators on *Moby-Dick* have shared is that the "theology/cetology" pun is the key to the novel. Whether the reader sees the whale as an embodiment of God or an agent of Fate or as some other metaphysical force, the attempt, by Ahab, Ishmael, and the other men of the Pequod, to come to terms with that whale as a real and simultaneously symbolic force provides the drama of the novel.

The importance of metaphysics in *Moby-Dick* is reaffirmed throughout the novel by references to religious experiences and truth-seeking. The novel's early scenes, for example, include a chapter devoted to Father Mapple's Jonah sermon. Also there is a detailed description of Queequeg's "Ramadan." Sermons recur throughout the novel and there are Baptismal and Eucharistic parodies, which

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will be discussed later in more detail. Biblical references and names appear repeatedly, from Ishmael and Ahab to Biledad and Ezekial and Gabriel. In fact, it is not much of an exaggeration to say that Moby-Dick is a religious novel, since virtually every metaphor used in the novel contributes to the identification of whaling with a search for religious truth. Most particularly, a systematic correspondence is established between the whale and the power of God, based on Biblical paradigms.

The most important of these paradigms are the stories of Job, Jonah, and Christ. These three stories emerge as central to an understanding of Moby-Dick; all three are concerned with suffering and evil and with man's three possible responses to that evil--acceptance, rebellion, and endurance. Job, Jonah, and Christ are all faced with the need to respond directly to the force of God's will in their lives: Job and Jonah must endure suffering to learn the lesson of humility and acceptance, though they learn that lesson at different levels--Job attains acceptance at a psychological level, while Jonah's acceptance is really only a surrender to God's superior strength. And the lesson learned by Job and Jonah in these problematic "philosophical" Biblical books is the lesson epitomized in the

13 The stories of Job and Jonah have received a great deal of critical attention, as for example in Thompson's Melville's Quarrel With God, and in Janis Stout, "Melville's Use of the Book of Job," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 25 (1970), 69-85.
example of Christ—the need for total acceptance and humility. The paradigms of Job, Jonah, and Christ thus establish ideal norms within the novel. The story of Jonah embodies the idea of the jealous pettiness of man rendered ineffectual through God's mercy; the men of Nineveh are saved despite Jonah's foolishness. The story of Job embodies the idea of suffering relieved through faith; when Job accepts God's power and greatness and no longer complains about his suffering, his suffering is immediately relieved. And the story of Christ represents the idea of mankind redeemed from spiritual death through God's power and mercy. Against the background of these three stories appears Ahab, who parodies all three of the models but does not learn any of these lessons, and the reader judges him through the perspective provided by his ironic resemblance to these figures.

Technically, this rhetorical manipulation of the reader is achieved in various ways. First, Melville sets up the paradigms through verbal clues—patterns, allusions, stylistic parodies. Then, in addition to simply evoking the patterns, Melville also demonstrates the distortions which occur when they are unconsciously or consciously imitated by the characters of the novel.

An example of such a dual use of one Biblical paradigm, the Book of Job, will illustrate how this process works. Although it is brief and comparatively unimportant in the larger conflicts developed in the novel, Chapter Thirty-One,
entitled "Queen Mab," provides an excellent demonstration of Melville's use of satiric techniques as secondary tools of characterization in this novel. Standing as it does between the early chapters of the novel which are dominated by the personalities of Ishmael and Queequeg and the main narrative which focuses on Ahab's search for the White Whale, this short satiric chapter, which consists of Stubb's description of a dream he has had, serves several significant functions: it establishes the characters of both Stubb and Ahab, it foreshadows the ending of the novel, and it introduces the themes of acceptance and rebellion.

Since most critics have seen this chapter primarily as a tool for presenting Stubb and setting him up as a foil for Ahab, it is necessary first to consider Stubb's role in the novel as a whole. Along with Starbuck, Stubb is one of the few characters in the novel capable of becoming Ahab's adversary. He is a practical, earthy man, a popular type in Melville's fiction, and his frequent involvement in serio-comic chapters in this novel suggests that he plays a key part in the satire found in this work. In fact, it is possible to see in Stubb a tool for reducing Ahab's pretensions; Stubb's commentary and actions consistently mock Ahab's quest.

At first glance, it would seem that throughout the novel Stubb is used as a contrast to Ahab. While Ahab tosses his pipe away because he receives no enjoyment from it, Stubb's emblem is his pipe, which insulates him from
pain and suffering. While Ahab seldom sleeps and gets no enjoyment from his food, Stubb is an avid eater and sleeper: his eleventh and twelfth commandments are "Think not" and "Sleep all you can." While Ahab is moody and seldom smiles, Stubb is always merry.

Despite these differences, however, which are heightened by Ahab's obvious contempt for Stubb, there are also similarities. Both men are egotists: Stubb's hedonism limits his insight, just as Ahab's solipsistic vengeance-seeking limits his ability to make correct judgements. Both are guilty of significant acts of destruction in the novel: Stubb abandons Pip in an act of unplanned but nevertheless cruel recklessness, and Ahab refuses to help in the search for the missing child and eventually destroys his ship and crew. Most important, in the series of chapters beginning "Stubb Kills a Whale," Melville establishes a connection between Stubb and the cannibal sharks; this connection is based on Stubb's perversion of religious rituals; for him, the killing of whales becomes a kind of religion. Similarly, Ahab perverts religious rituals for his own selfish ends. Furthermore, Stubb is "brave as fearless fire" and "as mechanical" (p. 459), and so is Ahab who is also associated with fire imagery and who likewise describes himself as running on "iron rails" (p. 147).

Also, despite their differences, Stubb understands Ahab, perhaps even more than Starbuck. In "Queen Mab," Stubb shows himself the first of the crew to recognize
the potential danger of Ahab's monomania, as at least subconsciously he acknowledges his inability to resist Ahab's power. Then, in the chapter entitled "First Night Watch," Stubb recognizes Ahab's voiceless encounter with Starbuck as a battle of wills which Starbuck loses. And Stubb is also the character most clearly aware of Fedallah's Satanic power over Ahab.

Thus, Melville establishes an ironic kinship between the man who tries to pierce the "pasteboard mask" (p. 144) of experience in his metahuman quest and the ordinary man who prefers not to think and who acts only in response to his own physical desires. Their goals may be dramatically different, but their actions are uncomfortably alike, and Ahab's evil is mirrored in a lesser way in Stubb's grasping selfishness. The result is the undercutting of Ahab's theatrically tragic pose by a shrewd, self-seeking minor character who embodies the limitations of human nature, particularly selfishness and greed.

Most critics have maintained that the main function of the "Queen Mab" chapter is to demonstrate Stubb's limitations. From a dramatic point of view, it might be expected that Stubb would become an active antagonist of Ahab. He is after all the one crew member who is half-inclined to return Ahab's insults with blows, the one who boasts that he intends to "wrench off" Fedallah's tail and "duck him." However, the antagonism never materializes, and in the "Queen Mab" chapter Melville establishes the
reasons for this. Stubb in his subconscious works out his preceding confrontation with Ahab (over Ahab's nightly walking of the decks), and in the process reveals that like Starbuck he is "overmanned" by Ahab. At the same time, Ahab's status is elevated by his clear psychological triumph over Stubb, the non-thinking man.

The key to the dream is Stubb's comments before he goes to sleep that night. He says, "I don't well know whether to go back and strike him, or--what's that?--down on my knees and pray for him?" (p. 113), and then adds, "He might as well have kicked me, and done with it. Maybe he did kick me, and I didn't observe it, I was so taken all aback with his brow, somehow. It flashed like a bleached bone" (p. 114). These impressions work themselves into Stubb's dream: Ahab has kicked him, he is kicking back, and Ahab turns into a pyramid. As numerous critics have pointed out, Stubb's attempts to resist Ahab's will and assert himself as an individual are ineffectual: he first kicks his own leg off, and then he stubs his toe, suggesting an additional dimension of meaning in his name: perhaps his name suggests that any attempt to resist Ahab would be pointless and only result in his "stubbing" his own toe. This dream details for the reader Stubb's reasons for "not kicking back" against Ahab's usurpation of the Pequod for his own purposes. Finally, the lesson the dream teaches Stubb is the advice of the merman: "'Be kicked by him; account his kicks honors; and on no account kick back; for
you can't help yourself, wise Stubb. Don't you see that pyramid?" (p. 116).

The idea of the inferiority of Stubb to Ahab is undoubtedly an important part of the meaning of this chapter. But so also are implications which undermine Ahab as well as Stubb. The two sides of Ahab which are recognized by Stubb and which must also be recognized by the reader are also suggested in this dream. The merman tells Stubb that he has been kicked by a "great man" and "with a beautiful ivory leg" and therefore should consider the whole experience an honor, but there is also the possibility that it is an "insult," though a "dead" one rather than a "living" one. Stubb's attitude toward Ahab is thus seen as ambivalent: on the one hand, admiring and sympathetic; on the other hand, resentful and rebellious. This ambiguity is too much for Stubb: he prefers to "stash it" and "let that old man alone" (p. 116), rather than to sustain this "plaguy juggling" of his emotions. The non-thinking man Stubb sees the "ambiguousness" of Ahab as an insoluble puzzle. Yet, this attitude also reflects the reader's and Ishmael's ambivalence: the response of the thinking man to the puzzle which Ahab represents is equally uncertain.

As interesting as such character insights may be, the satiric implications of the details of the dream are even more revealing as far as the themes of acceptance and rebellion are concerned. Before going to sleep, Stubb
wonders whether he should pray for Ahab, though he has "never done it before" (p. 115). The introduction of the idea of praying perhaps accounts for the religious implications of the dream, which is in several ways a parody of the Book of Job.

The Book of Job functions as a paradigm for the "Queen Mab" chapter. The similarities are obvious. Both focus on an "insult" directed by a greater individual against a lesser one: the captain of the ship versus the second mate, God versus Job. Both include an attempt to "justify" the right of the greater individual to wreak his will on the lesser one, based on his apparent superiority. Job must learn to accept God's will because God is so vastly above him that to challenge it is blasphemous, and Stubb must learn to "account [Ahab's] kicks honors" (p. 116). Both the Book of Job and the "Queen Mab" episode contain an "argument" over the issue: much of the Book of Job consists of an extended debate between Job and his companions, and the merman says to Stubb: "'Let's argue the insult'" (p. 116). The meaning of the dream also hinges on words which are key words in the Bible—"great" as an adjective used to describe God and "wise" as an adjective used to describe the man who accepts God's will, for example.

That Stubb's "wisdom" consists of accepting the will of the "great man" Ahab would seem to imply that in the dream Ahab becomes God; however, this does not occur in the novel as a whole. Though the thematic equation of
God with Ahab and Stubb with Job may explain Stubb's cowed acceptance of Ahab's power, Melville does not intend to represent God as Ahab in *Moby-Dick*, and the novel is clearly critical of Ahab's destructive egotism. So the thematic equations in "Queen Mab" are extended: Stubb is transformed into Ahab, and Ahab is transformed into the Leviathan, God's agent of power and destruction, in the structure of the dream. Once this transformation has occurred, the meaning of the dream changes: Ahab must learn the "wisdom" and necessity of acceptance, rather than Stubb, or become an agent of evil and destruction himself.

This transformation occurs quite early in Stubb's account of the dream. Stubb "kicks his leg right off" as Ahab also has lost a leg. Moreover, Stubb says, "And then, presto! Ahab seemed a pyramid..." (p. 115): the White Whale is described in the novel as having a "pyramid" hump and as being marked with hieroglyphics like the Sphinx. The implications are clear: Stubb becomes Ahab in "Queen Mab" and Ahab becomes the whale. By extension, if Stubb's attempts to resist Ahab are self-destructive, causing him to kick his own leg off and stub his toe, so also are Ahab's attempts to destroy Moby-Dick self-destructive and "unwise."

The association is continued into the next part of the dream. Stubb fancies that the kick from Ahab is not such an insult because it is "only a whaleboning, a playful cudgelling" (p. 115). By extension, since Stubb is enacting Ahab's part in the dream, the insult of the whale
to Ahab becomes also "only a whaleboning." And the "insult"—the taking of Ahab's leg by Moby-Dick—assumes the form of Ahab's ivory leg: "The insult is whittled down to a point, only" (p. 115). Ahab's purposeful vengeance is belied by the playfully indifferent view of the "whaleboning" in this chapter.

The situation is further complicated with the arrival of the "humpbacked old merman," with the "stern stuck full of marlin-spikes" (p. 116). Lawrance Thompson has interpreted this scene as a working out of the parody of God's message to St. Paul (Acts 9: 5). As Stubb's attempt to "kick against the pricks" in his dream is self-destructive and doomed to failure, so also Ahab's attempt to "kick against the pricks" is self-destructive and doomed to failure, from a Biblical perspective. This metaphor reiterates the message of the Book of Job—to accept God's will is wisdom; to "kick against the pricks" is folly and sin. The thematic implications of this idea in Moby-Dick are obvious.

Finally, the "humpbacked old merman" turns into a

\[14\] Thompson, p. 182.

\[15\] The meaning of the Biblical metaphor "kick against the pricks" is demonstrated in this part of the dream. If Stubb were to kick the merman, he would hurt his own foot with the marlin-spikes, just as he "stubbed" his toe on the pyramid, and just as the beast of burden in the Biblical parable only causes himself pain by resisting the spiked end of the goad. So, the dream implies, man's attempts to resist the will of God by fighting against it are self-defeating.
fish himself: "He all of a sudden seemed somehow, in some queer fashion, to swim off into the air" (p. 116). This association, together with the agedness of the merman, may suggest another dimension of the satire contained in the dream. It is God himself who displays his power to Job; perhaps it is God who delivers the corresponding message to Ahab as Stubb. The age-old notion that the dream is a true representation of reality may also support this idea. In any case, if we as readers are apt to see the dream as "true," it is impossible to see Ahab's actions in the same grandiose light in which he would choose to present himself.

Finally, structurally, the "Queen Mab" dream foreshadows the narrative events of the novel. Ahab will not give up the quest and learn the wisdom of Stubb—he will continue to kick against the pyramid, helplessly, pointlessly, foolishly, until he destroys himself and his crew. And, at the end of the novel, the "great pyramid," the life and death puzzle which Ahab sees embodied in Moby-Dick, will indeed turn into a fish and swim away. Stubb's dream thus foreshadows the ending of the major conflicts of the novel, while simultaneously satirizing man's limited vision and the folly of the quest through a carefully sustained parody of the Book of Job.

Although "Queen Mab" is a very short chapter, it is an excellent example of the usefulness of satiric techniques as secondary tools for presenting characters and
themes. It presents the lesson of humility—the idea that acceptance of God's will is necessary in lowly man—through a comic reworking of the Book of Job: Ahab's failure is the result of his inability to learn that lesson. Through similar techniques, all three of the most important Biblical paradigms, Job, Jonah, and Christ, are developed in the novel: they are alluded to frequently, and they condition the reader's responses to characters and events.

The Jonah model, the most obvious though least complex of the three, is introduced early in the novel with the little bartender named Jonah who serves drinks from inside the jaws of a whale and in particular with the Father Mapple sermon which is devoted specifically to the Book of Jonah. Then the pattern is re-introduced later when Ahab's behavior recalls the Jonah narrative: he is seen standing on the deck with "slouched hat and guilty eye," the very words used by Mapple to describe Jonah; restlessly lying in bed while the swinging lamp above his head repeats the image of a world awry; even by implication bringing on a storm as punishment for his defiance because of the whale. The chapter entitled "Jonah Reconsidered" is at one level a parody of the exegetists of the Bible, as Ishmael solves the problem of the size of the whale's mouth by suggesting that Jonah might have "esconced himself in a hollow tooth" (p. 307). This chapter is also another key to the theme of the novel, which reminds the reader of this important Biblical paradigm. The message
of the Jonah paradigm is humility; in the Book of Jonah, the rebellious man is portrayed as a clown instead of a noble character. The arrogant Ahab fails to understand this portrayal, but the reader receives the message of the Jonah story, and, therefore, the reader remains one step ahead of Ahab in understanding the meaning of his experiences: by recognizing that, in his resemblance to Jonah, Ahab becomes an absurd figure rather than an admirable one.

The Job paradigm is more complex and more important as a model in understanding Moby-Dick than the Jonah model. The Job story is established in a number of different ways as an allusion behind the action: we have already looked at Stubb's dream, for example, and Ishmael even calls Moby-Dick a "Job's whale" (p. 162). More than by direct statement, however, it is most fully evoked by Melville's symbolic identification of the whale as the supreme example of God's power, which is of course exactly the role which the Leviathan plays in the Book of Job. In Moby-Dick, Melville extensively develops the symbolism of the whale as emblem of ambiguous power, God's "agent" in the metaphoric structure of the novel.

This identification is largely accomplished through verbal echoes. The descriptions of whaling in the novel work in two directions: on the one hand the narrator demonstrates the extreme power of the whale, its magnitude, its sublimity, and its grandeur. As Leviathan in the story of the Book of Job is supreme proof of God's power,
so the whale in *Moby-Dick* is associated with inscrutable and uncontrollable power.

The function of the whale in the Book of Job is to show that the power of man is vastly inadequate when compared with the power of God as embodied in the whale. But in *Moby-Dick* a slight shift occurs; as Ishmael says in one passage, commenting on the capturing of whales:

> Is this the creature of whom it was once so triumphantly said—"Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish-spears? The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold, the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon: he esteemeth iron as straw; the arrow cannot make him flee; darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of a spear!" This the creature? this he? Oh! that unfulfilments should follow the prophets. For with the strength of a thousand thighs in his tail, Leviathan had run his head under the mountains of the sea, to hide him from the Pequod's fish-spears! (300)

What are the implications of this metaphoric reversal? Does this passage imply that modern man, in his ability to hunt and destroy the whale, is no longer the humble, inadequate creature that the Book of Job depicts him as being? Ahab believes this, but the rest of the handling of this symbolic construct in the novel implies that this is an error on Ahab's part; he misinterprets man's ability to kill and butcher the whale as proof of his power and pridefully "overreaches" himself in attempting to annihilate the whale as a symbol of God's power, destroying himself and his crew in the process.

The reason for the destruction of these characters
is that Ahab's interpretation of the whale as only representative of brute force is inaccurate; because of man's pride, Ahab fails to see that the whale is also part of the metaphysical world. The essential meaning of the many descriptive chapters in the novel is that the whale is not diminished in power but simply unknowable. It is a basically "ambiguous" force. It is powerful and massive and sometimes behaves with almost human cognition, so it is easy to project human malice into its actions, but its removal of Ahab's leg and Boomer's arm is labelled by the surgeon Bunger as "awkwardness" (p. 368) and not malice at all. When met head on, it is blind, but its lack of eyes on the front of its massive head does not diminish its power; it becomes a potent "battering ram." Its brain is comparatively small, but Ishmael points out that its spinal column, made of the same material, is massive. Ambiguities multiply, with the final result that the whale becomes a gigantic puzzle. Man's relation with God as suggested by the symbol of the whale in *Moby-Dick* is slightly different from the relationship postulated in the Book of Job in that the ambiguity is more fully emphasized, but the basic meaning remains the same: in the face of the tremendous power and mystery of the whale, man is pitifully insignificant; so also, facing the reality of God, man is also pitifully insignificant.

The Book of Job also introduces the question of unjustified suffering, clearly applicable to Ahab's
plight, since that is the cause of his fanatic rebellion against the message of the Book of Job. Again the ideal is humility: Job must learn that lesson before any other in order to remain the upright man that he is; in the Book of Job, man is seen as the noble questioner, the pose which Ahab assumes as well, but in the end Job accepts the power of God as a just answer. Ahab, in contrast, does not learn humility: he "cries out against God" and remains pridefully rebellious.

The Job and Jonah paradigms are present throughout the novel as clues and explanatory guides for the interpretation of Melville's themes. Given these paradigms, the reader can recognize the error of Ahab's actions: he is committing the sin of pride, the sin which Jonah and Job must overcome to remain morally sound. But Melville is not satisfied with a simple identification of that sin through such models. Instead, he carries the themes much farther dramatically, by means of a series of parodies that identify Ahab as a distorted, inverted form of Christ.

In fact, Christian parody is one of Melville's most important satiric techniques: it plays a major role in almost all of the rest of Melville's novels. Ahab is the first (or perhaps the second, since Taji is guilty of much the same set of misconceptions) of Melville's characters who play Christ. In each case, the reason for the use of such inverted Christian imagery is the same: Melville can find no better way to illustrate the failure of the
prideful man to influence his world than by having him parody the actions and words of Christ, the redeemer of mankind, with ironic results.

That Ahab plays Christ is first of all apparent from several allusions in the novel. At the time of his first appearance, Ishmael says of him: "And not only that, but moody stricken Ahab stood before them with a crucifixion in his face; in all the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe" (p. 111). Later, at the Black Eucharist, Ahab himself mimes Christ's words: he says, "'Now, three to three, ye stand. Commend the murderous chalices! Bestow them, ye who are now made parties to this indissoluble league'" (p. 146). He wears the "Iron Crown of Lombardy," and he imagines himself crowned with thorns: "'Tis iron--that I know--not gold. 'Tis split, too--that I feel; the jagged edge galls me so, my brain seems to beat against the solid metal'" (p. 147). And, finally, as critics often point out, Ahab's last words are an ironic parody of the words of Christ: he says, "'Thus, I give up the spear!'" (p. 468).

In addition to having Ahab mimic Christ in words and in actions, Melville also introduces important sacramental parodies in Moby-Dick in which Ahab functions as a Satanic high priest, an "anti-Christ." Ahab's baptism is a baptism into evil; the pagan harpooneers drink their own blood at the Black Eucharist; and Fedallah, the devil figure, seems to preside over both these events. The inversion of the
rituals which represent rebirth and redemption into Satanic devil-worshipping ceremonies illustrates the extent to which Ahab's adoption of the pose of Christ can only be a parody. However well-intentioned Ahab may be in his desire to destroy the White Whale, he is sacrilegiously overstepping the boundaries of the human being in attempting the destruction of Moby-Dick, since the Job and Jonah paradigms identify the whale as an agent of God.

Christian parody thus functions in *Moby-Dick* as a form of high burlesque. An ideal model is evoked, Christ or Job or Jonah, especially when Melville's characters act or speak in ways which recall that model. But the resemblance is always ironic, and it only serves to heighten the reader's awareness of the contrast between that character and the model. Although Ahab may mimic Christ's words, he is so un-Christ-like that his mimicry is correctly judged to be a perversion of the meaning behind them. In this way, Melville clarifies his themes by supplying the reader with valuable "keys" to evaluate more accurately than would otherwise be possible serious errors in judgment and actions.

Melville employs satire not only in the descriptions of the actual actions of the novel; of equal importance in understanding the themes of *Moby-Dick* is an understanding of the narrator Ishmael. And the sections of the novel in which the voice of Ishmael is most clearly heard are the chatty, rather rambling descriptive chapters in which
Ishmael shows us the whale, through the various interpretive tools which man has at his disposal, experience, observation, reading, indirect reports, and intuition. These parts of the novel also suggest that man's ability to understand the whale is vastly inadequate. Despite elaborate descriptions and analyses, the whale remains basically unknowable, and the theme of the limited nature of man's epistemology emerges.

Melville considers first the least adequate means of "knowing" whales: second-hand reports. All the various pictures and stories Ishmael has encountered on the subject are incorrect. Melville says, "You must needs conclude that the great Leviathan is that one creature in the world which must remain unpainted to the last" (p. 228). Melville devotes in fact several chapters to illustrating this point, particularly the series of chapters beginning with "Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales." Ishmael cannot trust the reports of others as a means of understanding the whale, and Melville describes extensively the errors committed by the various men who have attempted to depict the whale.

It is not too surprising that reports on the whale are inadequate, since second-hand reports are often exaggerated or distorted. But when the narrator leads us to see the whale through his own "first-hand" observations, we might expect a more accurate description. Ishmael tries to give us such an account: systematically classifying
whales in "Cetology," measuring the skeleton of a whale and even dissecting one in "A Bower in the Arsacides." The careful attempts to describe the whale accurately through the techniques of modern science might be expected to give us a clearer understanding of whales.

Unfortunately, the use of empirical techniques yields no better knowledge of whales than do indirect reports. The skeleton is carefully measured, but Ishmael points out that it does not resemble the actual whale at all. In "Cetology," he sets up a system of classification but after classifying the whale, he knows no more about it than before; moreover, the classification is incomplete: "I now leave my cetological System standing thus unfinished" (p. 127), says Ishmael. The dissection of the whale supplies some information, but that information is misleading because the subject is only a cub, not a full-grown specimen. Even visual descriptions fail; the whale can scarcely be observed except in part, since it is almost impossible to see a living whale in its entirety.

If the senses yield little insight into the true nature of the whale, there still remains one more source of knowledge: intuition, the all-important tool of the transcendentalists. Perhaps if Ishmael cannot understand the whale by reading about it, or looking at its pictures, or even by dissecting it, he can through the device of insight discover it. Ishmael advances this idea in the novel: he is by nature inclined to seek transcendent
meaning in natural experiences and delights in metaphor. However, as Milton Stern points out, Melville offers a highly critical view of this kind of knowledge-seeking. Thought which is not grounded in the realities of life can cause man to plunge off into empty nothingness, as "The Masthead" chapter suggests. Moreover, the strongest believer in transcendentalism in the novel is Ahab! Melville's point is clear: if observation is an inadequate method of seeking understanding because it fails to give man "the whole picture" of a whale, intuition is an equally unacceptable method because it forces man to turn inward and practice "self-reliance"—trust his own feelings and impressions. This is of course exactly what Ahab does, and the result is disaster. When he trusts only his own insights, man must assume that those insights are correct, but our experiences show that as often as not they are incorrect. Intuition can never be a wholly satisfactory way of finding knowledge.

The final meaning of the descriptive meditative analyses of the whale which Ishmael offers the reader is thus the same as that of the Job and Jonah paradigms:

the whale, as a symbol of man's experience of God, is unknowable and incomprehensible. Man's attempts to master the whale are limited by his inability to fully grasp the meaning of the whole experience. Once this basic characteristic of the whale is established, Ahab's audacity in his "fiery hunt" becomes apparent.

It is a little inadequate to describe the satiric elements in Moby-Dick only by analyzing models, however. There is also as in White-Jacket a tonal dimension to the satire. The following pattern recurs in the novel: dramatic action occurs, followed by Ishmael's reactions to that action which are characterized by comic overstatement and the cheerful self-mockery of the "hyena" pose. This commentary effectively reduces and undermines the pretentious, self-consciously tragic pose of Ahab. The whale as described by Ishmael is an ambiguous creature characterized by both magnificence and blubber; the reader is apt to be struck more than once with the impression that Ahab, Ishmael, and the rest of the crew are caught up in a tremendous cosmic joke, at man's expense and resulting from man's folly.

The presentation of the notion of a "cosmic joke" is in fact recurrent in Moby-Dick. It is the message of the Jonah chapter and of the Queen Mab chapter. Ahab entertains the idea sometimes himself when he engages in verbal play with the carpenter, as "manmaker," projecting him into the role of God as Ahab envisions him, a foolish
"bungler," a "pudding-head," a "blockhead," to be insulted and mocked. A more extensive development of the same motif also occurs in another primarily satiric chapter, "Leg and Arm: The Pequod Meets the Samuel Enderby."

This is a symbolic gam in which Ahab is confronted with another sea captain whose experiences with Moby-Dick duplicate his own. This "Boomer/Bunger" chapter is another metaphysical puzzle, full of implied associations and ambiguous meaning. Both Captain Boomer and Ahab have lost limbs to Moby-Dick; both men have thus experienced an "insult" which Ahab chooses to believe comes from God. Yet, their reactions are very different: while Ahab's response is self-consciously tragic, Boomer interprets the whole experience as a grand joke, even labeling Bunger, the surgeon who removed his arm, as a great practical joker.

In the chapter entitled "The Hyena," Ishmael has already acknowledged the existence of one such great practical joker—God. Is it then possible that Bunger is Melville's type of God? This is the idea advanced by John Humma, who sees Bunger as Melville's God-figure, right down to the hole in his head.18 There are some associations developed between God and Bunger in this chapter, although it is very short; Ishmael says that

Bunger has been a preacher and describes him as "imper­turbable" and "godly-looking" (p. 367). These allusions suggest the tantalizing possibility that in the Boomer/ Bunger relationship Melville is presenting a parody of man's relationship to God.

But to say that there are associations between Bunger and God is not to say that Melville is accusing God of being a "bungler." It is possible to see in this chapter another working out of the Job paradigm, since the chapter combines a presentation of suffering with a problematic treatment of the issues of acceptance and rebellion in man. If Bunger is seen as a type of God, his comment on the "amputation" only confuses the meaning of these events, since he attributes the suffering of Ahab and Boomer not to malice but to sheer "awkwardness" on the whale's part. Moreover, the chapter offers two versions of Boomer's experience--his own and that of Bunger, and the reader is not told which interpretation is correct. Is it Boomer who tells the truth, when he calls Bunger a knave and a liar? Or is it Bunger who tells the truth, in his explanations of the whale's actions? The blind folly of man interpreting his own experiences and attempting to act on that interpretation is demonstrated in the confused pandemonium and unreliable accusations of this puzzling chapter. Boomer in his person combines the responses of acceptance and rebellion: he has had installed on his ivory arm a club hammer with which he once tried to knock
Bunger's brain out—a parody of Ahab's "kicking against the pricks." But at the same time he is a jovial character who adopts freely the hyena view of existence. Like the Plotinus Plinlimmon chapters in Pierre, this chapter contains no solution to the central ambiguity of Moby-Dick, but simply a restatement of the problem. The relationship between God and man as exhibited in Moby-Dick can only remain problematical; because of man's epistemological limitations and selfishness, there can be no clear resolution.

Man is thus a victim of the practical joke played on him by the universal practical joker, a joke based on his easy deception through his senses and emotions. Although once the reader has completed the novel he may respond with a sympathetic awareness that a tragedy of sorts has occurred, there is also at all times the slightly teasing feeling that the tragedy is the result of man's folly rather than the work of the gods.

Thus, in Melville's sea novels, the use of satire shifts slightly, as it becomes the more flexible tool of a novelist fond of "mighty themes." While the satiric methods found in Typee, Omoo, and Mardi are traditional ones, the more sophisticated use which Melville puts satiric techniques to as a tool for characterization in Redburn, White-Jacket, and Moby-Dick brings him closer to the unique forms which those devices will assume in Melville's two full-fledged mature satires, Pierre and
The Confidence-Man.
CHAPTER 3

PIERRE

In *Pierre: or The Ambiguities*, Melville's first novel after *Moby-Dick*, satire is used effectively as a tool of characterization. In this novel, Melville's themes are embodied in Pierre's experiences, and it is absolutely essential that we as readers respond to Pierre with both sympathy and amused detachment. To a large extent, this ambivalent reader-response is affected through Melville's satiric treatment of his protagonist.

Like Melville's other primarily satiric works, *Mardi* and *The Confidence-Man*, *Pierre* is for many readers difficult and problematic. The heavily satiric Saddle Meadows portion of the novel can easily be misread if the reader is not alert to Melville's clues that the "summer" world of Pierre and Lucy is being ridiculed. Moreover, even if the reader acknowledges the satiric intent, it is possible to accuse Melville of indiscriminately mixing passages offering tragic insights into the nature of the world and passages containing bombast or grotesque parody. Most important, Melville's techniques of characterization and theme development in *Pierre* are extremely complex and place strident demands on the reader. The central character is
often so ambiguous that the reader's attitude toward him also becomes uncomfortably uncertain, and the judgments of critics sometimes reflect this confusion: Melville purposefully presents Pierre both as a sympathetic character who strives against Fate and human mediocrity to right what he believes to be the evil in the world and as a character whose pretensions and delusions are ridiculous and whose actions are destructive. When Pierre calls himself the "fool of virtue" at the end of the novel, Melville emphasizes these apparently contradictory tendencies, and his novel carefully sustains the difficult tension between Pierre as knight of virtue and Pierre as destructive fool. This is accomplished by means of satiric characterization techniques which attempt to keep Pierre's dual nature continuously before the reader.

Part of the difficulty in dealing with Pierre is due to its multi-level structure. The novel is in some ways traditional; Melville adopts the narrative method of presenting a complication which results in a series of rising actions followed by a climax and a series of falling actions. Though the plot is melodramatic, it is still logical; the action is based on clear cause and effect relationships. Simultaneously, Pierre is more a novel of character than a novel of action through Melville's emphasis on Pierre's psychological make-up and his developing consciousness. The action also takes place against a mythic framework in which Christian allegory becomes a
paradigm against which Pierre's actions can be "read" and judged, an aid to the interpretation of external and psychological "events." Because of the complexity of the novel, Melville must characterize Pierre at a number of levels, including dramatic, psychological, and allegoric ones. At each of these levels, satire plays an important role in revealing theme and character.

At the dramatic level, Pierre is characterized mostly by satiric comparisons with other characters. One critic has observed that the gams which take place in Moby-Dick and which serve to measure Ahab's character are replaced in this novel by the various people Pierre encounters who help to explain Pierre's purposes and actions. These characters are mainly "playmates" from Pierre's "summer" days, young men of about his own age who resemble him closely in background and position but who seem markedly different in other ways. Glen Stanly, Fred Tartan, and Charlie Millthorpe all are presented as "foils" against which Pierre's strengths and weaknesses can be more accurately judged. In many cases, these "foils" serve a satiric function as they provide a means for Melville to subject Pierre to ridicule.

The satire in these comparisons is very different from the humorous mockery which Melville employs in Mardi.

1 Stern, p. 188.
It is also different from the satire found in the sea novels, in which Melville's departure from a "straight" narrative is signalled by a stylistic shift, like the shift from serious narrative to mock heroic narrative in *White-Jacket*. It is closest in form to the kind of religious parody developed in *Moby-Dick*. Melville offers the reader a critique of his characters in which the most important satiric technique is ironic parallelism. In *Pierre*, the reader sees striking resemblances between Pierre and Glen, Fred, and Charlie--resemblances which are somewhat incongruous because in each case Pierre is in other ways very different from these characters, who are all lesser men. Yet, the reader is forced to make the connections despite these differences. The effect of these comparisons is to ridicule Pierre's heroic pose; the resemblances are generally reductive since each of these three characters embodies one of Pierre's limitations. They thus become parodies of the central character of the novel.

Mildred Travis has called Glen Stanly the dark "alter-ego" of Pierre. The two cousins are in many ways doubles. Glen is the only other male survivor of the family; he is about the same age as Pierre; like Pierre, he is at the

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start of the novel the heir to "a noble property" (p. 216). He has shared with Pierre "a more than cousinly attachment" (p. 216). Even his name is a mirror image of Pierre's, "Stanly" having as its root the same meaning as "Pierre," that is, "stone." Like Pierre, Glen has been a suitor to Lucy Tartan, and after Pierre is gone, he resumes this courtship and even inherits Pierre's ancestral home in his place. Thinking about Glen's possession of Saddle Meadows, Pierre regards him as a kind of reincarnation of himself: "Indeed, situated now as he was Glen would seem all the finest part of Pierre, without any of Pierre's shame; would almost seem Pierre himself--what Pierre had once been to Lucy... the great manly beauty of Glen, possessing a strong related similitude to Pierre's, might raise in Lucy's heart associations, which would lead her at least to seek--if she could not find--solace for one now regarded as dead and gone to her forever, in the devotedness of another, who would notwithstanding almost seem as that dead one brought back to life" (p. 288); so Pierre is haunted by "this phantom of Glen transformed into the seeming semblance of himself" (p. 289). Passages such as these reveal that Pierre and Glen are indeed paired characters.

With the creation of such a duplicate character,

Melville develops a form of ironic low burlesque--Pierre's disconcerting resemblance to the "villain" of the novel undercuts his heroic pretensions. Glen is an ironic alter-ego, an imperfect copy of Melville's protagonist who reveals his strengths and weaknesses more clearly than does Pierre himself. Although Pierre, repeatedly described as having more "heart" than the average man, seems superior to the "heartless" Glen, a "mean villain" who is labelled by Pierre "'Hound, and base blot upon the general humanity!'" (p. 239), Glen also embodies Pierre's most alarming failings: his pride and his lack of self-awareness. Pierre feels toward him "something strangely akin to that indefinable detestation which one feels for any impostor who has dared to assume one's own name and aspect in any equivocal or dishonorable affair; an emotion greatly intensified if this impostor be known for a mean villain at bottom, and also, by the freak of nature to be almost the personal duplicate of the man whose identity he assumes" (p. 289). This equivocal passage suggests the dual role of Glen Stanly in the novel; because the "heartful" Pierre is a vastly more likeable character than the haughty and ostentatious Glen, the reader sympathizes with Pierre over his personal enemy, and their conflict places them in opposite roles as "hero" and "villain." Ironically, however, this enemy is in some ways also an embodiment of the false qualities in Pierre himself. If Glen is an impostor, it is evident by the end of the novel that Pierre has also deceived
himself and others, and of course the tragic weakness of Pierre which leads to this blindness is his personal egotism. This resemblance enables the reader to understand the extent to which Pierre's murder of Glen—"his own hand" having "extinguished his house in slaughtering the only unoutlawed being by the name of Glendinning" (p. 360)—represents a kind of ironic psychological suicide. The reader's understanding of the character of Pierre is thus enhanced by the parody of Pierre which is offered in the person of Glen Stanly.

Glen's ally in the feud with Pierre is Fred Tartan, Lucy's brother. Fred is not as fully drawn as Glen, but he also becomes for the reader a device for measuring Pierre's character. Fred's motivations in seeking to fight Pierre are ironically Pierre's own—he challenges Pierre in the role of loving protector to a gentle sister. The very idealistic demands that Pierre makes on himself are exactly those which lead his early "playmate" to go against him. The irony of Pierre's assumed role as "knight of virtue" is emphasized when he makes war on a foe who himself represents the same virtues. The forces which Pierre confronts in his war against evil are paradoxically Glen and Fred, both ironic mirror images of himself.

The significance of this somewhat ambiguous resemblance between Pierre and Fred, whom one critic has called
the "conventional brother," is particularly illustrated when Pierre, upon receiving Fred's and Glen's challenge, himself parodies an earlier scene in the novel. Responding to the note, he exclaims, "'Oh, Glen! oh, Fred! most fraternally do I leap to your rib-crushing hugs! Oh, how I love ye two, that yet can make me lively hate, in a world which elsewise only merits stagnant scorn!'" (p. 35?). This passage recalls an earlier scene from Pierre's "summer" world at Saddle Meadows: caught in an embrace with Lucy and challenged by her very militant brothers, Pierre exclaims, "'My darling brothers and sister!'" and ends by "hilariously embracing them all again" (p. 29). The same action here results from exactly opposite motivations in Pierre— one love, the other hate; one joyful, the other miserable. In these passages, the ideal of brotherly love is transformed into hate—the "hugs" have become "rib-crushing." By the end of the novel, Pierre's idealistic faith in the power of love has become a mockery, and his idealistic assumption of the role of protector/brother has been transformed into a cruel joke on himself.

A third early "playmate" of Pierre appears in the novel—Charlie Millthorpe, whose position and actions also make him an ironic alter-ego of Pierre. As in the case of

Pierre and Glen, the backgrounds and present situations of Pierre and Charlie are similar. Like Pierre, Charlie has an aristocratic heritage; he is descended from an "old knight." Like Glen and Fred, he is "of Pierre's own age" (p. 276). Like Pierre, he chooses an exalted literary life, believing that to be the only satisfactory way of earning a living, and dwells in the old church of the Apostles following an "idealistic" philosophy. He is responsible for the well-being of his mother and three innocent sisters: Pierre in time also comes to be surrounded by three girls who are in some ways like sisters to him. Like Pierre, that "rustic knight" is also proud; in fact, bizarre as Charlie often appears ("minus head," as Pierre calls him), his enthusiasms often parody Pierre's. He says at one point, "...it's my opinion the world is all wrong. Hist, I say--an entire mistake. Society demands an Avatar,--a Curtius, my boy! to leap into the fiery gulf, and by perishing himself, save the whole empire of men! Pierre, I have long renounced the allurements of life and fashion. Look at my coat, and see how I spurn them! Pierre! but, stop, have you ever a shilling? let's take a cold cut here--it's a cheap place; I go here sometimes. Come, let's in"
(p. 281). The similarity between these sentiments and those expressed by Pierre is apparent: the comparison reduces Pierre's pretentious idealism through the last sentence which undercuts the ethereal, heroic pose of the first sentences with a non-heroic reference to poverty and
the demands of the physical world. The absurdities of Pierre's idealistic position are highlighted by Charlie's ludicrous ravings.

As is the case with Fred and Glen, the similarities between Pierre and Charlie thus undercut Pierre's heroic pose by revealing his limitations and emphasizing his ridiculousness. Moreover, in addition to revealing similarities which are damaging to Pierre's idealistic position, Melville also uses the differences between the two young men to demonstrate Pierre's limitations, for Pierre is in some ways a lesser man than even the foolish Charlie. After Charlie has paid off Pierre's debtors, Pierre himself recognizes Charlie's natural goodness: he says, "'Plus heart, minus head!'... 'the god that made Millthorpe was both a better and a greater than the god that made Napoleon or Byron..."' (p. 320). And Charlie has, however unknowingly, adapted to his environment: he survives while Pierre does not, protecting his mother and sisters in a way which contrasts with Pierre's ultimate destruction of all those around him.

Yet, Charlie Millthorpe is also a means for Melville to highlight Pierre's greater potentiality and greater insight. Charlie has his limitations too; sensing Pierre's danger but fearing to appear too obtrusive, he does not stop Pierre when he might have been able to save him. And the narrator further suggests the limitations of the Charlie Millthorpes of the world when he comments about
him: "At any rate, that certain harmless presumption and innocent egotism...these had by no means retarded him: for it is often to be observed of the shallower men, that they are the very last to despond. It is the glory of the bladder that nothing can sink it; it is the reproach of a box of treasure, that once overboard it must down" (p. 280).

Pierre, by implication the "box of treasure," may have the tragic end, but he is of greater potential worth than Charlie Millthorpe, the "bladder" that cannot sink: he is the "deep" man as opposed to the "shallow" man.

Thus, Melville uses satiric character foils to reveal Pierre's limitations and, paradoxically, to increase the reader's sympathy for him at the same time. In each of these cases the parody reduces Pierre's pretended heroism. We are given a character who gives up family, friends, and fortune for an ideal, with a dramatic flourish—but entirely for egotistical reasons. Through these characters, Melville reveals Pierre's limitations—his pride, his falseness, his capacity for producing evil—much as he uses the mock heroic passages in *White-Jacket* to undercut the tragic potential which is part of the warrior world and to evoke in the reader an awareness of man's limited self-knowledge.

The characterization of Pierre is not accomplished only through personality contrasts, however; the novel also emphasizes Pierre's developing consciousness, his unrelenting journey deeper and deeper into his own spirit. In the presentation of Pierre's psychological development,
satire is also an important device. Melville traces Pierre's progression into self-knowledge by cataloguing his reactions to a series of mocking symbolic "faces" which function as self-caricatures, bringing him closer and closer to understanding his own character by embodying in exaggerated form his attitudes and qualities. Pierre is internally characterized by these enigmatic faces, as he is externally characterized by the events of the novel. They become satiric mirrors for Pierre, which enable the reader to see Pierre's weaknesses clearly and which enable Pierre to penetrate at least a little distance into his own personality.

The motif of the "mirror image" in fact is introduced quite early in the novel. Whether represented in a portrait, a vision, or an actual reflection in a glass, Pierre's "mirror" world is a device Melville frequently uses to call attention to his delusions and to highlight his realizations. Even in his happy world at Saddle Meadows before his discovery of Isabel, Pierre has an ominous insight into the falseness of his supposedly "heavenly" life. When "peeping into paradise," he catches a reflected glimpse of another dimension of reality: "Now, crossing the magic silence of the empty chamber, he caught the snow-white bed reflected in the toilet-glass. This rooted him. For one swift instant, he seemed to see in that one glance the two separate beds—the real one and the reflected one—and an unbidden, most miserable presentiment thereupon stole into
him" (p. 39). The premonition described in this passage foreshadows for Pierre discoveries which become increasingly painful as the novel progresses; even when he seems most unaware, the "sometimes moody" Pierre has epiphanies in which he recognizes a second reality in his "heavenly" world. The "two separate beds" prefigure other dual images in the novel: Pierre's portraits which trace his gradual dissolution as a human being, his father's various portraits, the "Cenci" of Guido and the portrait of the "Unknown Stranger." The mirror world is used as a device to suggest that reality is multi-faceted rather than simple, and, particularly in the early parts of the novel, to suggest the limitations of a one-sided view. Pierre is haunted by mysterious "faces" which are full of ambiguous meaning which "casts a baleful light" on Pierre's own foolishness and misconceptions. Thus, like the descriptions of Glen Stanly and Pierre's other "doubles," the mirror images add a dimension of ridicule to Melville's characterization of his protagonist.

The earliest "mirror images" Pierre confronts in the novel surround him at Saddle Meadows and are used to reveal Pierre's myopic, egotistical view of himself. The relation between Pierre and these early faces is narcissistic. He sees in them reflections of his own beauty and goodness, produced by the all-powerful emotion of love: "The eye is Love's own magic glass, where all things that are not of earth, glide in supernatural light...Love's eyes are holy
things; therein the mysteries of life are lodged; looking in each other's eyes, lovers see the ultimate secret of the worlds; and with thrills eternally untranslatable, feel that Love is god of all" (p. 33). Of course, Love is Pierre's first false god; the limitations of this lover's vision are suggested when Pierre repeatedly sees himself in the "beautiful" faces around him. Pierre's "eyes of love" are remarkably egocentric.

Of course, we readers see far more than Pierre ever does. Although Pierre gradually achieves some understanding of his own personality and limitations, he never reaches the reader's level, even at the end of the novel. In particular, because he is blinded by the "summer" world in the first third of the novel, he does not recognize the irony of many of these early "reflections." For example, within the first few pages of the novel Melville presents the reader with the image of Pierre and Lucy "silently but ardently eying each other, beholding mutual reflections of a boundless admiration and love" (p. 4); with this single reference, Melville establishes for the reader the explanation for their relationship. The love of Pierre and Mrs. Glendinning is similarly revealed to be a kind of mutual self-love: Mrs. Glendinning "in the clearcut lineaments and noble air of her son, saw her own graces strangely translated into the opposite sex" (p. 5). Even the portraits which cover the walls of the Glendinning mansion are admired by Pierre because they reflect his own pride--
the faces of his ancestors suggest the grandeur of his heritage: Pierre is named for his father who is named for his grandfather; he even re-enacts the role of his grandfather, as he drives an ancestral phaeton drawn by horses which are descended from his grandfather's horses. Pierre is happy because he is the center of his own universe and all the images around him only serve to direct his attention back to himself: "Pierre found himself surrounded by numerous kinsmen and kinswomen, yet companioned by no surnamed male Glendinning, but the duplicate one reflected to him in the mirror. But in his more wonted natural mood, this thought was not wholly sad to him. Nay, sometimes it mounted into an exultant swell. For in the ruddiness, and flushfulness, and vaingloriousness of his youthful soul, he fondly hoped to have a monopoly of glory in capping the fame-column, whose tall shaft had been erected by his noble sires" (p. 8). In his "summer" world, Pierre's mirrors are filled with his proud self-image.

Although Pierre is not always aware of the mocking implications of such an egocentric vision, the reader sees many illustrations of the unsatisfactory nature of this point of view. In particular, after reading the rest of

5 The sexual imagery of this passage of course heightens the ambiguity. It is because of his father's sexual indiscretions that Pierre finds himself in his great predicament. Moreover, Pierre does indeed "top the pedestal," by himself either engaging in or coming dangerously close to incest.
the novel, the reader can look back on these early parts and evaluate Pierre's failings. Pierre's resemblance to his parents and ancestors is particularly damaging: although Pierre proudly sees himself in his mother and father and grandfather, the reader sees that these resemblances are not entirely complimentary. His mother is a haughty, egocentric woman who is neither as good-hearted nor as likeable as Pierre. His father's apparently adulterous relation with Isabel's mother is a blot on that perfect man whom Pierre regards as divine. Pierre's equivocal "looking-glass" relation with his parents thus reveals some of his own faults: he is, like his mother, proud and unyielding. And, like his father, whom he resembles so much, he will later in the novel engage in a highly equivocal sexual relationship, which will destroy a number of lives.

The second major section of the novel deals with Pierre's growing acquaintance with these truths, an acquaintance which develops in direct proportion to his growing relationship with Isabel. It is of course significant that Isabel first appears as a haunting face, which disturbs Pierre's narcissistic vision of the world. Lucy says of that face, early in the novel: "As a fixed basilisk, with eyes of steady, flaming mournfulness, that face this instant fastens me" (p. 37). Isabel's face, along with the chair portrait of Pierre's father, of which it is also a mirror image, becomes a catalyst in Pierre's development of self-knowledge. Beginning to recognize the one-sidedness
of his life at Saddle Meadows, Pierre himself employs the image of a face: he says, addressing Fate, "Thou Black Knight, that with visor down, thus confrontest me, and mockest at me; Lo! I strike through thy helm, and I will see thy face, be it Gorgon!—" (pp. 65-66). The irony of this passage does not become apparent until much later in the novel, in the Enceladus passage, when Pierre, whose name means "stone," is symbolically turned to stone by his unrelenting search for the darker side of reality.

During this middle part of the novel, the "faces" Pierre encounters lead him to adopt a "dark" view of reality which is an exact reversal of his previous bright view. He recognizes the "infinite haughtiness" in his sainted mother: he says, "Me she loveth with pride's love; in me she thinks she seeth her own curled and haughty beauty; before my glass she stands,—pride's priestess—and to her mirrored image, not to me, she offers up her offerings of kisses" (p. 90). Similarly, Pierre recognizes evil in his heretofore "divine" father, and he acknowledges the inability of his society to protect and offer help to Delly Ulver and to Isabel. Pierre's emotions in this section of the novel, triggered by Isabel's presence, result in an almost complete reversal of all his assumptions and expectations: his "most miserable presentiment" becomes his new reality.

The second section of the novel thus brings Pierre to an awareness which includes the possibility of evil as an inevitable part of reality. However, this awareness is
by no means unlimited. Pierre is able to recognize evil in others, but he ignores the possibility that evil might exist in himself as well. He has not yet discovered that the "faces" show him not only other people, but may also serve as caricatures of himself. He assumes the role of "knight of virtue," adopting in the process a heroic attitude which recalls the heroic background of White-Jacket, and he makes war on the evil represented by his father and his mother and their uncharitable world without recognizing his own weakness and fallibility.

This heroic pose must be undercut in order for the reader to understand what really happens in the novel. To accomplish this end, Melville subjects Pierre to satiric attack. The reader remains one step ahead of Pierre in the process of discovery, and Melville presents other "mirror images" which Pierre does not recognize as epiphanies but which reveal that Pierre too has his "dark" side. Pierre unconsciously recognizes this ambiguity when he comments about Isabel: "Thou seemest to know something of me that I know not of myself" (p. 41). Significantly, viewing his features in the mirror as he reads Isabel's letter, Pierre experiences a sense of discovering himself anew: "Pierre... started at a figure in the opposite mirror. It bore the outline of Pierre, but now strangely filled with features transformed, and unfamiliar to him; feverish eagerness, fear, and nameless forebodings of ill!" (p. 62). Of course, Pierre does not grasp the meaning of this transformation:
he directs his battle outward against external evil rather than inward and thus ignores his own resemblance to his father. But Melville intends the reader to see the similarity, as the narrator points out that Pierre's aunt "seemed to see, transformed into youth once more, the likeness, and very soul of her brother in the fair, inheriting brow of Pierre" (p. 73).

The "mirror image" identification suggested between Pierre and his father becomes particularly ironic when Pierre, having decided to sacrifice his "summer" world to an heroic ideal, the honorable acceptance and protection of his "sister" and the preservation of his father's honor, burns his father's portrait: "Steadfastly Pierre watched the first crispings and blackenings of the painted scroll, but started as suddenly unwinding from the burnt string that had tied it, for one swift instant, seen through the flame and smoke, the upwrithing portrait tormentedly stared at him in beseeching horror, and then, wrapped in one broad sheet of oily fire, disappeared forever" (p. 198). After witnessing this destruction, Pierre impulsively tries to save the portrait, but only burns his hand. This scene, with his father's face twisted in horror, recalls Pierre's earlier transformation before the mirror, and it foreshadows the conclusion of the novel. In Pierre, the cycle of idealization, disillusionment, and destruction is recurrent. Blind to his own potential for evil, Pierre turns inward when he decides to burn his father's portrait and rejoices
in finding himself "free to do his own self-will and present fancy to whatever end" (p. 199). The full irony of this self-reliance does not become evident until the portrait of Pierre's father is recreated in his own portrait at the conclusion of the novel--Lucy's "skeletal" drawing surrounded by "ashes" and "charcoal dust" is prefigured in his father's burning portrait. The central part of the novel is thus transitional. While recognizing human fallibility in his divine father and in the heavenly Saddle Meadows, Pierre does not extend his recognition to include the possibility of evil in himself and is thus guilty of self-deception. The reader, however, is aware of the satiric resemblance between Pierre and the dark faces he encounters; he is able to discern Pierre's lack of perspective and inadequacies because of the complexity of Melville's use of reductive characterization.

During the final part of the novel which takes place after Pierre has arrived in the city, the faces he meets become more and more ambiguous and mocking until they reach an almost grotesque satiric intensity. The first satiric "mirror image" Pierre encounters in the city is that of Plotinus Plinlimmon, the supposed author of the pamphlet Pierre reads on his way to his new life.

The significance of the Plinlimmon pamphlet has perhaps provoked the greatest amount of critical disagreement about Pierre's themes. Some commentators see this "philosophy" as the key to the novel, the "Truth" that Pierre cannot
understand; that is, Christ-like action in this world is doomed to failure, and all man can aim for is a "virtuous expediency." Critics taking this view dismiss Plinlimmon's "repulsiveness" as a necessary defect resulting from his "horological" reality. Other commentators see Plotinus as a device for elevating Pierre's sympathetic stature: the "philosopher" is after all something of a hypocrite who has not even written his own pamphlet. Moreover, his definition of "virtuous expediency" is superficial and self-seeking. The narrator denies that the pamphlet offers any insight: he calls it "more the excellently illustrated restatement of a problem, than the solution to the problem itself" (p. 210). The pamphlet is obviously of some importance in understanding what happens to Pierre in the novel; it is just as obviously an ambiguous clue at best.

But if the issues discussed in the pamphlet provide no simple "key" to the theme of the novel, it is clear that Plinlimmon himself as a character is another satiric "face" with which Pierre must deal. Since, in a number of ways, the philosopher is an absurd caricature of Pierre, Plotinus Plinlimmon is an excellent illustration of Melville's use of satiric caricature to reveal his characters. Like the descriptions of Bunger in *Moby-Dick*, the descriptions of him are full of symbolic overtones. He is a Christ-figure of sorts, the leader of the Apostles, and he is a "mirror image" of Pierre who seems to know the "Truth" that Pierre is struggling to see. The narrator presents his pamphlet
as a possible solution to the puzzle of the novel. Yet, Plotinus himself is a symbol of that puzzle as well—an ambiguous figure whose face mocks Pierre and who is vaguely "repulsive" at the same time that he is fascinating, a "non-benevolent" poetic philosopher. Any meaning that is contained in his words is effectively cancelled by his bizarre personality. His one clear statement sums up his enigmatic personality: when a "noble scholar" says to him, "'I see,'" he answers, "'I am afraid that you do not see'" (p. 291), and then retreats into his inscrutability. As his name suggests, he is both a mystic seer and a clown. The same ambiguous combination is found in Pierre.

What Pierre sees in the face of Plinlimmon is exactly what he sees in Lucy's mirror--his own developing doubts about the rightness of his heroic gesture and his motivations. The Plinlimmon image, which he sees through his own "glass," is mocking, suggesting the possibility that Pierre is a self-deluded fool: "Vain! vain! vain! said the face to him. Fool! fool! fool! said the face to him. Quit! quit! quit! said the face to him...Ass! ass! ass!...'Ay,' shuddered Pierre, 'the face knows that Isabel is not my wife! And that seems the reason it leers'" (p. 293). In hinting at those possibilities, the face becomes the first reversal of Pierre's idealistic view of himself, just as the face of Isabel had earlier triggered a disillusionment with the divine world of Saddle Meadows.

Like other satiric mirror images in the novel, the
face of Plinlimmon thus reveals certain not-entirely-apparent aspects of Pierre's own personality: in some ways, it is an ironic reflection of Pierre's character, a parody of Pierre's heroic self-image. The equivocal syntax of the following sentence suggests this possibility: "Only through two panes of glass—his own and the stranger's—had Pierre hitherto beheld that remarkable face of repose,—repose neither divine nor human, nor any thing made up of either or both—but a repose separate and apart—a repose of a face by itself" (p. 291). The "two panes of glass" referred to in this passage, evoking an ambiguity which results from two meanings of "glass"—a window and a mirror—recall other dual images in the novel. In fact, Pierre and Plotinus share revealing similarities. Both assume the incompatibility of "divine" and "earthly" virtue, though Pierre has chosen to adopt Greenwich time and Plotinus China time. Having established this double set of values, both turn inward: Pierre makes himself a Christ-like victim of his own "enthusiasm" and Plotinus isolates himself through rejection of emotion and becomes a meaningless blank. Both approaches are in essence unrealistic and incredibly selfish.

Moreover, both Pierre and Plotinus hide the truth from themselves. Plinlimmon is Melville's first confidence-man, the false philosopher masquerading as the true one, and he is playing confidence-man to himself as well as to those around him. In describing Plotinus, the narrator
emphasizes the element of self-disguise: "Though the clothes worn by this man were strictly in accordance with the general style of any unobtrusive gentleman's dress, yet his clothes seemed to disguise this man. One would almost have said, his very face, the apparently natural glance of his very eye disguised this man" (p. 290). Ironically, however, Pierre is also a similar sort of confidence-man: the reader sees him repeatedly hiding his true motives and true feelings from himself and from those who love him. His mocking resemblance to the ridiculous Plinlimmon thus satirically demonstrates his self-deception.

The mockery Pierre fancies he sees in the face of Plotinus becomes more explicit in Pierre's dream of Enceladus, which also links the mythic structure of the novel with its psychological one. Stricken with a blindness which is perhaps reminiscent of Oedipus' blindness, Pierre "sees" the Delectable Mountains of Saddle Meadows turned into the Mount of Titans and, ironically, sees his own image appearing on the face of the giant Enceladus: "Foremost among them all, he saw a moss-turbaned, armless giant, who despairing of any other mode of wreaking his immitigable hate, turned his vast trunk into a battering-ram, and hurled his own arched-out ribs again and yet again against the invulnerable steep...That moment the phantom faced him; and Pierre saw Enceladus no more; but on the Titan's armless trunk, his own duplicate face and features magnificedly gleamed upon him with prophetic discomfiture and woe"
Enceladus thus becomes a grotesque caricature of Pierre.

The appropriateness of this image in clarifying Pierre's situation is explicitly stated by the narrator:

Old Titan's self was the son of incestuous Coelus and Terra, the son of incestuous Heaven and Earth. And Titan married his mother Terra, another and accumulatively incestuous match. And thereof Enceladus was one issue. So Enceladus was both the son and grandson of an incest; and even thus, there had been born from the organic blended heavenliness and earthliness of Pierre, another mixed, uncertain, heaven-aspiring, but still not wholly earth-emancipated mood; which again, by its terrestrial taint held down to its terrestrial mother, generated there the present doubly incestuous Enceladus within him; so that the present mood of Pierre—that reckless sky-assaulting mood of his, was nevertheless on one side the grandson of the sky. For it is according to eternal fitness, that the precipitated Titan should still seek to regain his paternal birthright even by fierce escalade. Wherefore whoso storms the sky gives best proof he came from thither! But whatso crawls contented in the moat before that crystal fort, shows it was born within that slime, and therefore forever will abide. (347)

Pierre's vision of his own face on the Enceladus rock clearly involves "an awakening" from "that ideal horror" to his "actual grief," as his idealistic, but entirely false, view of himself is replaced by a realistic recognition of the sorrow and pain which his war against evil has led him into. Having turned inward to his own self, a self unrealistically glorified by his pretensions, Pierre recognizes in the vision of Enceladus his own de-Christianization and "earthliness" and experiences some of the horror of his own potential for evil actions. Pierre is beginning to discover
that the "gorgon" he was seeking may be in himself, but, as Melville says, coming out of this vision, "He writhingly strove to assume an expression intended to be not uncheerful—though how indeed his countenance at all looked, he could not tell; for dreading some insupportably dark revelations in his glass, he had of late wholly abstained from appealing to it" (p. 347). This passage in which Pierre dreads his own potential is far removed from the passage cited earlier in which Pierre sees his reflection in his mirror as a source of pride because of his exclusive opportunity to "top" the "pedestal" of his ancestors.

The intensity of Pierre's Enceladus vision suggests that Pierre has an ominous sense of his own self-deception. However, the next "mirror image" which appears in the novel suggests the limitations of that self-knowledge. Pierre encounters a mysterious portrait of a stranger which both he and Isabel see as their father. This scene represents the most extensive development of the "mirror image" motif. In destroying the chair-portrait of his father, Pierre had fancied that he was destroying the dark side of reality. The discovery of this second portrait—a "resurrection" of the previous one—suggests the ever-present existence of that side of human nature. Moreover, because Isabel sees herself so strikingly mirrored in the painting, the ambiguous dark side of Pierre's present reality seems to focus on her—the object of his "idealistic"
"enthusiasm." Pierre's response to the portrait is revealing; he immediately distrusts his first assumption that Isabel is his sister, with of course a strong suggestion of ambiguity in his motivation; such a discovery would absolve him of his fancied "incestuousness." Yet, this distrust immediately leads Pierre into further ambiguities: if Isabel is not his sister, then his "grand enthusiasm" is a delusion, and the suffering it has caused his mother, Lucy, the Tartans, and Isabel is unjustifiable. Interpreted in this light, his actions are the result of the very terrestrial attractiveness of Isabel, and his "celestial" self-sacrifice is a blatantly foolish and selfish lie.

Even more than suggesting the ambiguousness of Pierre's actions, however, this scene emphasizes the extent to which he is still blind to his own limitations and guilt. The portrait of "The Stranger" is accompanied by its own "mirror image," Guido's portrait of Beatrice Cenci, which hangs on the wall opposite that of "The Stranger" and which Pierre and Isabel significantly do not notice. Like so many other dual images in the novel, these two paintings emphasize the complexity of Pierre's reality: the ambiguous smile of "The Stranger" who so closely resembles Pierre's father and Isabel is reflected in the deceptive angelicalness of Beatrice, who, like Pierre, has been led by Fate into committing incest and parricide and who like Pierre is the victim of her father's evil.
Yet Pierre does not see the second painting and thus never achieves the insight that, applied to his own position, would reveal that his own "virtuous enthusiasm" is not only infeasible because it places him at war with society (the message of the Plinlimmon pamphlet, which asserts that "Christ-like" action is doomed to failure in this world), but also may be a kind of delusion, that beauty and goodness may be a cloak for sinister intent, not only in others but also in himself. Pierre is denied a final epiphany which the reader experiences and dies still deluded by his pride, with only a few uncertain "loomings" of his own predicament.

The final caricature of Pierre is the skeletal portrait painted by Lucy which he sees just before he leaves to combat Glen and Fred:

The marble girl sat before her easel; a small box of pointed charcoal, and some pencils by her side; her painter's wand held out against the frame; the charcoal-pencil suspended in two fingers, while with the same hand, holding a crust of bread, she was lightly brushing the portrait-paper, to efface some ill-considered stroke. The floor was scattered with the bread-crumbs and charcoal-dust; he looked behind the easel, and saw his own portrait, in the skeleton. (357)

And Pierre exclaims: "'Dead embers of departed fires lit by thee, thou pale girl; with dead embers thou seekest to relume the flame of all extinguished love! Waste not so that bread; eat it—in bitterness!'" (p. 358). This portrait, suggesting death and destruction, represents the
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final irony of Pierre's self-discovery; in attempting to eliminate the "snake's nest" of his father's evil, Pierre destroys his mother, but he does not learn from the experience. In attempting to destroy the evil represented by Glen, ironically his own darker self, he destroys Isabel, Lucy, and himself.

The development of Pierre from a "laughing boy" to "a pensively smiling youth" to a "fiery enthusiast" to a distorted and damned earth giant is thus traced through psychological epiphanies and half-epiphanies, triggered by grotesque caricatures which increase Pierre's self-awareness while never completely destroying his delusions. At the psychological level, Pierre's character moves deeper and deeper into himself, becoming more and more ambiguous as the novel progresses: Pierre finally ends up so entangled in himself that he never reaches the knowledge he is seeking.

Finally, besides its dramatic and psychological structures, Melville's Pierre also has an allegorical dimension. During the course of the action, the narrator presents Pierre as an ironic Christ figure, a parody of Christ. This quite detailed identification results in an ambiguous reader response and also serves to connect the dramatic and psychological techniques of characterization employed by Melville in this novel.

The use of Christian imagery in the presentation of Pierre is obvious from the start of the novel. The
narrator says, "Nor had that pride and love which had so
bountifully provided for the youthful nurture of Pierre,
neglected his culture in the deepest element of all. It
had been a maxim with the father of Pierre, that all
gentlemanhood was vain; all claims to it preposterous and
absurd, unless the primeval gentleness and golden humanities
of religion had been so thoroughly wrought into the complex
texture of the character, that he who pronounced himself
gentleman, could also rightfully assume the meek, kingly
style of Christian. At the age of sixteen, Pierre partook
with his mother of the Holy Sacraments" (p. 6-7). Begin­
ning with this notion of Pierre as "Christian," the struc­
ture and style of the novel gradually create an implied
equation between Pierre and Christ.

The details contribute to that effect. Pierre's
mother's name is Mary. His grandfather is described as a
"sweet-hearted charitable Christian; in fact, a pure, cheer­
ful, childlike, blue-eyed, divine old man; in whose meek,
majestic soul the lion and the lamb embraced--fit image
of his God" (p. 30). His portrait on the wall "possessed
the heavenly persuasiveness of angelic speech; a glorious
gospel framed and hung upon the wall, and declaring to
all people, as from the Mount, that man is a noble, god-like
being, full of choicest juices, made up of strength and
beauty" (p. 30). Admiring Lucy, Pierre says, "'Thou art
my Heaven Lucy; and here I lie thy shepherd-king'" (p. 36),
a fairly explicit identification of himself as Christ.
Practically every page of this early part of the novel contributes to this Christian allegory.

As Pierre moves toward his "grand resolution," the identification between him and Christ becomes more and more striking. The narrator says of Pierre, "Then Pierre felt that deep in him lurked a divine unidentifiableness, that owned no earthly kith or kin" (p. 89). Commenting on Pierre's final decision, the narrator says, "Thus, in the Enthusiast to Duty, the heaven-begotten Christ is born; and will not own a mortal parent, and spurns and rends all human bonds" (p. 106). Pierre prays, "May heaven new-string my soul, and confirm me in the Christ-like feeling I first felt" (p. 106). Isabel continues the pattern: "'Not mere sounds of common words, but inmost tones of my heart's deepest melodies should now be audible to thee. Thou speakest to a human thing, but something heavenly should answer thee;--some flute heard in the air should answer thee; for sure thy most undreamed-of accents, Pierre, sure they have not been unheard on high. Blessings that are imageless to all mortal fancyings, these shall be thine for this'" (pp. 113-14). Or, in another example, she says to him, "'Thou art a visible token, Pierre, of the invisible angel-hoods, which in our darker hours we do sometimes distrust. The gospel of thy acts goes very far, my brother. Were all men like to thee, then were there no men at all,--mankind extinct in seraphim!'" (p. 156). This motif culminates in the parody of the Last Supper.
which concludes Pierre's second interview with Isabel:

"...Pierre, for thy dear deed thou art already sainted, ere thou be dead."

"Do saints hunger, Isabel?" said Pierre, striving to call her away from this. "Come, give me the loaf; but no, thou shalt help me, my sister.—Thank thee;—this is twice over the bread of sweetness.—Is this of thine own making, Isabel?"

"My own making, my brother."

"Give me the cup; hand it me with thine own hand. So:—Isabel, my heart and soul are now full of deepest reverence; yet I do dare to call this the real sacrament of the supper.—Eat with me."

They eat together without a single word; and without a single word, Pierre rose, and kissed her pure and spotless brow, and without a single word departed from the place. (162)

The effect of such extensive use of Christian imagery in the characterization of Pierre is to some degree to increase the reader's sympathy for him. Pierre appears as a self-sacrificing victim of virtue: when he suffers and indirectly causes the suffering of others, the reader sees that as the inevitable end of Christ-like action in the world: as Plotinus Plinlimmon says in his pamphlet:

"...whatever is really peculiar in the wisdom of Christ seems precisely the same folly to-day as it did 1850 years ago" (pp. 211-12). Pierre's Christ-like pose seems both to elevate him above the common man and to suggest that virtue in this world is doomed to destruction. For this reason, Lawrance Thompson believes that this novel
represents a direct challenge to God. Yet, while Melville retains throughout the novel reader sympathy for his apparently Christ-like hero, there are from the start such strikingly incongruous undercuttings of Pierre's Christ-likeness that by the time of the mock Last Supper, the reader recognizes Pierre's Christ-likeness as primarily ironic. As the Last Supper scene suggests, Pierre's "Grand Resolution" is almost a kind of blasphemy. Melville establishes these incongruities in a number of ways.

The first and most obvious of these techniques is stylistic. Pierre attributes religious significance to nature, to his family, to Lucy, and to his own actions, and habitually deifies everything and everybody in his world. Yet, this very indiscrimination becomes ridiculous—an unreal fiction, as for example in the quotation already cited in which Pierre sees Lucy as "Heaven" and himself as her "shepherd-king." Similarly, the narrator's hymn to love makes hyperbolic and sometimes ludicrous assertions about reality: "...far out at sea, no more the sailors tied their bowline-knots; their hands had lost their cunning; will they, nill they, Love tied love-knots

6 Thompson, Melville's Quarrel With God.

This hyperbolic style reveals the limitations of Pierre's "love"-worship. Pierre uses religion freely to suggest the beauty and superficial pleasures found in his "summer" world of Saddle Meadows; however, the narrator continuously mocks that world with such ridiculous images as eyes filled with fishwings and striped tigers and punctures the optimism of Pierre's "summer" vision with ominous foreshadowings of evil. If Pierre's religious worship of that world is misguided, then perhaps the corresponding use of Christian images to describe Pierre's "Grand Resolution" is likewise inappropriate.

In undercutting Pierre's Christ pretensions, Melville does not rely wholly on style. The narrator himself suggests an ambiguity in Pierre's motivations—he wonders if Pierre's Grand Resolution would have been made if Isabel had been a mishapen cripple instead of a beautiful girl; he suggests the apparent contradictions which result from Pierre's reading of Hamlet and Dante's Inferno; he even makes the following comment about Pierre's resolution and its possible effects: "Such, oh thou son of man! are the perils and the miseries thou callest down on thee, when, even in a virtuous cause, thou steppest aside from those arbitrary lines of conduct, by which the common world, however base and dastardly, surrounds thee for thy worldly good" (p. 176). And he wonders where are the gods which Pierre has so frequently evoked when he decides to shelter
Isabel by pretending to be her husband.

Aspects of Pierre's personality also undercut his pretensions. The narrator emphasizes Pierre's "uncelestial" physical qualities—particularly his healthy appetite which is ironically the motivation for the Last Supper scene. Moreover, in a foil technique similar to the one discussed earlier in this chapter, Pierre is also satirically compared with another set of playmates, his fine young horses:

"His particular and confidential friends; born on the same land with him, and fed with the same corn, which, in the form of Indian-cakes, Pierre himself was often wont to eat for breakfast...they were a sort of family cousins to Pierre, those horses; and they were splendid young cousins; very showy in their redundant manes and mighty paces" (p. 21). This image is apparently only playfully facetious, but Melville repeats it several times; Pierre's mother also makes the equation, commenting on Pierre's resemblance to a fine horse. Moreover, describing Pierre's relation with Nature, the narrator says: "[Nature] blew her wind-clarion from the blue hills, and Pierre neighed out lyrical thoughts" (p. 14). In this passage, the comparison is slightly ridiculous. Pierre increases the identification by moving in and out of his horses' legs to show their docility, and, evoking a somewhat ludicrous image, he

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suggests to Lucy that they appear as groomsmen at the wed-
ing. Then, long after the playful Saddle Meadows world
has disintegrated, just before Pierre assumes what one
critic has termed "a Christ-like Pose," with both arms
extended at his sides, he puts one foot on each of the two
letters he has received and exclaims, "'Now am I hate-
shod!'" (p. '357).

The effect of this imagery on the reader is curious.
The reader's response can only be ambivalent to a character
who appears at one instant compared to a fine colt and
the next compared to Christ. Like Pierre's use of hyper-
bole and his healthy appetite, such an "uncelestial" com-
parison tends to undercut Pierre's Christ-like pose. The
reader is able to judge Pierre's actions in better perspec-
tive and to see through his Heaven-born "Enthusiasm" to
the earth-born motives behind it—the attractiveness of
Isabel and his selfish desire for romantic glory.

The second half of the novel, picking up the Christ
imagery, pursues these ironies relentlessly. Pierre moves
into the old renovated church and becomes one of the
Apostles, but his leader is not Christ but the unsatis-
factory Plinlimmon. Moreover, his Christ-like renunciation
of the world is ironically undercut by his ambiguous relation-
ship with Isabel which borders on incest. Isabel's name

9 Thompson, p. 296.
is a significant clue to her relationship to Pierre's self-deceptions. It means "oath of Baal," and she does indeed become a kind of oath for Pierre. But Baal is consistently identified in the Bible as a false god set up in place of the true one. Isabel is a kind of false religion for Pierre, as is also suggested by Melville's repeated use of the word "enthusiasm" to describe Pierre's idealistic sacrifice of himself for Isabel's sake; this word originally referred to a religious love and commitment. Moreover, the "bel" part of Isabel's name suggests a further ambiguity: it means "beauty" as well as "Baal," implying that Pierre's false god might be Isabel's attractiveness.\(^\text{10}\) The religious imagery of the first half of the novel is thus revealed through the action which takes place in the second half of the novel as the worship of false gods—father, mother, Lucy, Isabel, Plotinus, and Pierre himself.

This discovery is demonstrated metaphorically in Pierre's vision of Enceladus, already discussed in the

\(^{10}\) The name "Isabel" has an interesting history. It is related to the Hebrew "Elizabeth," meaning "consecrated of El." "El" was the usual name for the God of the Hebrews. "Isabel" however comes from the Babylonians and means "oath of Baal," Baal being of course the false god of the Bible. The etymology of the name has also been confused with the French "bel," meaning "beauty." In the context of Melville Melville's novel, it is a remarkably appropriate name. Evelyn Wells, A Treasury of Names (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1946), p. 97.
preceding section. As numerous critics have pointed out, Pierre's Christian resolution becomes paganized in the second half of the novel. Pierre's earlier view of himself as Christ is replaced by a view of himself as a Promethean giant assaulting the gods. In the final analysis, the Christ figure of this novel dies an incestuous murderer and a blasphemous liar. This final development extends the ambivalence which Pierre must evoke as a character. We sympathize with Pierre as Christ-like victim and yet must recognize in him a kind of "fiend," caught up in his own ambiguities. Our attitude toward Pierre thus partakes of our attitude toward both Christ and Satan, as he is compared to both in the novel. Pierre is both saint and fiend.

Thus, satiric techniques employed in Pierre reveal a very complex character who is able to function on a number of literary levels. Pierre's "foolishness" is always before the reader: dramatically and symbolically, he is never treated in a wholly serious manner, and the narrator is always verging on mockery. In the first third of the novel, Pierre's simplistic view of the world as a summer place is mercilessly parodied and undercut; in the second third of the novel, Pierre's Christ-like pretensions are reduced to the absurd; in the final third of the novel, his foolishness becomes sinister and destructive. Indeed, the always-present element of parody helps to explain the apparently inappropriate examples of tragedy
interspersed with farce, such as the names of Pierre's publishers which appear in a letter containing tragic implications—"Steel, Flint, and Asbestas"—and Pierre's "skating" to his doom on paired letters, obviously a somewhat ridiculous image. As in the sea novels, in *Pierre* satire is combined with other techniques to create a complex tone.

Despite Pierre's many foolish statements and actions, he is also treated with considerable sympathy. He is a victim as well as an agent of evil, led into error through his reading, his education, his heritage, his ideals, his sensitivity, his own personality. The reader's attitude toward Pierre can thus only be explained as "ambiguities contained in ambiguities." The more complex Pierre's portrait becomes, the more ambivalent must be the reader's attitude to Pierre as a person. Satiric techniques in *Pierre* thus serve as tools of characterization which enable Melville to manipulate his reader's expectations and reactions in order to achieve his desired ends—the depiction of a harsh, wintry world and the depiction of man's capacity for self-deception and the impossibility of a simple heroic redemption in that world.
CHAPTER 4

THE SHORT FICTION AND ISRAEL POTTER

Except for the full-length serial novel Israel Potter, which appeared in Putnam's from July 1854 to March 1855, Melville turned his attention between 1853 and 1858 to publishing in magazines. Most of his works during this period were short fiction. Although critics generally find Melville's work in the short story genre uneven, these magazine pieces are useful for analysing Melville's narrative techniques, since they illustrate in condensed, unusually simple form most of the major themes and methods found in Melville's longer, more complicated works.

In particular, satiric techniques are important in many of these short stories. Of the fourteen stories published in a later collection of these magazine pieces, The Piazza Tales, about half are satiric in part or in total. Although the effectiveness of the satire varies in these works, they still provide useful illustrations of Melville's satiric handling of major themes. A critical examination of these works may even help to resolve some of the interpretive problems which arise in reading Melville's longer satires. As do the novels, Melville's short works employ either a naive narrator who is subjected to a variety of
mockeries or an aware narrator who copes with the vagaries of existence through hyena-like laughter. Either way, the final result is a telling critique of man's errors, both social and metaphysical. These stories thus offer interesting insights into Melville's attitudes toward his society and its institutions as well as examples of his different satiric techniques.

Perhaps the most clearly satiric short stories are the "diptyches"—"The Two Temples," "Poor Man's Pudding" and "Rich Man's Crumbs," and "The Paradise of Bachelors" and "The Tartarus of Maids." In these stories, Melville presents a dual view of reality through a two-part description. The term "diptych" is derived from two hinged paintings which functioned as a single unit: this is an apt analogy since the diptyches consist of two apparently unlike experiences which are ironically paired for purposes of social criticism. Moreover, since Melville requires that his reader perform the final step of juxtaposing the two "views" in order to apprehend the ironic similarities and differences between them, the diptyches also serve as additional evidence of the importance of a rhetorical approach to criticism as a way of understanding Melville's fiction. Only by actually working to compare and contrast the two "halves" of each diptych can the reader comprehend the meaning of the story as a whole.

The targets of the diptyches are clearly social abuses. As in Typee, Omoo, and Mardi, usually these targets are
specific and easily identifiable. In "The Two Temples," Melville's target is religious hypocrisy, the same subject he explores at length in Omoo. In "Poor Man's Pudding" and "Rich Man's Crumbs," social evils like poverty and ill-health become central issues, but far more important as a target is the insensitivity of the "haves" (Blandmour, the British official, even the narrator himself) toward the "have-nots." And, in the most effective of these works, "The Paradise of Bachelors" and "The Tartarus of Maids," Melville uses sexual symbolism to demonstrate the dehumanization of man which results from the abuses of a machine-oriented, inhumane society.

"The Two Temples" takes an experience of the narrator in a beautiful church and juxtaposes it with an experience in a London theater. The structural similarities are extensively developed: in both halves of the story, the narrator enters a building and climbs a network of stairs to an elevated point and then looks down on a spectacle below (the church service in "Temple First," the play in "Temple Second"). There is in both cases a dramatic and climatic contrast: the cool darkness of the climb as opposed to the hot blast of air which confronts the narrator as he emerges at the top of his climb. In both the Church and the theater, the person who is the center of attention below disappears and returns a few minutes later wearing different clothes--and in both cases there is a keen sense of an audience-to-performer relationship between that individual
and the crowd.

Despite these similarities, each of the diptyches is still a self-contained unit. The point of "Temple First" is clearly that the Church-goers are violating the true spirit of religion; they are "the salt of the earth," arrogantly sure of their own worth, but they lack the Christian virtues of charity, humility, and love of their fellow man. When the narrator "burgles" his way into the church, a neat inversion of the usual relationship between church and church-goer, he stands isolated, and the lights which play on the congregation below create an aura of Satanism. The church service seems perverse and distorted. As the narrator looks down on it through a half-closed window, it seems to resemble "a necromancer's show." Finally, the falseness of the beautiful temple and its beautiful congregation is demonstrated when the narrator, despite his generally sincere attempts to respond to the Church service in a meaningful way, finds himself arrested and made to pay a heavy fine. The usual values are inverted in "Temple First"--the attempt to worship becomes "suspicious," and the "beadle-faced man" guards the entrance hall of the church to prevent "undesirables" from entering. Religion has become secularized, and its true meaning has been distorted. Melville's narrator, a critical observer, makes his point directly, and at a simple level the story attacks the church-goers' false values.

Taken as a single unit, the first half of "The Two
"Temples" is thus a straightforward example of social satire. However, when this simplified presentation of religious hypocrisy is juxtaposed with "Temple Second," new and far more original insights into the failure of the first world are presented.

First of all, the parallelism which the diptych develops between the church service and the play is itself an attack on false religious values. The service is a "dumb-show" to the narrator; he only half hears the priest's words, although he watches his gestures and picks up one key passage, "'Ye are the salt of the earth.'" On the other hand, the play is effective and moving. Quite literally, the "false" world presented in the play is more meaningful than the "true" world of the priest. Parallelism thus works to reduce the stature of the religious ceremony, first by linking it to a stage performance, which is by definition "unreal" (complete with costume changes, sets, and audience) and then by ironically suggesting that the stage performance is in fact more meaningful than the Church service.

Since religious ritual is the key to a comparison between the stage show and the church show, Melville also enhances the ironic resemblance by including a sacramental experience in "Temple Second," but none in "Temple First." Although the church service lacks a sacrament, there is a Eucharist of sorts in the theater: the narrator accepts a free mug of ale and drinks "immortal life" to the father
of the boy who offers it to him; then, to increase the reader's awareness of the symbolism behind this action, Melville has his narrator say: "Stuff was in that barley malt; a most sweet bitterness in those blessed hops. God bless the glorious boy!" (p. 164). Although the context of this sacrament is incongruous, the "communion" of the narrator and the audience is a positive tribute to the good feeling of the story; the fellowship of the community is lacking in "Temple First," but present in "Temple Second."

In fact, perhaps the most startling difference between the two stories is the narrator's isolation in "Temple First" as contrasted to his association with other people in "Temple Second." Although virtually all the other details are made parallel, the addition of human communication and a spirit of fraternal good will makes the second temple very different from the first. In this second half of the diptych, the narrator is offered and receives charity not once but twice; he is surrounded by the congregation which in "Temple First" was below him, watching the church service which resembled a "sly enchanter's show" (p. 153). The strongest demonstration of the community which exists in "Temple Second" is the audience's response at the end of the play: "Starting to their feet, the enraptured

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thousands sound their responses, deafeningly; unmistakably sincere. Right from the undoubted heart. I have no duplicate in my memory of this. In earnestness of response, this second temple stands unmatched" (p. 165). The second temple contains elements of a true feeling lacking in the first temple.

This diptych does not make a particularly original statement about religious hypocrisy. But the unique form which the two parts of this story assume as halves of a single whole demonstrates Melville's use of satire as a narrative tool as well as an end in itself. The ironies of "Temple First" are readily apparent: but when the reader is made to compare "Temple First" with "Temple Second" further satiric denigration is achieved.

Like "The Two Temples," "Poor Man's Pudding" and "Rich Man's Crumbs" makes a fairly unoriginal statement about social abuses in the world. The two halves of this diptych force the reader to see the tragedy and the dehumanizing effects which poverty and suffering have on the human spirit and to understand the heartlessness of the unfeeling responses which the "rich" make to the "poor." As in "The Two Temples," this simple theme is satirically complicated through Melville's use of the format of the diptych.

As in "The Two Temples," the first half of the diptych is in itself a satiric attack on certain abuses--the too-easy philosophizing of Blandmour and the heartlessness of the society which ignores the plight of the noble
Coulter and his "gentle, blue-eyed wife." The narrator himself is wryly critical of Blandmour's "bland" dismissal of poverty. He notes that "Poor Man's Manure" piles up much more heavily on Squire Teamster's field and gently mocks Blandmour's enthusiasm with his cynical reactions to such rather nonsensical ideas as "Poor Man's Eye-water" and "Poor Man's Egg." Moreover, the reader actually witnesses himself the falseness of Blandmour's interpretation of poverty—he accompanies the narrator as he eats the poor food of the Coulters and weeps with Martha over her dead children; the reader and the narrator are both made to experience, at least vicariously, the effects of poverty. From that less limited perspective, Blandmour appears as a fool. In fact, as Richard H. Fogle has noted, the descriptions of the Coulters come very near to sentimentality; Melville evokes the unqualified sympathy of his readers for these two suffering but courageous souls, and their unhappiness demonstrates in near-pathetic form the heartlessness of Blandmour's careless dismissal of the sufferings of the poor.

Blandmour is particularly interesting as a likely caricature of Emerson. Several critics have commented on the similarities of Blandmour's observations to the observations Emerson makes about poverty in the "Discipline"

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chapter of *Nature*, where he labels poverty as the "great perceptor." Of course, once a connection between Emerson and Blandmour is established, the rest of the story becomes an attack on Emerson's philosophy of transcendentalism, which is a favorite target throughout Melville's fiction, although it is possible that some critics have overemphasized the systematic quality of this attack. While Melville admired Emerson, he also saw inexcusable faults in the wisdom of "this Plato who talks through his nose," as he once labeled him. These are essentially the same flaws which he projects into Ahab (whom one critic has called a "crazy transcendentalist"): Emerson's complete trust in man's ability to intuit and interpret correctly the experiences and phenomena of his life places inordinate confidence in man as knower, a dangerous approach. Moreover, Melville recognizes that the "idealistic" orientation of the transcendentalist can too easily lead to a denial of reality. Whether Blandmour is intended specifically as a caricature of Emerson himself is a question which can only be resolved by closely examining the evidence; however, that he is a

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3 Critics who have commented on this similarity include Marvin Fisher, "'Poor Man's Pudding': Melville's Meditation on Grace," *American Transcendental Quarterly*, 13 (1972), 33.

caricature of the attitude which Melville associates with Emersonian transcendentalism is clearly evident. In this diptych, the contrast between a bitter real world and a false ideal one is such a major theme that that attitude is a particularly appropriate satiric target. Against the reality of the Coulters' suffering, Blandmour's philosophical speculations turn into meaningless wordplay and verbal tricks.

The ironies developed in "Poor Man's Pudding" are thus clearly presented within that sketch alone. But when the narrator presents "Rich Man's Crumbs" against the portrait of the suffering Coulters, the effect becomes much more dramatic. The second half of this diptych inverts the proud dignity of the Coulters and turns it into frenzied grovelling. There is a nightmare quality about "Rich Man's Crumbs" which belies the courageous struggling of the Coulters and reveals the essential hopelessness of their plight.

Again, Melville establishes the connections between the two sketches through parallelism. Both have as their subject "the poor man" and both look at that "poor man" through the eyes of the "rich man." Both include a character who maintains that the "poor man" is not in so bad a state: Blandmour dismisses poverty with a jaunty reliance on Nature as the great provider; the British official replaces "Nature" with England and claims that "the British poor are the most extravagantly relieved of all the poor..."
in the world." Against the reality of poverty—whether its effect is stoic suffering or frenzied rage—both interpretations are seen as grossly inadequate.

As in "The Two Temples," these fairly obvious statements about social evils are given complexity through ironic reversal. In "Poor Man's Pudding," the narrator is offered food which is extremely poor fare: in "Rich Man's Crumbs," the poor are offered food which is extremely fine. The reversal of the act of "giving" elevates the Coulters by implying that despite their poverty, they are charitable, good-hearted people. At the same time, this reversal also suggests an ironic reductive similarity between the quality of the charity portrayed in "Rich Man's Crumbs" and the quality of the food the narrator receives in "Poor Man's Pudding." Moreover, the violence of the mob in "Rich Man's Crumbs" belies the endurance of the Coulters in "Poor Man's Pudding"—Melville tears down the wall of respectability and dignity and reveals the horrors of poverty for what they are.

Finally, the narrator himself, though he is made to experience the degradation of poverty (he is even mistaken for one of the beggars in "Rich Man's Crumbs"), is ironically linked with Blandmour and the public official; the narrator responds to the pathetic Coulters with sympathetic horror, but he is unable to help alleviate their suffering and flees in terror from the madhouse world of poverty in "Rich Man's Crumbs." Both titles are aptly chosen: "Poor
Man's Pudding" is plentiful but barely edible, and "Rich Man's Crumbs" are delicious, but woefully inadequate. Neither charitable gestures nor optimism can resolve the problem of poverty, and the narrator is forced to recognize the inadequacy of both through this nightmare vision.

A similar reversal also takes place in "The Paradise of Bachelors" and "The Tartarus of Maids." In these sketches the contrast between Heaven and Hell provides a key to an understanding of the story. Melville uses sexual imagery to reveal the dehumanization which modern man affects in his life.

The first of these two sketches is a genial portrait of a dinner in the seclusion of the "Temple." On the surface, it is a positive experience, complete with good fellowship, good wine, and such a pleasant time that the narrator even thinks that "the bugbear called trouble" is not really a problem and scarcely exists at all.

Of course, such an attitude could only, in the context of other treatments of similar themes, be ironic. As in the other diptyches, Melville undercuts his portrayal of an experience with ironic associations. First of all, he mentions "the blight that tainted the sacred brotherhood"—a blight which critics have identified as homosexuality. Moreover, as critics have noted, the first half of this diptych contains distorted sexual imagery which reveals the inadequacy of the life of the happy bachelors who
frequent the Temple. Moreover, the narrator remarks the loss of heroic stature which the modern Templars have experienced. The use of the term "bachelor" is an important key to the gentle satire found in this half of the diptych: as Fogle points out, the term "bachelor" is often used in Melville's fiction for a character who has refused to acknowledge the darker side of reality: "The Paradise of Bachelors" is a haven for escapists and a place for withdrawal from society. Religious imagery also heightens these ironies: a sacramental parody takes place in which the narrator reveals that the modern Templars have exchanged significant rituals for hedonistic pleasure-seeking, as the symbolic bread and wine becomes good food and drink to satisfy the Templars' physical appetites. Thus, the "Paradise" described in this story represents a false and perverted view of human security and happiness.

Only when Melville adds "The Tartarus of Maids" do the full ironies of this hedonistic escape become apparent. The sexual symbolism of "The Tartarus of Maids" has received a considerable amount of attention. Beryl Rowland points out that the process of human biological creation is

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5 Examples include the phallic horn, the nine bachelors, and their final departure in pairs.

6 Fogle, p. 23.
parodied in this second half of the diptych down to the most detailed correspondences. The sexual perversions associated with the Templars (whether real or symbolic of their life-negating existence) are ironically exaggerated by a juxtaposition with "The Tartarus of Maids," which is a monstrous sexual joke.

The point of both uses of sexual imagery is essentially the same. The existence of the hedonistic escapists and the existence of the suffering girls are equally life-denying. On the surface, "The Tartarus of Maids" makes a simple satiric point: the dehumanizing and devastating effect of the modern American factory on human beings. When the two halves of the diptych are combined, the theme becomes more complicated. The stories imply that any life pattern that denies human beings the fullness of experience is life-negating and nightmarish.

Like the other two diptyches, "The Paradise of Bachelors" and "The Tartarus of Maids" have practically identical structures. The seclusion of the Temple, reached by "stealing" into some "cool, deep glen" (p. 185), suggests the isolation of the girls; as the narrator passes into a "frozen" gorge, the paradisaic warmth of the Temple is ironically inverted to become the frozen Tartarean world

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of the suffering girls. The nine bachelors' working over
the horn of plenty parallels the nine-minute production
of foolscap; both are portrayed through sexual imagery.
There are also more direct links between the two sets of
characters: the paper is made up of old shirts of the
Templars, and the man in charge of the mill is Old Bach.
Finally, the narrator forces the two halves into juxta-
position through the final sentence of the story; he says:
"Oh! Paradise of Bachelors! and, oh! Tartarus of Maids!"
(p. 211). They are two halves of a nightmare vision of
the two extremes of life-negation: excessive pleasure-
seeking and excessive pain.

These three diptyches provide an excellent example of
Melville's skill as a satirist. In addition to launching
attacks on specific targets, Melville enhances his satire
through a narrative use of parody. The format of the dip-
tyches enables him to present a highly effective satiric
attack through both gentle irony and exaggerated reversal.
An analysis of the diptyches thus reveals Melville's two
uses of satiric techniques: first, to reveal inadequacies
in the outside world, and second, to serve as narrative
tools which direct the reader's understanding of fictional
characters. Satire for Melville is both a tool for
expressing meaning and a tool for ordering and structuring
his works internally.

The diptyches are the clearest demonstrations of
Melville's effective use of satire. On the other hand,
other more problematic works illustrate some of the critical difficulties associated with Melville's use of satire. In particular, "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" reveals the importance of an awareness of Melville's use of the techniques of satire in evaluating and interpreting his work. Critics of Melville have generally regarded this short story as a failure. Most of them consider its major flaw to be its extravagant, rather frenzied emotionalism which leads to a loss of control in the story. Because the narrator's mood changes are abrupt and extreme, the adoration of Merrymusk and his family for the cock is excessive, and the ending of the story is melodramatic (Merrymusk and his family expire one by one and the cock crows one last time and then itself falls over dead), the story becomes unbelievable, and the reader laughs at Merrymusk when he should be sorry for him or delight in his immortality.

This critical objection is perhaps valid. The narrator of "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" is a rather frenzied character who seems just a little bit mad, and it is difficult to determine which of several possible reader responses is appropriate. However, once Melville's satiric intent is recognized, the extravagances of the narrator become much easier to understand and to cope with. Of course, unless the members of the Merrymusk family are believable human beings, it is difficult to sympathize with them, but, since Melville does not intend for his reader just to feel sorry for them, their lack of believability is consistent
with the purpose of the story. The false assumptions of
the narrator and the Merrymusk family and their willing­
ness to substitute a false ideal for the harsh realities
of poverty and pain are ridiculed in "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!"
For this reason, the ending of the story is something of
a joke, like the rooster's "falling over backwards."
Melville is presenting not a realistic description, but
rather black comedy, which is nightmarish and comic at the
same time.

The satiric tone of "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" thus allows
the reader to be amused at the ridiculousness of the
characters without sentimentalizing them (almost the same
process which occurs in Pierre). The theme of "Cock-A­
Doodle-Doo!" at first seems to be the need for a recognition
of immortality; the ending of the story is explained as
the triumph of the human spirit over all evil, physical
and metaphysical. This is essentially S. P. Moss's reading
of the story. The inscription which the narrator carves
on the graves of Merrymusk and his family would seem to
substantiate this interpretation. The effect of the rooster
on the narrator is appropriately dramatized by allusions to
heroic battles in which virtue triumphs over evil: the
rooster, for example, resembles an overpowering angel

S. P. Moss, "'Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!' and Some Legends
in Melville Scholarship," American Literature, 40 (1968),
192-210.
in the Apocalypse who seems "crowing over the fall of wicked Babylon" (p. 142). The extravagance of Melville's description of Trumpet's crow and the effects which it has on the various characters reach heroic intensity.

Yet, the mocking tone of "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" belies the conventional theme of the triumph of spiritual life over human mutability. The cock is not a heroic symbol, but a mock heroic one. It is nicknamed by the narrator "Signor Beneventano," as part of the extravagant comparisons he sets up, but the narrator's description of that character from the Italian opera is not grand but almost comical: he was "a man of a tall, imposing person, clad in rich raiment, like to plumage, and with a most remarkable, majestic, scornful stride. The Signor Beneventano seemed on the point of tumbling over backward with exceeding haughtiness" (pp. 139-40). The "stagey" aspects of the cock and the exaggeration present in the story suggest that it is not an entirely serious portrayal. The "spiritual voice" is after all that of a rooster, with all the equivocal connotations of the word "crow" built into it: is his crow a cry of triumph or a cry of mockery? Moreover, the rooster is vainglorious and slightly ridiculous, about to tumble over with its own haughtiness, as in fact it does at the end of the story.

The contrast between the reality of suffering and death and the narrator's absurdly disproportional delight in Trumpet's "continual crowing" causes the reader to
reject the hollow vaingloriousness of the cock's crow.
The story ends with mass destruction, which is not exactly
tragic because the ridiculous Merrymusk and his family never
become real flesh-and-blood people. Like Pierre, Merrymusk
is an appealing fool who denies the reality of his experi­
ences for the fantasy of his ideals. The ludicrous ending
in which Merrymusk and his family all collapse and Trumpet
falls over dead should prevent any perceptive reader from
seeing the story as tragic. The ending is a cruel joke,
on Merrymusk, on the narrator, and on the cock itself, since,
in every sense of the word, death is victorious, even over
the symbolic Trumpet.

Melville thus presents a story about suffering and
death, like "Poor Man's Pudding," then introduces the con­
ventional Christian notion of immortality to qualify that
vision. But his symbol of immortality is a haughty cock
so self-heavy that it is about to fall over backwards.
The story thus attacks the folly of easy optimism; the
three final crows of the cock, over Merrymusk, over his
wife, and over their children, are a kind of betrayal, as
Peter betrayed Christ three times before the crowing of
the cock, since the promise of transcendence becomes sus­
pect at the end of the story. "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" is a
story about the human spirit. In the face of real suf­
fering, the endurance of spirit seems nightmarish rather
than cheering, as the "hollow-faced" Merrymusks smilingly
go to their deaths. "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" is thus
characterized by the "hyena" laughter which is so important in *Moby-Dick*. Evil is greeted with merriment, even with the exuberant joy of the cock's crow, man's only way of coping, but that joy appears hollow and cruel against the reality of suffering and death.

There have been numerous attempts to identify the cock with passages in the writings of the transcendentalists, particularly with passages and allusions in the work of Thoreau. Although there are problems in attempting to establish these connections, the story does attack false idealism, and since Melville regarded transcendentalism as a philosophy which could too easily lead to that error, the failure of the cock and the failure of transcendentalism are related. In "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" Melville attacks man's belief in any transcendent reality, absurdly represented by the "supernatural" cock, by juxtaposing with that reality a physical experience which is a concrete and undeniable fact: disease, suffering, and death. That Merrymusk can continue to believe in the spirit of the cock is both a tribute to the ever-buoyant human spirit and a mockery of the folly of man.

It is probable that the problems of "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" will never be totally resolved. The tone is rather
hysterical; the story requires from the reader sympathy for Merrymusk and at the same time a willingness to laugh at him—a mixed response which may not be totally compatible. But even if Melville's satiric control in this story is finally judged to be imperfect, it is still necessary to recognize satiric elements in the story in order even to begin to make sense out of it. "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" may finally best be regarded as a humorous but not wholly successful attack on blind idealism and optimism.

In contrast to the extravagance and pandemonium which characterize Melville's satiric world-view in "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" "Bartleby the Scrivener," Melville's most frequently anthologized short story, is a restrained and measured work. Yet, even in this story, satire is an important element. These two works in fact represent the two ends of Melville's satiric spectrum: the near-tragic ironies of "Bartleby the Scrivener" are very different from the near-comic mockery of "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" Yet, different as they may be in style and in method, these two works both depend heavily on satiric techniques.

The key to an understanding of "Bartleby" is an understanding of the narrator and his world, which is presented satirically. Thus, the subtitle, "A Story of Wall Street," is more than just an identification of setting; like the subtitle of White-Jacket, "Life in a Man of War," the metaphoric identification of Bartleby's world as "Wall Street" both characterizes that world and helps to make
Bartleby's problems clearer.

In fact, the narrator is in some ways as important as Bartleby in working out the conflicts of the story. The first sentence of the story, "I am a rather elderly man" (p. 3), focuses the reader's attention on the narrator, and the story is not only a description of Bartleby but also a description of the attempt of an average, easy-to-identify-with, well-meaning man to cope with the reality that is represented by Bartleby. For this reason, an understanding of the narrator and his world is essential for understanding the story.

The narrator devotes several pages to describing himself and his world. He describes himself as an "eminently safe" man who leads a comfortable, trouble-free life organized according to his own whims. The reader who has witnessed Melville's attacks on this sort of life in "The Paradise of Bachelors" and other works might early in the story suspect that the narrator's safe life is inadequate, since he denies the "bugbear called trouble" a role in his scheme of existence. Even if the reader does not recognize this narrator's limitations, however, Melville makes them apparent when he presents this slightly pompous, well-meaning but limited man a puzzle with which he cannot cope.

The world of the law office on Wall Street is a world in which men escape by conforming—to legal principles, to rules, to order. It is a closed world, as the "walls"
which surround the office illustrate—"rather devoid of that element called life"; the narrator emphasizes this element of the environment by observing that his work is done among old legal papers, mortgage deeds, and wills. The safe, secure world of the narrator is only safe and secure because he has withdrawn from life; the "seclusion" of his offices recalls the "seclusion" of the Templars. Into this closed, dead-wall world comes Bartleby, who, like the maids in the second half of "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," forces the narrator to recognize the reality of suffering.

Bartleby's miserable existence demonstrates the inadequacy of withdrawal as a solution to life. The job of the scrivener is to copy, and in order to fit in, Bartleby must copy and verify the accuracy of those copies. He must therefore conform to the rules of the society by reproducing the ideas and beliefs of others, a process at which the narrator is particularly adept. Bartleby does not accept this role, however; his rejection of it is demonstrated in his refusal to conform by copying. His withdrawal is thus different in kind from the narrator's: he closes his mind to the world after becoming aware of its evil, whereas the narrator, because of his refusal to accept that evil, escapes into method and "copying." Yet, the dangers are similar; in both cases, withdrawal from life can lead to an incomplete and self-destructive existence. The disintegration of Bartleby demonstrates the need for
commitment and active struggle.

Bartleby, however, like the whale in *Moby-Dick*, remains a puzzle, which both the narrator and the reader must work to unravel. The ridiculousness of some of the narrator's attempts to "understand" and cope with Bartleby turns against him, and he is satirized by his failures in these attempts, which are generally humorous. Though there is no broad farce, such as is found in parts of "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo," there is a great deal of comedy in "Bartleby the Scrivener," based on incongruity and juxtaposition.

The most obviously comic figures in "Bartleby the Scrivener" are the other scriveners, Turkey and Nippers. As Fogle has observed, these characters are to a certain extent humorous characters: their emblematic names reduce them to symbols, and the narrator's "morning/night" description of them so dehumanizes them that they become primarily comic machines, designed to demonstrate the range of responses to Bartleby and to illustrate aspects of the narrator's character. The narrator has no difficulty coping with the idiosyncrasies of these characters. Because their moods are predictable and ordered, he is tolerant of their oddities and can co-ordinate their activities to make his business work well in spite of them; but in doing so, he reduces them to functioning robots. The problem with Bartleby is that he is human and unpredictable and,

10 Fogle, p. 17.
therefore, cannot be so easily coped with. The narrator's control over Turkey and Nippers and his adaptations to their moods thus reveal his tendency to dehumanize those around him in order to achieve order.

Once Bartleby has appeared on the scene, the focus of the comedy shifts away from the other scriveners to the narrator himself, as we watch his serio-comic attempts to force Bartleby into some similar slot. Repeatedly, the narrator himself becomes a comic figure. The best illustration of this sort of humor is the passage in which the narrator imagines himself simply walking up against Bartleby and pretending he is not there. This idea of course is comically incongruous, since the narrator is superimposing an imaginary view of reality over a reality which is remarkably different. The "safe" lifestyle of the narrator does not allow for the existence of a Bartleby, and so the narrator is mocked by his inability to keep Bartleby in perspective. Eventually, he even runs away from the pale scrivener, rather than continuing his attempts to cope with him.

Even if the reader recognizes that the "Wall Street" life of the narrator is being satirized, there is still the question of the meaning of Bartleby himself. Critic Donald Fiene points out that there are countless allusions to Christ in the descriptions of Bartleby.11 Some of

these, like the narrator's response to Bartleby's death and the references to Bartleby's nativity, have been noticed by almost every critic of the story. Two immediate effects result from this association. First of all, it assures that this character whose motivations are so enigmatic that he becomes almost inhuman will have the sympathy of the reader. Secondly, it provides him with a certain depth, by suggesting that he may be in fact more than he seems to be. Thus, the reader's (and narrator's) responses to Bartleby are partially conditioned by his meekness and "forlornness."

A possible further explanation for Bartleby's "Christ-likeness" is advanced by Stein. It may be that Bartleby represents not Christ, but the failure of Christ in the closed "dead-wall" world of the story--if Bartleby is identified with Christ, then Christ becomes in this world not a redeemer but a non-communicative, pitifully ineffectual victim of his surroundings. Although Bartleby resembles Christ, he is also a failure. There is no Eucharistic motif, as is found in "Temple Second," for example, and Bartleby's death does not change Wall Street. In fact,

12 William B. Stein, "Melville's Comedy of Faith," ELH, 27 (1960), 319. A similar explanation has also been offered for the deaf-mute who appears at the beginning of The Confidence-Man. In fact, ineffectual Christ figures are fairly common in Melville's fiction.
this death is more of an escape than a redemption. The only form that Christ can assume in the Wall Street world is that of Bartleby, an inadequate, finally pitiful naysayer in a hostile world.

Although this explanation is workable, however, the identification of Bartleby with Christ, like the view of Bartleby as modern artist, is not adequate to explain his actions. Instead, Bartleby is something of a neutral character who is more interesting for the light he casts on his surroundings than in his own personality. This enigmatic, provocative character serves to suggest that the narrator's society and easy morality are not adequate because they ignore the ambiguities of reality; Bartleby's actions are both tragically meaningful and comically meaningless, and the satire of the short story is directed against a lifeless, conformity demanding society which cannot really cope with either of these possibilities.

As the narrator's attempts to comprehend Bartleby are the main subject of the story, so man's apprehension of the world beyond the senses is an important theme in the two short works, "The Apple-Tree Table" and "I and My Chimney." The theme of metaphysical knowledge-hunting which is explored in Moby-Dick and The Confidence-Man appears in these two companion pieces.

The "apple-tree table" is endowed with a considerable number of suggestive metaphysical associations: the table has a Satanic club-foot and is related to Cotton Mather
and the idea of spiritualism. It is found in a locked attic, where the narrator expects to find "forbidden knowledge," and since it is an "apple-tree table," it may even be associated with Adam and Eve and man's fall. The provocative associations of the table make it a typical Melville "symbol"; it is full of metaphysical significance like the whale, not totally explained but nonetheless very much a part of its meaning.

Out of the table emerges a "seraphic" bug, which first fills the narrator and his family with terror and then fills them with wonder and delight. Like the table itself, the bug is symbolic. The narrator's daughter Julia considers it a miraculous demonstration of immortality. It emerges out of time: its "ticking," symbolic of the passage of time, eventually enables it to break loose from the table, a beautiful symbol of spiritual life triumphing over physical "deadwood."

Melville does not limit the story, however, to a simple statement about the existence of immortality. As the vainglorious death of the cock belies the claim of the tombstone, so the scientific "facts" of the "wondrous story" of the bug in the table belie the superficial "message" which Julia finds in the experience: the promise of immortality. It is after all a "bug," not a "butterfly"—a "nomable bug," as Biddy calls it—and once it emerges, it perishes rapidly. Julia's first reaction when she sees it is to say "'I feel it crawling over me
even now.'" The "spiritualist" explanation of the bug is inadequate, since it ignores the fact that the bug is a natural creature, which dies soon after its emergence from the table. The story, subtitled "Spiritual Manifestations," thus does not provide the insight it promises into the metaphysical world. However, the story gently satirizes not only spiritualism which finds in every natural object a supernatural meaning, but also the attempts of science to explain the phenomenon. The scientist's explanation of its presence may be exact and detailed but does not explain the characters' reactions to it, and because the scientist only explains the process, he does not answer the question "why." True knowledge can only come through man's senses, since they are man's only tools of discovery, but such knowledge is never really adequate. There is the tantalizing possibility that "the bug" is the key to metaphysical knowledge; there is also the tantalizing possibility that the bug is, as one critic has called it, a "humbug" which means nothing.\(^{13}\) The pretentious subtitle of the story is belied by its puzzling meaning. The promise of a clue to the meaning of all life is destroyed by the outcome of the plot; and the reader's final memory of the experience

\(^{13}\) This ambiguity is reflected in the title of one article: Marvin Fisher, "Bug and Humbug--Melville's 'Apple-Tree Table,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, 8 (1971), 459-66.
is apt to be the picture of the narrator and his family ludicrously crowded around the table, waiting for the mystic bug to appear. The pursuit of knowledge is an almost hopeless, if necessary, quest.

Likewise, in "I and My Chimney," Melville explores man's inability to attain knowledge. This provocative piece in some ways typifies Melville's use of satire in the short story. It is, as Melville's editor described it, a "capital, genial, humorous sketch...thoroughly magazinish." Yet, this genial exterior covers a rather wickedly suggestive presentation of complex themes.

As in Melville's novels, the first clue that the story is satiric is an incongruous juxtaposition—the chimney and the narrator. The story goes on to develop an extensive identification between these two entities: both are old, both are in the way of progress, both are slightly obese, both are "old smokers." Melville even plays with sexual symbolism as a way of developing the identification between the narrator and his chimney. Many critics have suggested that the chimney is a phallic symbol, and the narrator's attempts to protect that chimney can be read as an attempt to resist the destructive power of his energetic wife and daughter and, thereby, retain his masculinity in the face of the threat of castration. Although they might not be its final

meaning, such associations are undoubtedly part of the theme of the story.

The implied equation between the narrator and his chimney supports the critical theory that the story is a satiric attack by Melville on those individuals who attempted to "explain" him out of existence. The possibility that "I and My Chimney" may refer to the examination of Melville by Oliver Wendall Holmes in 1855 has been advanced by a number of critics, and there is some evidence that this may even be the story's reason for being. Melville treats the attempt to delve into his personality in search of some "secret chamber" as primarily destructive. As he was always critical of a too-simplified explanation of the workings of reality, so he was also resentful of a critic's attempt to "codify" him and his work, if that meant damaging the "thing itself"—the chimney destroyed in the hunt for a secret compartment. And, indeed, the use of the "chimney" to symbolize Melville's fiction seems particularly appropriate: it is large, cumbersome, and "smoky," like Melville's work rambling and episodic. If such a reading of "I and My Chimney" is possible, then we have here an example of Melville engaging in a satiric attack on himself; this is

15 See for example Merton M. Sealts, "Herman Melville: 'I and My Chimney,'" American Literature, 13 (1941), 142-54.
romantic irony, a specialized form of satire in which the satirist's targets are his own vices and follies. "I and My Chimney" then becomes a genial but facetious look at Melville by Melville, a playful self-mockery.

A more comprehensive interpretation might also be possible, however, one that allows for some self-mockery while still offering other possibilities. Like "The Apple-Tree Table," "I and My Chimney" explores man's search for an understanding of the life force itself.

This possibility is suggested by one important characteristic of the chimney: it is a life-giving element in the narrator's home. It is a nursery for his wife's geraniums and gives warmth and flavor to the narrator's wine. Moreover, the narrator mocks his wife's glib assumption that the house will still stand if the chimney has been razed: it is the backbone of the house. But as a symbol of life, it is ambiguous, for although it is a source of strength and growth, it is also compared to a pyramid and is associated with ashes and death. It is a multi-dimensional symbol for both the power of life and the power of death.

If the chimney represents life, then we find Melville returning to the theme of the difficulties involved in attaining knowledge, a theme which he explored at length in *Moby-Dick*. This theme is consistent with the biographical possibilities of the story. Science, in the form of Hiram Scribe, and modernity, in the form of the narrator's
progressive wife and daughters, may attempt to get at the heart—the "secret chamber"—of the chimney, but they can only do so by destroying the thing itself. And the narrator, who can, through empathy and intuitive insight, recognize the importance of retaining the chimney as a whole, can never completely unravel its meaning and can never ensure its survival.

Finally, one of Melville's best illustrations of the use of parody in a work of fiction is found in *Benito Cereno*. Satiric parallelism is in this work a pervasive technique which works at all levels to emphasize the irony of the slave/master relation.

Much of the parody is engineered by Babo, one of Melville's many confidence-men. Babo formulates an elaborate deception which mocks the misconceptions of Delano, as representative of the white world. To be sure, some of the plans devised by Babo and the other slaves have a practical purpose: they are badly in need of food, water, and navigational aid. However, many of them are simply constructs which serve no useful function, such as the elaborate Atufal ritual. And Babo's purpose in mounting the skeleton of Arando is not only to instill fear in the whites but also to taunt them for their loss of power.

Babo's cleverness in constructing the elaborate deception has been remarked by a number of critics. He anticipates Delano's preconceptions and devises a scheme in which blacks and whites act them out. Cereno appears
as the unscrupulous master, the slaves as either animal-like or docile and loving; Babo himself assumes the guise of the faithful servant of a moody master. Of course, these guises are all completely false. On board the San Dominick, everything is exactly the opposite of the way it seems.

Yet, when considered as satire, Babo's elaborate parody of the relation between slave and master assumes more ominous connotations. Delano's attitude toward slavery offers important insights into his character and into the role of that institution in society. He is not an evil man, but he is willing to adopt his own view of the relationship between Babo and Cereno, and Cereno and the other slaves. He takes to Negroes like "Newfoundland dogs" (p. 307); his view is sentimental, and it is not a true picture of the dehumanizing effects of slavery. Delano's limited insight into the evils of slavery thus makes him easy prey for Babo's deceptions. The whole ruse is possible because Delano is unable to see the blacks as anything but "animals." Despite an overpowering accumulation of evidence, the obvious never occurs to Delano and perhaps not even to the reader. Babo's parody thus emphasizes the folly of the man who allows a false view of slavery to undermine his perceptions.

Slavery is an old target of Melville's. For example, it is treated at length in the caricature of the United States that appears in Mardi. Melville regards slavery
as a flagrant abuse of the principles on which the country was formulated, and his criticism of it is unqualified. Thus Delano, the kindly man who is sentimentally touched by Atufal's dignity and who regards the negresses as "protective as leopards, loving as doves" (p. 292), is unaware of the reality of slavery—the abuse of power, the loss of human dignity—and because of his limited insight, he is satirized and made a fool of. Unquestionably, in the context of *Benito Cereno*, Amasa Delano behaves in a remarkably obtuse way.

As an attack on a social evil, *Benito Cereno* includes satire of the usual variety. But, as in other works, the satire of the story is not limited only to this. Melville's targets become broader as he introduces another variety of parody, engineered not by Babo but by the narrator. This parody is not directed only against the evil of slavery, but instead against a more universal type of evil for which slavery becomes an apt metaphor.

In addition to Babo's carefully contrived ploys, the action of the story also produces a number of unconscious or indirect parodies. The most obvious of these is a symbolic one. When Delano first spots the *San Dominick*, he notices a gargoyle: "A dark satyr in a mask, holding his foot on the prostrate neck of a writhing figure, likewise masked" (p. 259). The symbolism of this emblem gives the events of the story extra meaning: one possibility is obvious; *Benito Cereno* writhes in the grasp of Babo's power,
as the bottom figure writhes under the foot of the "dark satyr." However, it is also significant that both of these figures are masked; it is not entirely clear in *Benito Cereno* which of the characters is master and which is the slave. Aranda and Cereno had been first in control; now they are subject to the whim of Babo, who controls the ship. The situation on the *San Dominick* at the time of Delano's arrival is the reverse of what he expects to find.

Yet, toward the end of Delano's encounter with the *San Dominick*, a second reversal also takes place. On discovering the truth about Babo, Delano unconsciously parodies in his own stance this image of the "dark satyr": "The left hand of Captain Delano, on one side, again clutched the half-reclining Don Benito, heedless that he was in a speechless faint, while his right foot, on the other side, ground the prostrate negro" (p. 327). The implications are clear: the evil potential of power is present in Delano as well as in Benito Cereno, Don Aranda, and Babo.

This theme is echoed in a number of other parodies which take place. As the Spanish sailors are about to board the ship, Babo forces one sailor to walk out looking like a traitor and he is killed. Babo is again creating a false reality for the sailors to deal with— that is one

16 This image is noted by Margaret M. Vanderhaar, "A Re-examination of 'Benito Cereno,'" *American Literature*, 40 (1968), 190.
kind of parody. But also the sailors, on boarding the ship, repeat the pattern already established by Babo and the slaves. They kill and maim, seeking revenge, just as Babo and the slaves killed and maimed to get vengeance on their white masters. The cruelties inflicted by the white men who are the supposed "heroes" of the battle suggest that the evil which is in man's spirit is not limited to the man who has been dehumanized by slavery.

The final example of satiric irony in this work is the wickedly suggestive end of Babo—he is beheaded, and his head, that "hive of subtlety" (p. 353), is placed on the pole as a warning against similar insurrections. Yet, this is exactly what was done by Babo himself with the skeleton of Aranda. The supposedly "civilized" world in its actions repeats the patterns established by the "savage" world. Melville returns to an old theme, the existence of a potentiality for savagery which lies beneath the veneer of civilization in every man.

The themes of Benito Cereno are thus enlarged beyond a simple attack on slavery by the symbolic motifs in the story. Melville attacks man's potential for evil: the unrestrained abuse of power at every level. The two-part structure of Benito Cereno, for which it has been frequently been criticized, further suggests a two-sided reality—one part dark, one part bright—and the contrast between idealism and harsh realities. In Benito Cereno, parody thus reveals the inadequacy of a one-sided view of
life and the need for an awareness of evil in all men.

Thus a number of different satiric themes and techniques are found in the short fiction of Melville. If we apply the notion of a satiric spectrum advanced by Frye to Melville's short fiction, we can discover a variety of satiric forms, ranging in mood from the darkly ironic *Benito Cereno* and the seriocomic "Bartleby" to the almost farcical "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!" and "I and My Chimney." This same spectrum can be found in Melville's longer works, which range from the boisterous mayhem of *Mardi* and *Omoo* to the more restrained but still essentially comic satiric passages in *Moby-Dick* and *White-Jacket* to the sustained ironies of *Pierre* and *The Confidence-Man*. Melville's short works thus illustrate the flexibility of Melville's use of satire. Moreover, since the basic methods of satire in the short stories are the same as those in the novels, these works also offer a catalogue of different techniques--anti-climax, juxtaposition, comic incongruity, exaggeration, and above all parody.

In addition to these short works, during this period of magazine fiction, Melville produced one novel-length work, *Israel Potter*, which is probably his least known work. In this work, the mature author returns to the satiric targets on which he had focused in his first three

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novels—in particular, the unsettling contrast between lofty American ideals and the harsh realities of the nation, and the potential savagery which remains just beneath the surface gloss of civilization. Parts of Israel Potter recall Melville's early portrait of Vivenza, and both treatments are equally critical. And the juxtaposition of "savagery" and "civilization" found in Israel Potter recalls Melville's extensive development of these issues in Typee and Omoo.

Yet, although his satiric subjects are similar, Melville's techniques of satire in Israel Potter are much closer to the techniques of Pierre and The Confidence-Man. In particular, he uses the device of irony in Israel Potter to present his critical observations on America in particular and on society in general. Thus, this novel illustrates the gradual shift which appears in Melville's use of satire, a shift away from direct lampoon and toward indirection and parody.

On the surface, Israel Potter is a picaresque novel with an innocent picaro, like Fielding's Joseph Andrews with which Keyssar compares it. Melville depends heavily on source materials, but his adaptations of these sources reveal the workings of an ironist. In particular, he

alters the treatment of the pension issue: in his source, the reader is not certain that Potter is entitled to the pension; in Israel Potter, the loss of the pension is ironic because of all men Israel is most entitled to the pension: this loss is another illustration of the injustice of a destructive world. Israel is made into a more admirable character in order to increase the reader's awareness of his undeserved suffering. In the source, he is a self-seeking opportunist, but in Melville's novel he becomes a painfully honest individual who remains consistently loyal to his country no matter what.

The advantage of using The Life and Times of Israel Potter as a source for a book designed to present an analysis of the American ideal is apparent. Israel Potter is an unknown soldier whose life happens to coincide with a very interesting time in American history. By using him as a sounding board or an innocent observer, Melville can present extensive satiric portraits of three American "great men," Benjamin Franklin, Paul Jones, and Ethan Allen. Against these "great men" stands their not-so-great but highly fervent disciple, Israel Potter.

The first of these portraits is of Franklin, and it is an excellent example of the methods of satiric

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19 A discussion of the changes Melville made in the original story appears in Arnold Rampersand's Melville's Israel Potter: A Pilgrimage and a Progress (Ohio: Bowling Green University, 1967).
indirection. Melville builds up a heroic entrance for the "American sage," and then uses anti-climax to undercut that entrance; after commenting on the "striking picture" Franklin makes seated in his rather bizarre chamber, the narrator denies Franklin that effect. When Israel enters the room, Franklin's back is turned, and Israel sees only his "hunched shoulders" and "knotted mane." In this novel, comic incongruity characterizes Franklin's wisdom: his conversation is a running list of platitudes and contradictory and difficult-to-follow advice.

Franklin also exhibits a number of rather damning limitations as far as his humanity is concerned. He scolds the intrepid Israel for his lack of prudence, denies him a few luxuries like wine and pastry, cologne, scented soap, and sugar, all "for his own good." Israel comments that every time Franklin enters the room he "robs" him, with an air of doing him a favor. Moreover, there is an element of subterfuge in the actions: Israel eventually begins to suspect that he has been "had" by Franklin.

In some ways, Franklin resembles Melville's typical "moonshiny" philosopher. Indeed, his insistence on drinking ice water and his almost religious reverence for the sanctity of "the business deal"—he says, "Never joke during funerals and business transactions"—foreshadow the portrait of Mark Winsome in *The Confidence-Man*. Franklin epitomizes the American ideals—thrift, industry, and individualism—yet, his adherence to these ideals makes
him, like Emerson, something of a "confidence-man," as he denies Israel his luxuries and refuses to acknowledge Israel's very human desire for them.

Melville completes the portrait of Franklin with another example of satiric reduction—he first builds up a picture of Franklin brooding on some "weighty matter," and then undercuts it:

The man of wisdom stood mildly motionless a moment, with a look of sagacious, humane meditation on his face, as if pondering upon the changes of the important enterprise: one which, perhaps, might in the sequel affect the weal or woe of nations yet to come. Then suddenly clapping his hand to his capacious coat pocket, dragged out a bit of cork with some hen's feathers, and hurrying to his room, took out his knife, and proceeded to whittle away at a shuttlecock of an original scientific construction, which at some prior time he had promised to send to the young Duchess D'Abrantes that very afternoon. (84)

As the spokesman for the American dream, Franklin is a disappointment, a petty, rather irritating person with limited insight. Reality does not quite come up to the American ideal, and Franklin's frenzied activity finally resembles aimless piddling.20

The "other self" of Franklin, who represents civilization, or more specifically, "American civilization," is Paul Jones. Keyssar has identified Jones as the id in Israel's life working against the super-ego, who is

Dr. Franklin. Although Paul Jones wears the clothing of civilization, his appearance in this clothing is something of an ironic masquerade—as he parades in front of the mirror with Israel watching him, he bares his great arm which is covered with cabalistic tatoos. Paul Jones is a savage masquerading as a civilized man; as numerous critics have noted, the descriptions of this character in Israel Potter are crowded with references to his "Indian" or "cannibal" nature.

Keyssar and other critics have generally seen the portrait of Paul Jones as rather negative. On board the Ranger, Jones exposes the egocentric motives for his frenzied patriotism and at one point even begins to sound like mad Ahab. The portrait is not totally negative: Jones's chivalric treatment of the Lady Selkirk and his courage under fire are redeeming characteristics. What is important, however, is the tone of that portrait. The heroic values of a great American patriot are called into question when that heroism becomes a tool for personal vengeance and power lust.

In addition to Paul Jones and Franklin, who are America's representatives abroad, Israel Potter also includes a portrait of the captive Ethan Allen, whom Keyssar has called representative of the great American

Keyssar, p. 27.
If Franklin represents America as a philosophical ideal and Jones represents America as that ideal in action, Ethan Allen represents a positive view of America as a brave, gracious, noble savage. Allen has all of Jones's courage without the uncomfortable juxtaposition of civilized strategy and savage desires which make Jones such an ambiguous character. Yet Allen appears chained and baited like a bear, and Israel cannot help him. There is no triumph for the American as "noble savage."

Israel Potter thus includes three portraits of "great men" who are reduced satirically by the descriptions in the novel. The "wisdom" of these three characters is transformed into nonsense; as Keyssar points out, Jones's famous "I have not yet begun to fight" becomes the frenzied cry of a power-crazed extremist. And Franklin's "wisdom" becomes empty platitudes. The most articulate of the three is Ethan Allen, but he is led away in chains and his effectiveness in the action of the novel is extremely limited.

Against these three American "great men" stands Israel Potter himself. It is significant that Israel, though he is a man of action unlike Franklin, shares the characteristics of both Jones and Allen. He is courageous as they are, a "kindred spirit" and a near alter-ego of Jones and a sympathetic observer of Allen, who has also

22 Keyssar, p. 32.
23 Keyssar, p. 38.
been "baited like a bear," as for example in the early scenes in which he is made to dance for the entertainment of the drunken soldiers. Israel's exploits at least equal those of Jones and Allen; like Jones, for example, he takes over an enemy ship. The narrator even calls attention to this act when he observes that Israel gets no credit for his exploits while Jones becomes a public hero. Like Allen, he is a captive who behaves so well that he becomes something of a favorite with his captors.

Israel is different from these men of action, however, in that, unlike Jones and Allen, he is a failure whose efforts all go for naught; he does not triumph but only ends up an exile whose life is filled with poverty and suffering. Melville thus places the not-so-great man against the great men, and his failure suggests the failure of the American ideal. Israel's reality is a life of want and unhappiness; his courage is not rewarded, and he does not even get his pension at the end of the novel. Despite his honesty, his fidelity, and his courage, Melville's American patriot is clearly and consistently a hopeless failure.

Melville enhances this demonstration of the failure of the American ideal through his use of a Biblical paradigm suggested by the name of his protagonist. Israel is in search of the promised land, America, and is an exile from that land condemned to forty years of suffering in Europe. That promised land which Israel idealizes as the
Edenic world of his youth is always present in the novel as a goal, but it is a goal which Israel has trouble reaching. Keyssar has pointed out that the motif of aimless wandering is important in *Israel Potter*, as for example in the comic scene in which Israel is led about from place to place on board the British ship.\(^{24}\) Israel wanders about for forty years without reaching his promised land.

He does eventually return to America, of course, unlike the Biblical Moses who dies before entering the Promised Land. Israel's homecoming is ironic, however. He finally reaches America on the Fourth of July, and he is almost run over by a crowd of people celebrating the Battle of Bunker Hill in which he courageously fought. This homecoming results in no satisfaction, so that the title of that chapter can only be ironic. Instead of reaffirming the ideals of the Promised Land, Israel's homecoming only reveals its essential emptiness.

In *Israel Potter*, then, reductive portraits of American patriots and an inversion of a Biblical paradigm unite to create an attack on America as a false "Promised Land." But Melville's purpose is not simply to criticize America; it is America as an idealistic promise which cannot be kept that attracts Melville's objections. America is thus a symbol as much as a place in *Israel Potter*,

\(^{24}\) Keyssar, p. 22.
the symbol of freedom and Utopia which can never be fully realized. Melville's most serious attacks are against American rhetoric which refuses to acknowledge harsh realities and instead substitutes empty words for that reality. Israel Potter is a "faceless" protagonist who is best characterized by his national identity: he embodies the "American ideal." His failure in the real world both abroad and in his own country demonstrates satirically the failure of that ideal to succeed in reality.

Thus, the magazine fiction which Melville produced between Pierre and The Confidence-Man is united by several common themes: the failure of America to live up to its self-image, the limitations of false idealism, and the impossibility of conclusive human knowledge. This magazine fiction also illustrates Melville's willingness to adopt literary subterfuge in presenting these themes, manipulating his reader's expectations and offering insoluble puzzles for the reader to attempt to unravel. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, these works reveal the pervasiveness of satiric modes and intentions in Melville's fiction and the variety of their development. Melville's themes are often described as "metaphysical"; perhaps, given the importance of satiric techniques in these works, it may be more accurate to consider them as comic reactions to possible answers to the questions of metaphysics in human experience.
CHAPTER 5

THE CONFIDENCE-MAN

In The Confidence-Man, Melville adopts an unusual plot structure which is episodic and based not on a traditional pattern of rising actions, a climax, and resolution but instead on mimicry and repetition. Moreover, the title character lacks a clear identity and does not provide a focus for the reader's sympathies. For these reasons, critics have generally considered this work to be something of a problem, and some have claimed that it is marred by an apparently episodic structure. The Confidence-Man, however, is not aimless at all: it is a careful, systematic satire. Through complex "tactics of indirection," Melville produces a comic drama in which scenes, characters, and dialogues are ridiculed and in which the quest motif is distorted to reveal ironies implicit in man's search for meaning. Parody is the most important element in this work which eventually develops into an elaborate metaphysical joke.

Although most critics agree that The Confidence-Man is Melville's most fully developed satiric work, many have questioned its effectiveness as satire. In particular, three problematic issues have received a considerable
amount of commentary: The Confidence-Man has been criticized for its negative mood, its lack of clear norms, and its unusual structure. Since in many ways this work represents the culmination of Melville's use of satiric techniques in the novel, we must resolve these critical problems if we are to judge Melville finally to be a skillful practitioner of the methods of satire.

Some critics condemn The Confidence-Man as being unduly pessimistic. For example, Tyrus Hillway, who says that the novel is characterized by a "bitter mood," maintains that the playful intent requisite for satire is lacking in this work, because Melville's feelings against hypocrisy were simply too strong to sustain satiric perspective in a novel centered upon deceit.\(^1\) Alan Lebowitz has called The Confidence-Man a "bleak, unfunny satire," "a grim book and a tedious one."\(^2\) Although this bleak tone cannot really be considered a flaw, since it is not unusual to find a satire which is not particularly humorous, the intensity of Melville's nihilistic irony in The Confidence-Man has caused problems for a number of critics who see few affirmative elements in the work.

A more serious charge, advanced by Edward Mitchell among others, is that The Confidence-Man does not succeed

\(^1\) Tyrus Hillway, Herman Melville (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1963), p. 120.

as satire because it contains no norms.\(^3\) Since there are few virtuous characters and all of these are victims, *The Confidence-Man* does not seem to some critics to have a clear standard of right action against which to measure the events which occur on board the *Fidele*; as Ronald Mason maintains, since there appears to be little real innocence in the novel, there is not likely to be much nobility.\(^4\) Although there are a few apparently innocent characters whose motives seem pure, there is no way for the reader to be certain of their innocence, and these characters—most notably, the Episcopal minister, Mr. Roberts, and the charitable lady in the cabin—are the most easily duped of all the Confidence-Man's victims: they are not fully developed, and they play only a minor role in the action of the novel. On the other hand, those persons who are not tricked present no positive alternative to the gullibility of innocence—the only characters who resist the trickery of the Confidence-Man are either painfully inhuman intellectuals like Winsome and Egbert or confidence-men themselves, like Charlie Noble. Thus, for critics who agree with Mitchell and Mason, the novel


fails as satire because it lacks, in Mason's words, "the stable equilibrium of a character or a set of embodied precepts."\(^5\)

Finally, the satiric structure which Melville adopts is perhaps most problematic. Of all the difficulties which critics have noted in discussing *The Confidence-Man*, its unusual form is the one most often cited. It has been faulted for being repetitious, with numerous dialogues but no turning point in the action. Moreover, the conclusion of the novel presents a number of special difficulties. Ronald Mason considers *The Confidence-Man* flawed because it "peters out arbitrarily at the end of one of the subsidiary episodes,"\(^6\) and many commentators find it artistically incomplete because, though the action is set within the framework of a voyage from St. Louis to New Orleans, the *Fidèle* never gets to New Orleans. There is thus no clear structural goal to provide the novel with unity, and Melville violates the motif of the voyage as he has never done before. Without a clear climax and resolution, the tensions which are developed in the novel are not relieved, and it becomes a particularly difficult book to cope with and to justify, both critically and aesthetically.

Thus, although *The Confidence-Man* has in recent years

\(^5\) Mason, p. 205.

attracted an ever-increasing amount of serious attention, there is still an undercurrent of belief that The Confidence-Man is, in Lebowitz's words, an "odd--and oddly final--book," or, as Arvin suggests, "a dead end." Although there have been some attempts to explain its structure by seeing it in traditions apart from the realistic one, the satiric narrative methods employed by Melville in The Confidence-Man are still considered by many critics a dubious achievement, with a number of unresolved interpretive problems.

Though there is no doubt that the satiric techniques used by Melville in The Confidence-Man place strident demands on the reader, it is possible to come to terms with these difficulties. The three major problems which critics have most often focused on in The Confidence-Man--its negative mood, its lack of clear norms, and its unusual structure--are all partially or completely resolved by a close look at its highly-patterned satiric structure. Indeed, if the test of an effective novel is how closely the author interrelates plot, theme, and character, then The Confidence-Man is remarkable. Plot and character in this work are interwoven so tightly that it is impossible to separate them. And the thematic

7 Lebowitz, p. 152.

contrasts between truth and falsity and between trust and distrust are so consistently developed that they are present in every episode.

The first step in unravelling the structure of The Confidence-Man is to recognize the inverted quest motif which Melville uses as a skeletal framework. Although the plot does not fall into the usual pattern of rising action, climax, and resolution, Melville in The Confidence-Man employs unity of time, unity of place, and a carefully contrived Biblical paradigm to provide it with order and direction. When these motifs are combined with the suggestion that the entire voyage is a pilgrimage of sorts, a clear pattern begins to appear: the novel is another Melvillean "metaphysical quest," designed to lead man to some knowledge of "Truth." For Melville, however, "Truth" is not completely attainable; all man can achieve is a recognition of the ambiguities, and we have seen repeatedly Melville's refusal to oversimplify by reducing "Truth" to some philosophical or scientific code. So, in The Confidence-Man, the quest for knowledge and understanding is ironic, leading not to clear answers but to a comic dissolution of all meaning. For this reason, each of Melville's structural motifs is inverted to suggest man's inability to reach his goal of "Truth." The Confidence-Man does not offer its reader simple answers to the quest for meaning; instead, it presents an ironic pilgrimage which has no clear resolution.
The motif of the quest is carefully established at the start of The Confidence-Man. In Chapter Two, the narrator emphasizes that the characters on board the Fidèle are hunters: "...farm-hunters and fame-hunters; heiress-hunters, gold-hunters, buffalo-hunters, bee-hunters, happiness-hunters, truth-hunters, and still keener hunters after all these hunters" (p. 6). Also, the passengers on the Fidèle are identified as pilgrims: "a piebald parliament, an Anacharsis Cloots congress of all kinds of that multi-form pilgrim species, man" (p. 61). The progression of the riverboat towards New Orleans is a symbol for the experiences of man as he searches for some kind of meaning in his life.

However, if the novel begins with the assumption that the Fidèle's voyage to New Orleans is a quest, it becomes apparent after a very few chapters that it is an ironic quest. The basic pattern of the novel is not one of resolution but one of dissolution. The quest for truth presented in the novel thus leads nowhere: it is a pilgrimage without a clear purpose; since fact and fiction are completely entangled in the world of the Confidence-Man, there is no certain truth to provide a goal for the pilgrims. The novel ends abruptly long before the

riverboat gets to its geographical goal of New Orleans, and, in the last chapter, as the old farmer and the cosmopolitan bewail the lack of wisdom to be found in the Apocrypha of the Bible, two unidentified choral characters ridicule man's search for meaning:

"I tell you what it is," here cried the same voice as before, only in less of mockery, "if you two don't know enough to sleep, don't be keeping wiser men awake. And if you want to know what wisdom is, go find it under your blankets."

"Wisdom?" cried another voice with a brogue: "arrah, and is't wisdom the two geese are gabbling about all this while? To bed with ye, ye divils, and don't be after burning your fingers with the likes of wisdom." (209)

The ironic inversion of the quest motif which is found in The Confidence-Man is finally emphasized by these two nameless, mocking voices, which make fun of man's ill-fated attempts to gain knowledge.¹⁰

To further enhance the reader's sense that the novel is a kind of quest, though an ironic one, Melville establishes, if only by his narrative plan, the unities of time and place in The Confidence-Man. First, the action is limited to the events which occur on or around the Fidèle; the narrator thus sets up a single locale for the novel. Second, the action occurs within a limited

¹⁰ This effect is enhanced by the fact that the two questers in this scene are the deceitful confidence-man and the suspicious farmer.
period of time, a single day, as measured by the existence of light--it lasts from "sunrise" on April 1st to the extinguishing of the last lamp about midnight. The use of these unities creates the semblance of order in this novel centered on a pilgrimage in search of meaning.

Yet, like the motif of the quest itself, Melville seems to establish these unities only for the purpose of violating them, as he moves toward the final apocalyptic conclusion. As Leon Seltzer observes, the plot of the novel systematically undermines both unity of time and unity of place. Although the events all occur on board a riverboat, the narrator emphasizes that the world of the Fidèle is in continual flux, as characters depart and arrive and are accidentally encountered at landings: "Though always full of strangers, she continually, in some degree adds to, or replaces them with strangers still more strange; like Rio Janeiro fountain fed from the Corcovado mountains, which is ever overflowing with strange waters, but never with the same strange particles in every part" (p. 5). The Fidèle is thus a most unstable and shifting microcosm. Unity of time is similarly distorted: though the events which occur are superficially limited to one day, stories told by the various characters relate back to distant times and

distant places. And the allegorical implications of the novel, which cover the period of time from the "advent" of the Christ-like deaf-mute to the Apocalypse of the universe, also extend the events which occur considerably beyond the one-day structure of the novel.

By subverting the quest motif and the two unities which he establishes at the start of the novel, the narrator leads the reader into an ironic search for truth which causes him to "descend" from light into darkness. As false confidence is systematically exposed and replaced by distrust, the Fidèle progresses literally down the river and symbolically "down" toward moral and psychological disintegration and meaninglessness.

Moreover, in addition to an ironic quest motif, Melville also uses an allegorical parody to enhance the reader's awareness of the ironies implicit in man's search for meaning. As in Moby-Dick and Pierre, Biblical references abound in this novel. Indeed, some critics--Elizabeth Foster, for one--see the work as an extended religious allegory,\(^\text{12}\) chronicling the arrival and departure of Christ, or, rather, of an anti-Christ. But, just as the quest motif is introduced only to be ironically undermined, so these religious allusions are also ambiguous and contradictory.

The narrator makes the Confidence-Man an ambiguous

allegorical figure by associating him with both Christ and Satan. Most critics believe that the deaf-mute, who may be a preliminary avatar of the title character, is a type of Christ, but, since there is no proof that he and other forms of the Confidence-Man who appear later in the novel are actually one and the same person, the reader cannot for certain attribute his long-suffering meekness to the Confidence-Man. Moreover, in his later avatars as his deceit becomes more obvious, the allegorical identity of the Confidence-Man is even more ambiguous. There are parts of the novel in which he seems to be a Christ figure. In all of his guises, he sets forth a philosophy of Christian charity, and, as Ernest Tuveson observes, there are times when he seems to fulfill a priestly role, as when he gives the old miser the gift of faith: in this episode, the miser's change from distrust in man to trust in man seems a religious conversion. Moreover, the cosmopolitan starts his conversation with the barber with the greeting, "'Bless you, barber!'" (p. 192), which the narrator later refers to as a "benediction," "a sort of spiritual manifestation" (p. 193), and in the same scene the cosmopolitan "ascends" into one of the barber's three "thrones," perhaps suggestive of the Trinity, with Christ "seated at the right hand of

\textsuperscript{13} Ernest Tuveson, "Creed of the Confidence-Man," \textit{ELH}, 33 (1966), 259.
the Father." Paradoxically, however, in addition to such Christian symbolism, there are many references to the snake-like qualities of the Confidence-Man and he is even called a devil at times. It is never quite clear whether the title character in this novel is Christ-like or Satanic.

In fact, as Daniel Hoffman points out, he is allegorically neither Christ nor Satan, but a form of anti-Christ, who parodies and perverts the message of I Corinthians 13 for personal gain and exploits man's weaknesses for his own purposes. He adopts the words and images of Christ and employs them freely; however, the reader, who recognizes Satanic elements in his character and who is aware of Melville's use of irony in the novel, knows that these allusions are ironic and mocking. The Confidence-Man is a perverse form of Christ affiliated with Satanic forces, and the allegorical structure of the novel is a parody of the story of Christ, from his first coming to his second coming on Judgment Day.

The first and last chapters of *The Confidence-Man* develop these associations directly. They are paired chapters: the last chapter parodies the first. In Chapter I, the "lamb-like" deaf-mute appears as a Christ symbol who is both "gentle and jaded" (p. 4). With him

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comes sunrise. In the final chapter, the last light, a lamp which represents both the Old and New Testaments, is extinguished, and the flaxen-haired deaf-mute is replaced by the Satanic cosmopolitan and a child Confidence-Man.

Just as the deaf-mute is associated with Christ, so also, ironically, is the mysterious boy who appears in the final scene. This identification is accomplished mostly by the narrator's suggestion that the farmer is old Simeon, awaiting the coming of the Christ-child: this same old man also calls the child a "blessed boy" and a "public benefactor" (p. 213). However, as Pierre's resemblance to Christ is perceived by the reader as a false pose engineered by his pride, so this child is perceived by the reader to be not the child Christ but a child Confidence-Man, a trickster who gulls the old farmer and winks familiarly at the cosmopolitan. He is a laughing distorted version of the lamb-like deaf-mute, a parody with "leopard-like teeth" (p. 210), who is even called a "'divil'" by the man with the brogue. It is important that, though like Christ in the Apocalypse he wears flaming garments, his attire resembles that of a "victim in auto da fe" (p. 210). He becomes a form of martyred heretic, not Christ, but a false Christ, or more accurately what happens to Christian ideals in the nightmare world that the novel depicts. Melville projects in a dream vision conclusion the perversion which pervails in a world of fools and knaves, and this final chapter is in many ways
Thus, Melville manipulates the reader's response to the Confidence-Man by carefully developing allegorical patterns and simultaneously emphasizing the final disintegration which occurs at the end of this satiric dream vision through inversion of these patterns. However, though these patterns provide the skeletal support needed for this complex novel, the real structure is derived from the individual parodies which occur on virtually every page of the novel, as episodes and characters are connected with each other to create a closely-knit narrative structure from chapter to chapter. Virtually every confrontation in the novel is finally connected integrally with every other confrontation. Although the plot is episodic, the various sequential episodes do not occur at random but are related parts of an intensifying pattern based on satiric inversion and ironic parallels. These various episodes cannot be successfully isolated; they are meaningful only because of their relationships with similar or contrasting scenes, and it is only by measuring episode against episode that the reader can come to a reasonably valid interpretation of the novel. Actions and dialogues are repeated in different contexts to expose the delusions of the Confidence-Man's victims and the deceit practiced by the

Confidence-Man himself, and characters are reproduced in mocking forms to reveal their weaknesses and strengths through a subsequent usually very different perspective. By means of these techniques, the narrative structure of *The Confidence-Man* becomes almost a *tour de force*, with episodes tightly interwoven through irony and wordplay.

*The Confidence-Man* is largely a novel of character rather than a novel of action. As Elizabeth Foster points out, most of the conflicts occur at the level of talk rather than action.16 For this reason, many of the individual parodies which occur during the course of the narrative focus on the various people the trickster protagonist encounters and dupes. These parodies force the reader to recall prior conflicts and to compare and contrast a character with other related characters who have appeared earlier in the action. The novel sets up an interlocking pattern of allusions, images, and dialogues which forces the reader into the position of judge and interpreter of the action, as he observes a systematic working out of the themes of the novel by not one but several forms of the same character.

The Confidence-Man himself is the most obvious example of a character who is completely or partially re-enacted as another character. Although he assumes a number of

16 Foster, p. xiv.
different roles, he is, as John Seelye points out, the most consistent character of the novel, clearly one man with many different appearances. The philosophy of life he advances is expressed in consistent, even repetitive language. In creating echoes from one form of the Confidence-Man to another, Melville intends to identify the various guises of the title character. For example, references to the dog-likeness of the P. I. O. man remind the reader of Black Guinea, who plays "in a merry way" at being a dog in Chapter Three. In the case of Guinea, there is some question as to whether his pose is true or false, but by the time the reader witnesses the conversation between the P. I. O. man and Pitch, he has seen enough to know that he is seeing a trickster at work. The dog imagery relates Guinea and the P. I. O. man to each other, and in the process allows the reader to see that Guinea is a fraud and that the "gimlet-eyed misanthrope" was correct in his judgments about him.

In other instances, the techniques are more complicated. Apparently different characters are revealed to be ironically alike and apparently like characters are revealed to be unexpectedly different through character pairing. There are many examples of such "paired" characters in the novel, and a few are especially important: the conscious pairing

of Black Guinea and the deaf-mute introduces this technique early in the novel; the pairing of Pitch and the Indian-hater and of the gimlet-eyed misanthrope and the invalid Titan illustrates the loss of humanity which accompanies a misanthropic rejection of the falseness of man; and the pairing of Charlie Noble and the two other Charlies who appear in the novel, Egbert as Charlie Noble and Charlemont, illustrates the failure of "moonshiny" philosophies to protect man from the "confidence-game" which dominates the workings of the world. These sets of characters demonstrate Melville's use of a complicated kind of parody which enables the reader to see the various confrontations in much better perspective.

This difficult but effective pairing technique is introduced in The Confidence-Man in Chapter Three, in which the "dark" character Black Guinea is presented as an ironic "second self" of the lamb-like deaf-mute in Chapter One. These two rather inarticulate but provocative characters establish from the very beginning the major themes of the novel--the contrast between philanthropy and misanthropy and the problem of false appearances.

The differences between these two characters at first glance are most apparent. The coming of the deaf-mute in Chapter One is symbolic and entirely non-verbal. On the other hand, Chapter Three, focusing on Black Guinea, introduces the precisely opposite technique of dialogue cast in a literal and realistic context, as false characters argue
the validity of confidence against the charges of the cynical misanthropes. The deaf-mute solicits nothing: on the other hand, Guinea, small though his earnings may be, acts from pecuniary motives (as is emphasized by the pun in his name); he is begging coppers from the passengers on the Fidèle. But perhaps the most important difference between the two characters is in the narrator's attitude toward them. The lamb-like deaf-mute is associated with Christ, and the narrator offers no criticism of his mission, even observing that the "No Trust" sign of the barber is "not less intrusive" (p. 3) than his message of charity. On the other hand, the narrator reveals that Black Guinea is acting from ulterior motives by calling attention to his secret capture of the kindly merchant's business card: "Shuffling a pace nigher, with one upstretched hand he received the alms, while, as unconsciously his own advanced leather stump covered the card" (p. 14). Black Guinea thus commits one of the few acts in the novel which the narrator clearly labels as deceit: he has ulterior purposes, which the narrator emphasizes when he calls attention to his pretended cheerfulness and "secret emotions" (p. 8). He is finally a dark character, literally and metaphorically, in contrast to the "snowy" deaf-mute; this darkness links him to the forces of evil and foreshadows the final dissolution of light which takes place at the conclusion of the novel. Whereas the narrator presents the deaf-mute as a Christ-like victim of
the indifference and cruelty of the world, he suggests that Guinea may actually be something less than virtuous. The two characters are thus quite different.

A closer look reveals, however, that Black Guinea also is like the deaf-mute in a number of ways: he is in fact an inverted mirror image. While the deaf-mute is lamb-like and has a white fur hat "with a long fleecy nap" (p. 1), Black Guinea has "knotted black fleece" (p. 7) and resembles a "half-frozen black sheep nudging itself a cozy berth in the heart of the white flock" (p. 8). The two characters are both described as "strange" individuals, homeless wanderers: the deaf-mute "traveling night and day from some far country beyond the prairies" "had long been without the solace of a bed" (p. 4), and Black Guinea, when asked where he sleeps at night, answers that he "sleeps out on der pabements o' nights" on the floor of the "good baker's oven" (p. 7).

The two characters are further linked through a metaphoric parallel. In Chapter One, commenting on the presence of evil in the world, the narrator notes that the great outlaws of the past have vanished to be replaced by another kind of "bandit": "Creatures, with others of the sort, one and all exterminated at the time, and, for the most part, like the hunted generations of wolves in the same regions, leaving comparatively few successors; which would seem cause for unalloyed gratulation, and is such to all except those who think that in new countries,
where the wolves are killed off, the foxes increase" (p. 2). The "fox" in this novel is the Confidence-Man himself, and the apparently innocent deaf-mute is ironically associated with the fox: as critics have noted, he has a decidedly fox-like appearance: "His cheek was fair, his chin downy, his hair flaxen, his hat a white fur one, with a long fleecy nap" (p. 1). Even at this early point in the novel, the narrator is undermining the favorable description of the deaf-mute. Similarly, in Chapter Three, the final warning of the gimlet-eyed misanthrope about Black Guinea is dismissed as "the foiled wolf's parting howl" (p. 12). This image causes the reader to recall the earlier pattern and places the crippled Guinea, like the deaf-mute, in the role of fox.

Moreover, the first and third chapters of The Confidence-Man have an almost identical structural pattern. Both begin with a sentence which clearly directs the reader's attention to a strange individual, who is also occupying the attention of a small crowd. Both include a physical description of that man; in both instances, the reader's sympathy is evoked because that character is mistreated by the crowd. The pathetic deaf-mute is tormented by the crowd, and Guinea is the victim of a cruel "game of charity" (p. 8). Both scenes quickly establish the thematic opposition of trust and distrust--there is in each a clearly stated presentation of these alternative positions (the deaf-mute's slate versus the barber's sign
and the gimlet-eyed misanthrope versus the militant Methodist), but in Chapter Three it is "charity" that triumphs over distrust, in the person of the militant churchman who perverts the message of suffering humility offered by the deaf-mute by committing an act of physical violence against the gimlet-eyed cripple. So similar are the two chapters in many details that Black Guinea even comes to resemble a little bit the deaf-mute, as he waits, hopelessly and passively, for the crowd to make up its mind about him.

This extensive correlation between the first and the third chapters conditions the reader's response to the puzzling deaf-mute. The role of this character in the narrative has long been a subject of contention for readers of The Confidence-Man; on the one hand, he may be, as he seems, a Christ symbol, rendered impotent and ineffectual by the evil world containing "No Trust." On the other hand, some critics have suggested that he is a softening agent for the other Confidence-Men who follow him, perhaps even a form of the Confidence-Man himself. The deaf-mute is an ambiguous character whose function in the novel remains uncertain.

Although this ambiguity is never resolved in the novel, the similarities between the first and the third chapters make it clear that the narrator intends for the reader to compare the deaf-mute and Guinea and to "read" them against each other. This "pairing" even suggests the
tantalizing possibility that the two characters are actually one and the same. Whether they are or not (a question that the novel does not answer), it is important for the narrator to establish the possibility of false charity early in the novel, since the avatars of the Confidence-Man all involve a virtuous front with a deceptive evil intent behind it, and much of the irony of the novel depends on the reader's ability to recognize the "dark" side of existence which the Confidence-Man carefully hides beneath an optimistic philosophy. One function of the "pairing" of Chapter One and Chapter Three is thus to introduce the technical format of the novel.

By emphasizing similarities between Black Guinea and the deaf-mute while at the same time portraying them as different, the narrator also reveals the deceptive quality of appearances, which will become a major point in the novel. The reader's favorable impression of the saint-like deaf-mute is partially reduced by the narrator's ambiguous treatment of his "double," Black Guinea. Perhaps the deaf-mute, too, is a false innocent, a masquerader. It is always possible that innocence and goodness may be a sham. Reality is fittingly represented as "mere phantoms which flit along a page, like shadows along a wall" (p. 58). In fact, it is so illusory that the reader cannot trust his initial response, or indeed his second and third responses, no matter whether these responses are intuitive or rational.
The first extended parody Melville develops between two paired characters thus establishes the major techniques of the novel, as the narrator suggests, without necessarily developing, additional levels of meaning for the deaf-mute. Later avatars of similarly mute characters, the dispenser of tracts and the raven-haired prophet which some critics have identified as Poe, further reduce the saint-like qualities of the mute, until he becomes not a source of Christian norms, as one critic has suggested, but an equivocal figure who introduces the major issues of the novel—what is good? what is evil? Is trust in man really the answer? or is distrust man's only self-defense against a false, cheating world?—and then vanishes, leaving them completely unanswered.

In *The Confidence-Man* there appear to be only two attitudes which can protect man from the deceit of the trickster: total misanthropy which causes its proponents to reject the Confidence-Man's "line" as completely false; and philosophical distancing, which enables man to avoid emotional responses altogether. Although some critics have suggested that the characters who are not tricked by the Confidence-Man—the philosopher Winsome and his disciple Egbert, Charlie Noble, and the suffering Titan—may serve as "norms" in the novel, it is apparent from the descriptions of these characters that they pay a tremendous price for their insight: that price is the loss of humanity. Melville reveals the limitations of
these characters who cannot be tricked through similar methods of character pairing.

Of the numerous examples of misanthropes who confront the Confidence-Man in the pages of this novel, perhaps the most interesting is the Missouri bachelor Pitch, the only character who really gains a measure of understanding of the wiles of the Confidence-Man. He is, as one critic has noted, a "pivotal character."\(^\text{18}\) He is introduced about halfway through the narrative, and he is the only character with an entire chapter devoted to his reaction on discovering that he has been tricked. Moreover, the Confidence-Man devotes a great deal of energy to the duping of Pitch. Unable to deceive him as the herb doctor, he succeeds finally as the P. I. O. man and then attempts to follow up on his success from a second gulling as the cosmopolitan. However, Pitch, who has an insight few other characters possess, recognizes the Confidence-Man in his most deceptive role and refuses to be gulled a second time; also, through the cosmopolitan's urbane mask he spots a fellow misanthrope. Moreover, he is, partly because of his rejection of slavery and partly because of his honesty, unquestionably an admirable character, the one with whom the reader can most easily identify. Although he represents one thematic pole of the novel, misanthropy, he is an imperfect misanthrope who has not fully rejected

\(^{18}\) Seelye, p. 127.
humanity. As such, he is one of the most interesting and believable characters in the work. Because of his importance, it is necessary for the narrator to place him clearly in perspective, which he does through the parable of Colonel John Moredock, a parody of Pitch who demonstrates the dangers of extreme misanthropy.

While Guinea and the deaf-mute at first seem to be very different, Pitch and the Indian-hater at first seem very much alike. Both are associated with a primitive backwoods philosophy: Moredock is called "Moredock of Misanthrope Hall--the Woods" (p. 122), and Pitch is described as a "gentleman woodsman," "somewhat ursine in aspect; sporting a shaggy spencer of the cloth called bear's-skin; a high-peaked cap of raccoon-silk, the long bushy tail swishing over behind; raw-hide leggings; grim stubble chin; and to end, a double-barreled gun in hand--a Missouri bachelor, a Hoosier gentleman, of Spartan leisure and fortune, and equally Spartan manners and sentiments; and, as the sequel may show, not less acquainted, in a Spartan way of his own, with philosophy and books, than with wood-craft and rifles" (p. 91). Significantly, the story of Moredock is told by Charlie Noble as a direct commentary on Pitch, which of course further links the two characters. Most of all, they are connected by Pitch's half-jesting intention to start hunting boys, in order to exterminate them; he says, "'I doubt not that a price will be put upon their peltries as upon the knavish 'possums,
especially the boys. Yes, sir (ringing his rifle down on the deck), I rejoice to think that the day is at hand, when, prompted to it by law, I shall shoulder this gun and go out a boy-shooting'" (p. 101). This attitude is caricatured in the story of the Indian-hater as Moredock's fanatical drive to exterminate the Indian. In fact, Moredock the Indian-hater is an exaggerated version of the Missouri bachelor, who demonstrates the tragedy of the sensitive man who assumes the role of misanthrope (the Indian-hater has at bottom a "good heart"), because of his disillusionment with the world.

However, though superficially resembling each other, these two characters are quite different. Though Moredock is a parody of Pitch, Pitch is enlarged rather than reduced by the comparison. The Missouri bachelor is finally deceived into accepting another boy against his principles, whereas Moredock, though he lives at times an ordinary and friendly existence, perhaps intended as a caricature of Pitch's lack of consistency, never relinquishes his unrelenting drive to destroy Indians: Pitch is thus a "surly philanthropist," while Moredock is a "genial misanthrope." Although Moredock never encounters the Confidence-Man himself and lives apart from the world of the Fidèle, the Indians, who hide their sinister intent behind a genial mask, are clearly types of the
Confidence-Man, and he is never deceived by them. He sees, through deceptive appearances, the evil present at the heart of existence and strives to eliminate it in its entirety, even at the risk of losing some of his own humanity in the attempt. The story of Moredock illustrates the misanthropy necessary to protect man from the deceit of the Confidence-Man.

Because of the story of Moredock, the reader is forced to revise his initial judgements of Pitch. Despite a superficial similarity, Pitch is no Moredock. The misanthropy implicit in Moredock's hatred for Indians may be more consistent than the misanthropy of Pitch, an interesting echo of Chapter Fourteen, in which the narrator pauses briefly to consider consistency of characterization in fiction, but Pitch remains human and likeable whereas Moredock, as one critic has noted, deteriorates into an animal: "He commits himself to the forest primeval; there, so long as life shall be his, to act upon a calm, cloistered scheme of strategical, implacable, and lonesome vengeance. Ever on the noiseless trail; cool, collected,

19 Foster, p. lxvii.


21 Roy Harvey Pearce, "Melville's Indian Hater," PMLA, 67 (1952), 323.
patient; less seen than felt; snuffing, smelling—a Leather-stocking Nemesis" (p. 130). A contrast is sug­
gested between Pitch, the humane misanthrope who can be deceived, and Moredock, the brutal and hate-filled man who cannot be tricked, and it is Pitch who emerges as the more human of the two.

Other paired characters further reveal the danger of a too-extreme misanthropy. The actions and attitudes of the gimlet-eyed misanthrope and the backwoods Titan are clearly similar; indeed, when the Titan appears, the reader is likely to feel that he is encountering the gimlet-eyed misanthrope for a third time. Both are crip­
pled, outspoken misanthropes who see through the disguises of the Confidence-Man, and both bring about a shift in perspective for a whole crowd. Both associate the Confidence-Man with the devil as snake: the gimlet-eyed man asks, "'How much money did the devil make by gulling Eve?'" (p. 28). Likewise, the backwoods Titan exclaims, "'Profane fiddler on heart-strings! Snake!'" (p. 75). Although they have the insight to see the truth in spite of public opinion, both are called cowards: the herb doc­
tor labels the attack of the Titan a "coward assault" (p. 75), and the Methodist minister calls the one-legged man a "seedy coward" (p. 12). Finally, there is a tonal similarity in the departures of the two misanthropes: the herb doctor, after being struck by the Titan, exclaims, "'Regardless of decency, and lost to humanity!'" (p. 75).
He then exclaims: "'No, no, I don't seek redress; innocence is my redress'" (p. 75). Similarly, the misanthrope in Chapter Three departs amid hisses "in which the brave Methodist, satisfied with the rebuke already administered, was, to omit still better reasons, too magnanimous to join. All he said was, pointing towards the departing recusant, 'There he shambles off on his lone leg, emblematic of his one-sided view of humanity'" (p. 12).

As in the case of Pitch and Moredock, however, there are also differences between the two misanthropes. The action involved in the confrontation between the herb doctor and the Titan is a direct inversion of the action which occurs in the confrontation between the minister and the discharged customs-house officer. These two scenes represent the only parts of the novel in which the carefully-sustained tension between philanthropy and misanthropy explodes into violence; yet, the direction of the violence is in these two scenes exactly reversed. In Chapter Three, the misanthrope is the victim of the anger of the Methodist minister, a "false philanthropist," and he is severely shaken. On the other hand, in Chapter Seventeen, the misanthrope attacks the false philanthropist, the Confidence-Man as herb doctor, and deals him a blow.

The effect of this reversal is carefully contrived. First of all, the Methodist minister, the false philanthropist, is parodied by his resemblance to the misanthropic Titan. The superficiality of his "charity" and faith in
human goodness is revealed when he assumes the role of an attacker in Chapter Three; the confrontation between the herb doctor and the Titan, occurring much later, after the reader has witnessed in many forms the deceptive capacities of the false philanthropist, re-emphasizes this superficiality by drawing an equation between the violence of the minister and the instinctive striking out of the suffering dusk giant. The original gimlet-eyed misanthrope is re-created as the Titan in this chapter, in order to achieve a symbolic revenge on society's false charity. His violence results in an unmasking of the Confidence-Man, and this blow is indeed a blow for truth.

On the other hand, the violence of the Titan reduces the heroic quality of the earlier laughing misanthrope. As one critic points out, the Titan "responds to evil instinctively and in an obsessed manner. Unable to meet it with cunning, he uses force, becoming what he would destroy."²² Though he has considerable insight, the Titan is more of a pathetic character than a sympathetic one; he is associated with a primitive and suffering monster:

Just then the boat touched at a houseless landing, scooped, as by a land-slide, out of sombre forests; back through which led a road, the sole one, which from its narrowness, and its being walled up with story on story of dusk, matted foliage, presented the vista of some cavernous old gorge in a city, like haunted Cock Lane in

London. Issuing from that road, and crossing that landing, there stooped his shaggy form in the door-way, and entered the ante-cabin with a step so burdensome that shot seemed in his pockets, a kind of invalid Titan in homespun... (72)

As in the case of Moredock, the price paid for unrelenting misanthropy appears to be a partial loss of humanity. The "dusk giant" who can only respond to evil with instinctive violence is indeed ironically "lost to humanity" (p. 75), despite his unswerving honesty; a Melville "isolato," he has withdrawn from society into himself.

The pairing of Pitch and Moredock and the suffering Titan and the misanthropic minister thus reveals the de-humanization necessary if man accepts only the unswerving truth about society and existence. There is yet another set of characters who parody each other. These characters, who are all named "Charles," give the narrator an opportunity to explore the philosophical responses possible to the problems which face the truth-seeking individual in a harsh world. Charles Arnold Noble, the second-rate Confidence-Man, is one of these characters; two other characters are also associated with Noble, the association being suggested by a similarity between their names: these include Charlemont, the St. Louis merchant who appears in a parable related by the cosmopolitan, and the disciple Egbert who enacts the role of "Charlie" as an illustration of the philosophy of his teacher, Mark Winsome.

This identification is denigratory as far as Winsome and Egbert are concerned. Charlie Noble, a less skillful
Confidence-Man coming up against a master, has clearly been made a fool of by the Confidence-Man in the preceding chapter. Winsome, on the other hand, has offered his philosophy as a carefully developed vision of existence intellectually satisfying but also transferable to real life. The identification of these two characters with each other reveals that Winsome's mystic philosophy is roughly equivalent to the blatant hypocrisy and lowly intentions of a Charlie Noble. In this way, moonshiny philosophies based on cold intellectualism and mental tricks are satirized. By extension, Winsome and Egbert come to be seen as lesser confidence-men, false philanthropists who cannot be tricked but who are less admirable because of their invulnerability and who, like the animal-like misanthropes, pay the price of dehumanization for their insight.

Charlemont, who appears in a parable told by the cosmopolitan to Charlie Noble, is also related to these two characters, but the relationship is puzzling. The details of Charlemont's story are ambiguous; indeed, critics have interpreted the story in different ways. For example, James Miller explains Charlemont's withdrawal as an attempt to save his friends from the embarrassment of helping him in his bankruptcy. Other critics, placing him in the tradition of Benito Cereno and Pierre, see it as the psychological

withdrawal of the good man who has undergone the shock of discovering the evil side of existence. In any case, Charlemont's return to society represents a rejection of some too painful insight; since Charlemont's attitude toward mankind changes from benevolence to malevolence and back to benevolence against, this story is related to the theme of misanthropy and philanthropy in the novel.

The Charlemont parable, like the parable of the Indian-hater, is a kind of exemplum which provides the reader with an additional perspective on Charlie Noble and Winsome. These three persons, who have sufficient insight to see the dark side of reality beneath its bright exterior and who, in contrast to the misanthropes, also manage somehow to avoid despair, must be measured against each other, as suggested by their similar names. Like Charlemont after his discoveries, the mystic and the second-rate confidence-man think they understand humanity, at least to the extent that it is possible for any man to see through the deception of appearances to the reality beyond. Like Charlemont, also, they do not reject human company, as do the suffering misanthropes, but rather they return to the society of man, changed by their discoveries but still able to continue.

Still, the subsistence of these three characters is no more positive than the delusion of the innocents and the fools. Winsome and Egbert, although they have come to terms with the existence of evil on an intellectual level,
cannot emotionally respond to it at all. And Charlie Noble, like the Confidence-Man himself, is exploiting the delusions of others for his own personal gain or perhaps for an even more sinister misanthropic purpose: he is associated frequently with the devil. The only positive one of these three characters is Charlemont. Yet he is a mysterious figure whose existence the Confidence-Man denies. He is, as one critic has pointed out, a Christ figure of sorts. He returns, and "by art, and care, and time, flowers are made to bloom over a grave" (p. 160). The fact that he is able to return and be happy allows the possibility of a miraculous acceptance of the evil world and a transcendence over its evil. But significantly, this reconciliation occurs only in a parable told by the Confidence-Man, a story which may be deceptive.

Thus, through reductive parody and ironic parallelism, Melville reveals the loss of innocence necessary to protect man from the falseness of the Confidence-Man. The original laughing misanthrope is denigrated when he is re-embodied as a suffering dusk giant and a dehumanized Indian-hater. Emotionally, the cost of misanthropy is grave. Moreover, though certain philosophies may protect man from the Confidence-Man, these philosophies amount to little more than confidence games themselves. This failure

is emphasized by an identification between Charlie Noble and Egbert and is further suggested by the fact that the Confidence-Man gives Egbert a shilling, perhaps in recognition of a form of deceit not unlike his own.

In accordance with such examples of character re-enactment and pairing, the novel also develops a motif of character transformation. The Confidence-Man himself is of course transformed into a number of different characters. Moreover, the narrator even occasionally calls attention to these changes as they occur; in the following passage, the pun on "change" serves the technical purpose of pointing out that the Confidence-Man changes clothing, and, at the same time, emphasizes the transformation motif found throughout the novel: "What started this was, to account, if necessary, for the changed air of the man with the weed, who, throwing off in private the cold garb of decorum... seemed almost transformed into another being" (p. 21), says the narrator. Or, in another example, the herb doctor towards the end of his encounter with Pitch begins to change gradually into his next avatar, the P. I. O. man. The "spiritlessly enduring and yielding air" (p. 96) of the herb doctor becomes in the next chapter the obsequiousness of the P. I. O. man.

Similar transformations recur constantly, on every page of the novel. Throughout The Confidence-Man, characters are subject to sudden reversals and abrupt changes: for example, in addition to the Confidence-Man, the merchant,
Charlie Noble, Egbert, Orchis, Mocmohoc, Charlemont, and the "soldier of fortune" all undergo changes of sorts. Indeed, it is not uncommon for a character to surprise himself by experiencing his own unexpected transformation. In Chapter Thirteen, the merchant, while engaging in a philosophical debate with the Confidence-Man which fore­shadows the cosmopolitan's later debates with Charlie Noble, drinks wine and undergoes a transformation from trust to distrust; then, a little disturbed by the abrupt­ness of the change, he goes to bed. Similarly, after drinking wine with the cosmopolitan, Charlie Noble under­goes a "metamorphosis more surprising than any in Ovid" (p. 155), when the cosmopolitan asks him for a charitable donation: he rejects the plea for aid and then retires rapidly. The two transformations are linked to each other: in both cases, the truth is momentarily revealed, only to be quickly ignored or rejected. Insights for characters are fleeting, either because of self-delusion or because of the conscious art of a cunning trickster. Moreover, by such metamorphoses, the narrator emphasizes the fact that self-delusion is not much different from the con­sciously contrived delusions of a trickster. The Confidence­Man is clearly not the only deluder in the novel: man can frequently play confidence-man to himself, by assuming a false pose or refusing to accept the evidence of his own senses.

By presenting characters in several different forms
and by having different characters re-enact similar roles, the narrator provides the reader with an enlarged perspective. However, Melville does not limit his satire to recreated character types; just as characters recur in variant forms or are compared with other apparently different characters, so actual scenes are inverted and parodied in *The Confidence-Man*.

The Confidence-Man himself, as a trickster whose aim is the exploitation of human hypocrisy, employs the most obvious examples of ironic repetition: his techniques assume several clear patterns. For example, twice he introduces himself by pretending prior acquaintance with a victim (as in the case of the merchant and the Titan). He sometimes gains the confidence of his victims by remarking the prevalence of deceit in the world: the agent for the Black Rapids Coal Company is "warm against" the "hypocritical bears" who have created an imaginary depression in his stock, and the herb doctor warns the old man against false medicines. Twice he pretends to be searching for a person who is really himself in another guise—he tells the collegian he is looking for the man with the weed, and he assists the old miser in seeking out the agent for the Black Rapids Coal Company. He also employs repeatedly the pattern of noting a name in a register, with possibly Satanic suggestions: the man in gray records the names of the young Episcopal minister and the charitable lady in a notebook in order to publish them later on, and the
transfer agent enters the names of the collegian and the merchant in the stock book for the Black Rapids Coal Company. The Confidence-Man refers frequently to various previous guises, at times to prove his identity and at times to start a conversation. Also, in practically every guise, he pretends to go ashore. There is thus a remarkable consistency in the practices of the Confidence-Man, which serves to unify the novel by creating a rhythmic repetition of similar scenes.

Frequently, this repetition involves carefully constructed parodies. The lead-in methods of the Confidence-Man employed at the beginning of Chapter Nine are a simple example of how he uses parody against his victims. Referring to his earlier guise as the man with the weed as a transitional device, the agent for the Black Rapids Coal Company says to the collegian:

"Well, I am very sorry. In fact, I had something for him here."--Then drawing nearer, "you see he applied to me for relief, no, I do him injustice, not that, but he began to intimate, you understand. Well, being very busy just then, I declined; quite rudely, too, in a cold, morose unfeeling way, I fear. At all events, not three minutes afterwards I felt self-reproach, with a kind of prompting, very peremptory, to deliver over into that unfortunate man's hands a ten-dollar bill. You smile. Yes, it may be superstition, but I can't help it; I have my weak side, thank God." (39)

This entire speech is an obvious repetition of an earlier scene in which the Episcopal minister entrusts a coin for Black Guinea to the agent for the Seminole Widow and
"My conscience upbraids me.--The poor negro: you see him occasionally, perhaps?"
"No, not often; though in a few days, as it happens, my engagements will call me to the neighborhood of his present retreat: and, no doubt, honest Guinea, who is a grateful soul, will come to see me there."
"Then you have been his benefactor?"
"His benefactor? I did not say that. I have known him."
"Take this mite. Hand it to Guinea when you see him; say it comes from one who has full belief in his honesty, and is sincerely sorry for having indulged, however transiently, in a contrary thought."
"I accept the trust." (28-29)

The reader's response to the Confidence-Man's parody of this scene is fairly simple. The sharp difference between the clergyman's act of charity, which, despite the possibility of a selfish desire to allay his feelings of guilt, is basically well-intentioned, and the Confidence-Man's act of false charity, a softening device to prepare another victim for gulling, demonstrates the systematic perversion of good practiced by the Confidence-Man on the Fidèle. Unlike other re-enactments which appear to be unconscious or at least indirect, this one is engineered by the Confidence-Man himself and has as its function a telling contrast between naive innocence and perverse intent, which illustrates the central conflict of the novel.

There are a number of similar examples of the Confidence-Man's mocking manipulation of his victims. In Chapter Eight, he returns the charitable lady's Bible to
her when it falls from her lap. Later on, in a contrived re-enactment, the agent of the Black Rapids Coal Company manages to have the merchant Roberts return his transfer book to him, as if by accident. This inversion is ironic because the Confidence-Man is here forcing his victim into a role which mimics his own. Though a merchant's desire for gain is natural enough, Roberts is satirized because he is made to employ the actual lead-in techniques of the Confidence-Man, with his own conscience as his mark. When he notices the gilt inscription despite his scruples and takes advantage of an opportunity for profit, he is playing confidence-man to his own fastidious conscience.

In addition to parodies which are engineered by the Confidence-Man, the narrator himself also frequently engineers scenes and dialogues which are inversions of other passages. Whereas the Confidence-Man's parodies presuppose a clear understanding of the inherent selfishness of human nature, the narrator's parodies appear innocent, and the alert reader's only clue that Melville is playing with his expectations through a clever use of point of view is the consistent use of repetition. We have already seen how the narrator uses parody to link apparently unlike characters and to suggest unexpected similarities and differences. There are countless other scenes and passages in which the narrator creates provocative echoes which should cause the alert reader to juxtapose different parts of the novel. In fact, the
narrator's role in the novel becomes one of the most important critical questions which confronts the reader of *The Confidence-Man*. He is apparently naive; yet, the very selectivity of his observations and ordering of events suggests that his innocence may be as much a pose as are the various disguises of the Confidence-Man himself—that he may be, in short, another confidence-man playing tricks on the reader.

If the narrator is such a confidence-man, then the reader is placed in the role of a victim who cannot trust his first impressions or the accuracy of the information he is given. In order to judge the characters accurately, he must work to unravel the complicated structure of each episode; thus, he must recall earlier passages and consciously bring together apparently disparate confrontations in order to judge correctly the meaning of what occurs in the novel. As one critic has noted, a favorite technique of the narrator is to lead the reader into premature judgments—he is quick to sympathize with the deaf-mute and Black Guinea and quick to admire Winsome and Egbert for their cunning in outwitting the Confidence-Man. 25

In almost every instance, however, these premature judgments must be revised and in some cases even reversed as more "evidence" is presented in the novel. As he is made

to provide from his memory the originals against which parodies must be read, the reader thus becomes an active participant in the satiric "undressing" which goes on in the novel.

Since *The Confidence-Man* depends for its meaning on this complicated rhetorical method, the chapters on literary theory which are included in the novel become particularly useful as guides to the reading of the work. Three times during the course of the action the narrator delays his story long enough to comment briefly on the relationship between the novel and the world. These chapters are conceived in the same ironic and playful mood as are large parts of the narrative. They are treated by the narrator with off-handed nonchalance, a tonal quality which is revealed by the similarity of their titles:

Chapter XIV--Worth the consideration of those to whom it may prove worth considering (58)

Chapter XXXIII--Which may pass for whatever it may prove to be worth (157)

Chapter XLIV--In which the last three words of the last chapter are made the text of discourse which will be sure of receiving more or less attention from those readers who do not skip it (204)

Although they have been used to illustrate Melville's theories of the novel, it is clear that these playful chapters set forth no plain and consistent idea about the nature of fiction and were not intended to do so:
rather, they are a part of the satiric structure of *The Confidence-Man*, and serve to illustrate the ambiguous nature of all human knowledge.

As Edgar A. Dryden observes, the three chapters actually contradict one another as far as literary theory is concerned. In Chapter Fourteen, the narrator maintains that it is unfair for the reader to demand consistency of character in a novel because reality itself is not consistent and "while to all fiction is allowed some play of invention, yet, fiction based on fact should never be contradictory to it" (p. 58), a principle which if examined closely involves some contradictions, since it asserts that characters should be consistent with reality, but then maintains that reality itself is inconsistent.

Then, in Chapter Thirty-Three he comments: "Strange, that in a work of amusement, this severe fidelity to real life should be exacted by any one, who, by taking up such a work, sufficiently shows that he is not unwilling to drop real life, and turn, for a time, to something different. Yes, it is, indeed, strange that any one should clamor for the thing he is weary of; that any one, who, for any cause, finds real life dull, should yet demand of him who is to divert his attention from it, that he should be true to that dullness" (p. 157). These arguments can never be

Dryden, p. 166.
reconciled, since they are based on contradictory assumptions: the first that literature should be mimetic and realistic, the second that it should be "fantastic" and romantic, and these contradictory assumptions must lead to contradictory conclusions. Moreover, with a wicked touch of irony, the reader is at the conclusion of the second of these chapters referred to the first, and is thereby forced to juxtapose these contradictory comments. Faced with such ambiguous observations, the reader is made to challenge his assumptions about the purpose and ends of literature: he is presently engaged in reading a novel which may offer insights into the problems of truth-seeking, but these chapters on the nature of literature suggest that he should question the trustworthiness of any insights gained through a literary experience.

These satiric bits of criticism thus reveal the difficulties involved in discovering knowledge in a world which is itself a puzzle. The narrator first blithely maintains that the novel is a reproduction of the experiences of real human beings. Then he suggests that human nature is itself ambiguous and inconsistent and "like the Divine Nature" "past finding out" (p. 59). If this is true, then fiction based on real life must also be ambiguous and should not be criticized for this. The reader of a fiction should not accept the apparent for the true, but rather should attempt to discover the real meaning for deceptive appearances. In practical terms, the reader is
warned against a superficial acceptance of the insights contained in a work of literature. As far as Melville's methods in *The Confidence-Man* are concerned, this warning is necessary, since Melville requires his reader to revise repeatedly his critical judgments about the significance of characters and episodes in order for the satiric implications of the novel to be realized.

After having led his reader to question the ability of literature to lead him to "Truth," in Chapter Thirty-Three, the narrator paradoxically endows fiction with the capacity of showing reality with more intensity (and more "Truth") than the real world itself. Fiction thus becomes more "real" than real life:

> In books of fiction, they look not only for more entertainment, but, at bottom, even for more reality, than real life itself can show. Thus, though they want novelty, they want nature, too; but nature unfettered, exhilarated, in effect transformed. In this way of thinking, the people in a fiction, like the people in a play, must dress as nobody exactly dresses, talk as nobody exactly talks, act as nobody exactly acts. It is with fiction as with religion: it should present another world, and yet one to which we feel the tie. (158)

This critical passage is an inversion of the ideas found in Chapter Fourteen; such an inversion is not much different from the sort of parody practiced by the Confidence-Man when he re-enacts the charitable gesture of the Episcopal clergyman for his own sinister intent. Although the reader is casually led into accepting all of them as true, these observations cancel each other out. In these chapters the
reader is forced to re-evaluate his own too-easy assumptions about the relationship between art and reality. It is a form of over-confidence to assume too quickly that the senses can lead man to a true understanding of reality; perhaps it is also a form of over-confidence to trust too completely in the observations and insights provided by an author in a work of fiction. While Melville never suggests that man should abandon his quest for wisdom, he refuses to acknowledge the possibility of an ultimate "Truth" accessible through a literary experience.

The third commentary chapter, on "Original Characters," further complicates the critical theorizing being done by the narrator. In this chapter, he reverts to his earlier assumption, that the source of fiction is real life—a great "man-show." He further implies that there is a basic constancy in real life: "New species...are hardly more rare, than in the other...are new species of character" (p. 204). Then, the narrator deliberately creates an air of mystery around the existence of the "original" character: "In the endeavor to show, if possible, the impropriety of the phrase, Quite an Original, as applied by the barber's friends, we have, at unawares, been led into a dissertation bordering upon the prosy, perhaps upon the smoky. If so, the best use the smoke can be turned to, will be, by retiring under cover of it, in good trim as may be, to the story" (p. 205). It has been assumed all through the chapter on "Original Characters" that the Confidence-Man is the
subject under discussion. To say in concluding that he is not an original character is to say that he is only one of many "new, singular, striking, odd, eccentric, and all sorts of entertaining and instructive characters" (p. 205) and not anything special at all. This reduction of the Confidence-Man's status negates the allegorical associations with Christ and Satan present in his character, since both Christ and Satan are clearly "original characters." The Confidence-Man may be "only a man" after all. If so, he is not a great metaphysical scamp like the Devil, but simply a petty thief, a "humbug," and the reader's assumptions and impressions must be revised. The Confidence-Man is in this chapter denied the "originality" that would make him Christ or Satan, and becomes instead a shallow and mercenary figure: his "masquerade," which seems laden with mysterious significance, may have no special meaning at all. Once more the reader's expectations are violated. After this chapter, he must question the validity of earlier associations and re-evaluate the meaning of prior episodes.

Finally, it must be noted that the chapters on literary theory do not exist apart from the narrative proper. On the contrary, they are closely related to it through wordplay. For example, the cosmopolitan, upon being asked by Charlie Noble if the story of Charlemont is true, answers: "'Of course not: it is a story which I told for the purpose of every story-teller--to amuse. Hence, if it seems strange to you, that strangeness is the romance; it is what contrasts
it with real life; it is the invention, in brief, the fiction as opposed to the fact" (p. 160). As Edgar Dryden points out, this is a direct echo of the narrator's words in Chapter Thirty-Three. The Cosmopolitan is quoting the narrator.27 There is the unsettling suggestion that the narrator and the Confidence-Man are somehow in league with each other. If so, the reader has no guarantee that he is not himself the victim of a confidence-game: he must become wary of booby-traps, just like the rest of the participants in the novel.

Other examples of verbal echoes from narrator to character are equally revealing. Many tenets of his philosophy partially echo these three chapters on literary theory. For example, his claim that for a philosophy to be real it must reflect real life is related to the narrator's mimetic theory of the novel. Further, Winsome's casual dismissal of consistency in Chapter Thirty-Six, a satiric gibe at Emerson's transcendentalism, is related to the narrator's comments on consistency of characterization. The ambiguous vision of reality set forth in the three commentary chapters is thus parodied and re-directed by the philosopher Winsome for his own purposes. Similarly, the narrator's comments on character transformations suggest the transformations of the Confidence-Man himself: "On the other hand, that author who draws a character, even though

27 See Dryden, p. 169.
to common view incongruous in its parts, as the flying-
squirrel, and, at different periods, as much at variance
with itself as the caterpillar is with the butterfly into
which it changes, may yet, in so doing, be not false but
faithful to facts" (p. 58). Such associations between the
narrator and characters whose actions are at best equivocal
and at worst Satanic force the reader to question the nar-
rator's reliability.

The main effect of these three chapters on the rela-
tionship between literature and reality is thus to empha-
size the important point that The Confidence-Man is itself
a work of fiction, simultaneously imaginary and also able
to provide "more reality than real life itself can show"
(p. 158).28 The work is not "realistic" in the usual sense,
but rather is a fantastic but illuminating portrait of Mel-
ville's world, presented by a narrator who is quite capable
of "playing" with "truth," to a reader who is discerning
enough to recognize this and to revise his critical judg-
ments when necessary. This "fantastic" portrait of the
world can provide a more telling satiric portrait than can
more narrowly mimetic works.

As Merlin Bowen points out, there is an implicit
advantage in using a narrator who, though appearing to have
some knowledge as to the methods and goals of the
Confidence-Man, sets forth his narrative as if he were a

28 Dryden, p. 131.
naive observer; he does not interpret the events he
details for the reader, and, if he has suspicions about the
identity of the Confidence-Man, he does not voice them.
Yet, the grammatical structure of his sentences, in con­
trast to the simplicity of most of the dialogue, is
heavily qualified and filled with phrases like "it appeared
to be so," "as if," and "for some reason." This ambiguous
use of language suggests that the narrator may himself be
a linguistic trickster who is playing games with his
reader's perceptions; it also emphasizes the difficulty of
drawing valid conclusions in a world of appearances. The
three chapters on narrative technique, coupled with this
supposedly naive but ambiguous narrator, reveal that The
Confidence-Man is after all an invention and perhaps also
suggest that there are insurmountable difficulties involved
in discovering truth in a world of appearances. The nar­
rator is finally the biggest confidence-man of all, and the
novel is finally an April Fool's Day trick played on the
gullible reader.

In The Confidence-Man, inverted re-enactment and
repetition occur at every level. Parody is an all­
pervasive technique which is found on almost every page.
It is an important element of character presentation and

29 Bowen, p. 402.
30 Donald R. Swanson, "The Structure of The Confidence-
Man," CEA Critic, 30, No. 8 (1968), 6-7.
an important element of plot development. And finally, in its most common form, it amounts to a kind of ironic wordplay in which lines are aped and conversations are mimicked, sometimes consciously by the Confidence-Man and other times indirectly by the narrator.

Such wordplay, when engineered by the Confidence-Man himself, usually involves deliberate parodies of earlier encounters. The old miser, when he makes his deal with the agent for the Black Rapids Coal Company, chants, "'One hundred, one hundred—two hundred, two hundred--three hundred, three hundred'" (p. 63), the profit he wishes to make from his original investment. Later on, when the miser eagerly requests the address of the Black Rapids Coal Company agent, the Confidence-Man as herb doctor, mocking the old man's avid greed, mimics the chant:

"Let me see. Jones street, number one hundred and--no, no—anyway, it's somewhere or other up-stairs in Jones street."
"Can't you remember the number? Try, now."
"One hundred--two hundred--three hundred--"
"Oh, my hundred dollars! I wonder whether it will be one hundred, two hundred, three hundred, with them!" (88)

After using the old miser's greed for his own profit, the Confidence-Man in another avatar ridicules him by turning his own words against him.

A slightly more complicated example of this sort of verbal parody engineered by the Confidence-Man occurs when the man in the gray coat, encountering the gimlet-eyed misanthrope for the first time, exclaims, "'Who is that
scoffer...who is he, who even were truth on his tongue, his way of speaking it would make truth almost offensive as falsehood? Who is he?" (p. 26). This passage echoes the words of the man with the weed to the collegian concerning Tacitus: "'Tacitus!' Then opening it at random read, 'In general a black and shameful period lies before me.' 'Dear young sir,' touching his arm alarmedly, 'don't read this book. It is poison, moral poison. Even were there truth in Tacitus, such truth would have the operation of falsity, so still be poison, moral poison'" (p. 21). This repetition is primarily done for the purpose of emphasis: it is designed to reveal that what Tacitus and the "scoffer" are saying represents an insight into the nature of the world rather than a distortion, as the Confidence-Man implies. The grammatical structure of these sentences allows for the possibility that the "gloom" of Tacitus and the suspicions of the misanthrope are true. Moreover, because of his superior knowledge, the reader knows that what the gimlet-eyed misanthrope is saying is true: he has watched the Confidence-Man gull several victims, and he suspects that Guinea may be indeed a "hypocritical beggar." The implication is that, if the misanthrope's other suspicions are well-founded, then perhaps the gloomy view of the world advanced by Tacitus may also be accurate.

When similar examples of ironic wordplay are engineered not by the Confidence-Man but by the narrator,
their purpose is usually to provide the reader with clues for interpreting the significance of the events and conversations which occur in the novel. In certain cases, the purpose of a repeated line is to identify the Confidence-Man through his disguises. For example, Pitch says to the herb doctor, "'Who is your master, pray?'' (p. 97), an almost exact repetition of the question put to Guinea at the start of Chapter Three; this parallel suggests that Guinea and the herb doctor are similar, and, in the context of this novel, in which the reader sees the title character changing forms almost before his eyes, may even indicate that they are one and the same person. Other repeated passages work in a similar way; commenting on his earlier avatar as the man with the weed, the Black Rapids Coal Company agent says, "'Misfortune, I fear, has disturbed his brain'" (p. 39): this links him to the man with the weed himself, since that individual earlier attributed Roberts' forgetfulness to "an unfortunate brain fever." The reader is being given clues, in the form of verbal echoes, that the Black Rapids Coal Company agent and the man with the weed are both forms of the Confidence-Man. Similarly, the narrator's early suggestion that the Confidence-Man is a form of fox replacing the extinct wolf is echoed in Pitch's scornful taunt:

"Fall back you had better, and wag it is!" cried the Missourian, following him up, and wagging his raccoon tail almost into the herb-doctor's face, "look you!"
"At what?"
"At this coon. Can you, the fox, catch him?" (96)

Verbal parallelism is also used by the narrator to link apparently different characters. Thus, Pitch asks the P. I. O. man, "'Do you think now, candidly, that—I say candidly--candidly--could I have some small, limited—some faint, conditional degree of confidence in that boy? Candidly, now?'" (p. 111). Similarly, the soldier of fortune says, "'Stay,' pausing in his swing, not untouched by so unexpected an act; 'stay--thank'ee--but will this really do me good? Honor bright, now, will it? Don't deceive a poor fellow'" (p. 85). And the sick man says, "'Then you do really think,' hectically, 'that if I take this medicine,' mechanically reaching out for it, 'I shall regain my health?'" (p. 69). These characters are alike in that they are all about to be made fools of by the Confidence-Man. Similarly, Winsome and Pitch, so different in so many ways, are linked to each other because they are both truth-seekers: Pitch's earthen jug is thus symbolically recalled in Winsome's goblet of ice-water. And, in another example, a reduction of Winsome's "moonshiny" philosophy occurs when he says, "'If still in golden accents old Memnon murmurs his riddle, none the less does the balance-sheet of everyman's ledger unriddle the profit and loss of life'" (p. 170). This very Emersonian observation recalls the transfer book of the Black Rapids Coal Company agent and identifies the philosophy of Winsome
with trickster tactics of the Confidence-Man himself.

Such verbal parallelism is often particularly revealing. For example, verbal parallelism may help to resolve the question of the identity of the deaf-mute, a frequently discussed critical issue. The narrator says of the mute, "Though neither soiled nor slovenly, his cream-colored suit had a tossed look, almost linty" (p. 4). Later, in a parallel passage, the clothing of the man in mourning, an avatar of the Confidence-Man in which his secret identity is fairly obvious, is described as being "clean and respectable, but none of the glossiest" (p. 14). By itself, such a similarity in phrasing would not be particularly significant. However, when the reader combines such verbal echoes with the structural parallelism between the mute and Black Guinea and with imagistic associations which link the deaf-mute with the fox, it is impossible to avoid considering the possibility that the deaf-mute is not an innocent at all, but instead a form of the Satanic Confidence-Man.

There are numerous other word and image echoes from one part of the novel to another. The "coal-sifter" of a tambourine which Guinea plays in Chapter Three is related to the agent for the Black Rapids Coal Company, and then at the conclusion of the novel to the little boy Confidence-

Man with "sloe-eyes" that "sparkled...like lustrous sparks in fresh coal" (p. 210). The gimlet-eyed misanthrope calls the hunt for Guinea's friends a "wild-goose chase" and in the final chapter the cosmopolitan observes that the old farmer's hunt for a goose on his two-dollar bill is a kind of "wild goose chase" as well. Charlie Noble and the cosmopolitan are linked through snake imagery, and Winsome is likewise intrigued by the rattlesnake. The soldier of fortune, the gimlet-eyed misanthrope, and Pitch all associate the philosophy of the Confidence-Man with booby-traps and bombs about to explode when least expected. And the final triumph of deceit over truth in the novel is suggested by an imagistic inversion which echoes earlier passages. The gimlet-eyed misanthrope at the start of the novel exclaims, "'I'm just in the humor now for having him found, and leaving the streaks of these fingers on his paint, as the lion leaves the streaks of his nails on a Caffre'" (p. 27). Yet, he does not expose Black Guinea, and in the second to last chapter, not "truth" but lies have assumed the role of the lion: the barber observes, "'My trade teaches me that truth sometimes is sheepish. Lies, lies, sir, brave lies are the lions!'" (p. 199). Unquestionably, in the world of The Confidence-Man, it is deceit which triumphs, and it is the innocent (the "lambs" or the "sheep") who become the victims.

Thus, the narrator and the Confidence-Man both use repetition, inversion, and parody extensively in the
novel. Melville's skillful use of these satiric methods gives order to the novel and also resolves some of the problems which plague it. While it may be true that the world of the Fidèle is composed mostly of knaves and fools, it is possible to separate evil and good in the novel. Extreme positions are revealed as foolish and dangerous through ironic satire, and falseness is exposed, at least to the reader, through contrast and parallelism. In this way, through a structural pattern based on parody, Melville partially resolves the problem of norms in the novel. He does not present only "triangular results" but rather provides perspective through satiric comparison.

The Confidence-Man is a complex satire in which Melville makes extensive use of what Merlin Bowen calls "tactics of indirection"; that is, narrative techniques which force the reader to unravel the book rather than just read it. Structurally and thematically, the narrator undermines false optimism from start to finish, as he presents a vision of reality which is predominantly negative. He offers no simple solutions to the difficult problems which confront the well-intentioned person in search of meaning.

Yet, The Confidence-Man is not as nihilistic as many critics suggest, though Melville sets forth a dark view of the world. Because of the playful tone which Melville sustains in the novel, it is also a comic view—what one critic has called a "comic nightmare." The structure
of the novel, based on ironically re-enacted scenes, characters, and dialogues, is itself a kind of joke, in which the expectations of the reader are violated and he is forced to revise his judgments more than once. *The Confidence-Man* is a comic fiction, an April Fool's Day trick on the reader as well as the characters found in the novel. The fact that the novel is not realistic but fantastic prevents the reader from taking its nihilism too seriously; the possibility that the narrator is himself a confidence-man causes the reader to distrust his initial impressions and re-evaluate the values of "charity" and "faith" which the Confidence-Man mocks throughout the work. In the process, he may decide to reject the Confidence-Man's Satanic nihilism and ironically re-affirm the Christian virtues which are perverted during the encounters of the novel.

Finally, as satire, the novel is a necessarily exaggerated vision, making extensive use of parody and caricature, and deliberately distorting and over-emphasizing for effect. The result is a work which does not establish a developing character or a developing plot but rather emphasizes satiric exposure. It is an intense satiric dream vision designed to reveal the ambiguity which in everyday life appears remote. Thus, although the novel ends with a nightmare Apocalypse, it may actually affirm, through irony, the less superficial values which the Confidence-Man distorts in the novel.
CONCLUSION

In Melville's fiction, satire is found from his earliest semi-autobiographical travel novels all the way through The Confidence-Man. Its importance varies, but in virtually all of his works, satiric techniques play a significant role;¹ they become valuable rhetorical tools for Melville the conscious, careful craftsman. In portraying character, in narrating events, and in presenting themes, he uses these methods to control and to manipulate reader response and thereby to produce artistically effective works of fiction.

As this study has demonstrated, there are two forms of satire which occur in Melville's fiction. In his early novels, though the reader also sees Tommo and Taji and the narrator of Omoo struggling to achieve ethical and intellectual maturity, external social issues are

¹ The one fictional work which lacks satiric methodology is Melville's final novel, Billy Budd. In this novel, exactly the same ambiguities which Melville attempted to deal with throughout his work are present, in dramatic and archetypically powerful forms. But, perhaps because of his unwillingness to undermine the mythical qualities of Billy, Vere, and Claggart, Melville did not chose in this novel to adopt the techniques of satire in presenting this conflict between the various codes of conduct available to man. Despite the readings of the critics who see the work as ironic, there is no evidence of the elaborate parody and caricature found in the rest of Melville's work in this last novel.
comparatively more important than they are in Melville's later fiction: satiric techniques serve mainly to demonstrate the destructive effects of various social abuses, either specific ones or general ones. The satire of *Mardi*, especially, is clearly of the Rabelaisian variety, where specific external abuses and more general human failings blend and are attacked together. In Melville's later novels, on the other hand, attacks on social abuses become comparatively less important. Although the reader may find brief assaults on such weaknesses as excessive materialism, religious hypocrisy, and the narrow-mindedness resulting from cultural ethnocentricity, these assaults are relegated for the most part to secondary roles; for example, the comic portrayal of the American literary scene in *Pierre* is far more important for the insight it provides into Pierre's personality than for its own message. Seldom after *Mardi* does satire assume in Melville's work the overtly comic, extravagant, and often farcical forms which satire has historically assumed in the novel. Instead, subtler varieties of satiric methodology are used by Melville in his later novels to treat metaphysical problems, the "knots" of the human condition which can never be completely understood. In writing about these problems, Melville, through techniques of satire, punctures false idealism and exposes an ambiguous reality which lies beneath the mask of human experience. His satire is most often aimed at the failings of his own characters,
and his satiric methods serve mainly to condition reader response. In this second form of satire, the reader's active participation becomes especially important and necessary.

Whichever of these two forms satire may assume in Melville's works, the key to understanding its importance lies in a recognition of the ambiguities, Melville's name for the omnipresent metaphysical ironies which baffle man in his attempts to distinguish good from evil. For Melville, there are no obvious answers to the most difficult questions man may ask about the human condition. Instead, the attempt to find ultimate truths leads only to a discovery of the philosophical ambiguities, uncertainties and half-truths which can never be wholly resolved. Melville's protagonists, whether they are naive young adventurers like Tommo or sophisticated observer/recorders like Ishmael, encounter these ambiguities during the course of his fiction, and so indirectly does the reader, usually in the form of some symbolic puzzle, like the White Whale, the Plinlimmon pamphlet, and the sailor's knot in *Benito Cereno*. In general, the most important conflicts Melville develops in his fiction involve such metaphysical confrontations.

Significantly, the methods of satire are necessary tools for describing and delineating these confrontations. Melville satirically undermines apparently positive characters and actions to produce a sense of uneasiness which
leads the reader to question superficial responses and actively work to unravel metaphysical mysteries. As seen throughout this study, Melville achieves this effect largely through the methods of imitative satire, parody and caricature. The reader sees one working out of an event or conflict, reacts in one way, and then is forced to re-evaluate his initial reaction when he sees a later distorted version of the same event or conflict. Encountering ambiguities which blur the outlines of themes and possibilities, he must retrace his steps and revise earlier judgments. While these revised judgments seldom lead to final solutions to troublesome questions, Melville at least forces his reader to consider such questions thoughtfully and critically without oversimplification.

Melville's choice of imitative forms of satire to delineate these ambiguities is not surprising, since Melville's theory of literary creation is largely mimetic. By recreating in his fiction patterns found in the real world, including mythical, religious, behavioral, and linguistic ones, Melville creates art in the first place. When the purpose of that art is a satiric criticism of abuses found in that world, he distorts and rearranges the details of experience to produce parody and caricature, exaggerated comic portrayals of reality. This type of satiric distortion appears predominantly in Melville's earlier novels. In his later novels, the purpose of Melville's art is not simply to criticize social abuses but
to demonstrate less obvious but equally disruptive meta-
physical ambiguities and the intellectual misconceptions
which result from man's limited attempts to comprehend them
in systems of logic and philosophy. Melville uses satiric
methods to expose these misconceptions as well: the distor-
tion frequently involves the recreation of patterns which
are present in the narrative itself--an internalized form
of satire, found in Melville's most difficult and problemat-
ic works. By ironically reproducing a pattern which
originally appeared in the work itself, Melville presents
the reader with a puzzle which needs to be solved: he must
compare the two versions to arrive at an understanding of
the meaning of the experiences of a character or the right-
ness or wrongness of his actions.

The reader's importance as a participant in the search
for meaning emphasizes the usefulness of a rhetorical
reading, in which reader response is carefully examined,
as an approach to Melville criticism. Indeed, such an
approach is necessary in order to understand almost every
satiric work. The satirist consciously attempts to evoke
in the reader, through artistic manipulation, a critical
response to a human failing, and the reader, responding to
that attempt, must distance himself from the work by
engaging in a form of critical questioning which is often
directed as much against his own misconceptions as against
those of the struggling character. This process appears
to varying degrees in every major work by Melville, but it
culminates in The Confidence-Man, which is almost impossible to deal with critically without relying on the methods of rhetorical criticism. The reader is, like the various characters, continuously struggling to understand, and only by withdrawing his initial responses and intellectually re-evaluating his first reactions can he manage to unravel the puzzles of the novel, a process which becomes a kind of literary game between the reader and the novelist. The final result is a self-conscious craftsmanship which begins with the reader's recognition that he is apt to be misled by an unreliable narrator; Melville's careful use of satiric techniques then provides clues which enable the reader to turn back and revise and correct premature judgements. Like the characters, the reader must engage in a search-and-discovery experience; like the characters, moreover, the reader must find that search finally not wholly successful, for, after "penetrating the mask," "striking through the visor," and even unravelling the identity of the Confidence-Man, the reader and the characters must both discover only the ambiguities which for Melville represent the heart of all human experience.

Finally, then, satiric methods fulfill a number of necessary functions in the Melville canon. Because they

2 The notion that The Confidence-Man is an example of a specialized literary genre in which reader and author engage in a kind of elaborate game-playing is discussed in Elizabeth W. Bruss, "The Game of Literature and Some Literary Games," NLH, 9 (1977), 153-72.
depend so frequently on humor for their effectiveness, they provide needed comic relief and help to turn some of Melville's works into "tragi-satires" in which tragic conflicts and comic exuberance are successfully blended. Such a blend of comedy and tragedy is an important characteristic of Melville's style. Because the methods of satire, and particularly the methods of imitative satire, are so closely related to structure, they often provide Melville with a framework for ordering complex themes, as in *The Confidence-Man*. The close relationship between satiric caricature and symbolism also makes the use of these techniques congenial with the practices of a working symbolist, and a study of the satiric suggestiveness of some of Melville's famous symbols, like the White Whale, for example, helps to explain some of the ambiguities present in these symbols. And, most importantly, Melville's use of satiric techniques provides him with an unlimited source of reader control; through such techniques, Melville conditions his reader's responses to characters and their experiences. Particularly when they have this last, complex function, satiric techniques serve above all as all-important rhetorical tools through which Melville is able to treat tangled metaphysical puzzles with the complexity they deserve.
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Shannon Louise Antoine was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on October 5, 1950. She was graduated from Benjamin Franklin Senior High School in 1968, and then from the University of New Orleans with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1971. She spent the period from January 1972 to August 1973 working toward the M.A. at the University of New Orleans, where as a graduate assistant she also taught English. From the fall of 1973 to the present, she has been teaching English at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, while working toward a degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

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Major Field: English

Title of Thesis: MELVILLE AND THE ART OF SATIRE:
PERTPECTIVE THROUGH
PARODY AND CARICATURE

Approved

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

April 24, 1979