

THE GNOSTIC NATURE OF THE WORLD VIEW
AND FICTIONAL THEMES OF
HERMAN MELVILLE

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Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
May, 1984

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May 1984

PREFACE

The thesis that Melville's world view and fictional themes are those of a thoughtful, sincere interpreter of the gnostic imagination is not original with this study. And this writer acknowledges her indebtedness to those critics who explicitly relate Melville's spiritual idiom to gnosticism. Aspects of the writings of these same critics, however, also serve to illuminate the fact that scholars generally are confused about this form of harmonial religion. The inadequacies of these critical studies suggest the need for an up-to-date, concise, but detailed definition of gnosticism, in terms of its nature, history, and broad implications, written with students of literature in mind. In this study the attempt is made to provide this definition and to analyze Melville's major works in its light.

A majority of Melville's most eminent critics, who make up the second group reviewed, point to a lack of awareness about gnosticism. Only one of the eight who are included in this category explicitly links Melville's outlook on life to the gnostic element in the romantic imagination. But in consulting their opinions, I discovered that the burden of their views, in many specific respects, provides better support for the claim that Melville's fiction manifests his adherence to gnostic aims and doctrines than the opinions of those critics who explicitly link his outlook on life to the gnostic impulse. Consequently, in order to lend more credibility to the theory about the esoteric nature of Melville's understanding of reality, to acknowledge my awareness of the contribution

to Melville studies of these scholars, and to prepare to set forth some new insights into his most important fiction, I employ the views of these critics and demonstrate that the weight of their opinion supports a theory to which most of them do not ascribe.

The most original and noteworthy part of my study concerns the myth that informs Melville's major fiction at the level of the "experienced landscape." The symbolic implications of the monoplots of Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" and the image patterns of this body of fiction are that, at the level of the "experienced landscape" in each story, the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer is the basic source of Melville's major works. Moreover, Melville's treatment of Tommo, Taji, Ishmael, Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy Budd suggests that all of these protagonists represent the potential gnostic savior and that all of their quest objects depict the gnostic concept of the fallen world-Soul (the fallen Thought) of the Unknown God.

With these views, this study builds onto the existing theories about gnosticism in regard to Melville's spiritual idiom and art. To be more precise, this discussion shows that the mythos of the potential gnostic savior, dating from ancient times, is a body of religious but imaginative fiction to which Melville's major works are more indebted than anyone has realized. Melville's mythical, symbolic, allegorical, polemical, and cryptic works serve as a vehicle for the expression of gnostic ideas especially about salvation.

Many people have given their time and talent to aid in the completion of this study. DeLayne Griffiths and Sandy Murphy typed and helped with proofreading. For the encouragement and advice about this under-

taking that I have received from the members of my committee, I wish to thank Dr. Samuel H. Woods, Jr., Dr. Neil Leubke, Dr. Janemarie Luecke, Dr. Edward Walkiewicz, and Dr. Mary Rohrberger. No doctoral candidate could have enjoyed a more patient, sympathetic, and supportive committee than I have had the pleasure of working with. My major adviser, Dr. Rohrberger, deserves my special gratitude. This paper would not have been written were it not for her exceptional talent for leading students to discover the value of literature and literary analysis and for the example of her excellence as a critic.

Among the friends whose well wishes have aided me in writing this paper, I especially want to thank Dorothy Heiderhoff Petty for her warmth, humor, and support and Wanda Thilstead for her optimistic enthusiasm and advice about matters of style. The members of my family have played an important role in this effort as well. The flexibility, understanding, and pride which my husband, Dean, and our two children, Forest and Grant, have shown during the course of this work served to keep my spirits up. Not only they but also my mother, Dorothy Champlin Kline, my father, Ralph May, my sister, Jan May Tollas, and my brother, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Ralph May, Jr., deserve to take pleasure with me in completing this phase of my education. Contributing financially and emotionally, they have helped to make it possible for me to "do my thing." My brother warrants singling out in these respects. To all of the people whom I have named, I am most grateful.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE INADEQUACIES OF THE EXPLICIT CRITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE THEORY THAT MELVILLE'S WORLD VIEW AND THEMES ARE THOSE OF A NINETEENTH-CENTURY GNOSTIC

"Behind every art form there is . . . a philosophy of life."¹ Mary Rohrberger, Samuel H. Woods, Jr., and Bernard F. Dukore, editors and annotators of An Introduction to Literature, make this observation as they define the art of literary criticism. They are saying simply that the individual who creates a work of art holds in a more or less coherent form a number of attitudes about the personal, social, and cosmic levels of reality and that these attitudes, which in their totality compose a world view or philosophy of life, consciously and unconsciously direct and inform the artist's creation. Moreover, they say a philosophy of life is not only behind but also within every work of art. Each one expresses "a central idea about life," which is its theme.² Besides calling attention to the close relationship between writers' world views and the themes expressed in their literature, these critics' observations clearly justify the endeavor to identify appropriately and accurately a writer's understanding of reality as an activity fundamental to literary criticism.

Sometimes critics find it relatively easy to reach a consensus about an author's world view and its relationship to the themes expressed

in his or her fiction. But sometimes, despite much effort and attention, they are not completely successful. Such is the case with the criticism dealing with the world view and themes of Herman Melville. For more than 60 years, Melville's philosophy of life has been intensely investigated by literary critics; so many different and contradictory readings of his works have ensued that Werner Berthoff is moved to remark, "Interpretations of themes and meaning in Melville's books . . . have been legion, but constitute more of a case study in contemporary intellectual folkways than an aid to understanding."³ Paul Brodtkorb, Jr. calls attention to "the mountain of conflicting testimony that makes up the Melville bibliography."⁴

Melville's critics, in their efforts to classify Melville's philosophy of life, offer a mind-boggling variety of labels to their readers. Since the 1920s, Melville's philosophic idiom has been identified with Eastern and Western, ancient and modern, and orthodox and heterodox modes of thought. While the claim that Melville is a humanist, a nihilist, or a naturalist is made most frequently, impressive studies link his world view to esoteric and heterodox traditions. The persistence and reasonableness of these studies make it impossible to accept wholly the view that Melville's philosophy of life is essentially secular. Thus, when searching for insight into the nature of Melville's works and a term by which to classify it, the student of his works encounters as much fog as light in the canon of Melville criticism.

Because the term which is used to characterize a writer's world view indicates the nature, historical context and scope, and implications of the writer's attitude toward reality, it is important. Therefore, Melville critics can hardly afford to ignore the problem and must

continue to seek its resolution. In the first place, one might ask why there is controversy about the nature of Melville's philosophy of life? Perhaps the fault lies with Melville himself rather than with his critics. Perhaps, as John Seelye suggests, Melville's critics have been frustrated in their efforts "to discern patterns of consistency in Melville's works" because there are no such patterns.⁵ Was Melville so erratic and inconstant in his attitude toward reality that it is foolish to speak about a Melville world view?

As satisfactory as this theory may appear, it is refuted and rejected by the findings of this study. Several noteworthy critics who offer contradictory interpretations of Melville's works agree with James E. Miller, Jr. that Melville's fiction shows a "unity of vision" and is "essentially steady and straight in theme, though shifting radically in focus and form."⁶

Along with Miller, two other outstanding Melville scholars support the premise that there is only one Melville world view. Richard Chase classifies Melville as a humanist and a naturalist and maintains that, in terms of structuring ideas, Melville's early novels bear a close resemblance to his later works.⁷ In her book Melville's Orienda, Dorothy Melitsky Finklestein classifies him as a romantic thinker whose world view shows a close affinity with the esoteric mystical philosophy of the great Sufi poets, such as Hafiz and Omar Khayyam, yet she agrees with Chase in regard to the relative constancy of Melville's world view and themes.⁸ While the argument concerning the nature of Melville's world view continues, recent studies such as Theresa Cullen Timmon's unpublished dissertation "Herman Melville: The Metaphor of Narcissus"⁹ indicate that the view expressed by Chase, Miller, and Finklestein

regarding the constancy of Melville's philosophy is prevailing.

Because critics with the stature of Chase, Miller, and Finklestein agree that Melville's world view and themes appear relatively stable throughout his fiction, one cannot, it seems, blame Melville for the lack of agreement among scholars about his world view; therefore, one returns to the original question: why are critics finding it so difficult to achieve some measure of consensus? This study suggests that both the ultimate and immediate cause of this problem as well as a majority of the other problems in Melville criticism is that scholars generally are confused about the nature, history, and implications of gnosticism.

Beyond the statement that gnosticism is connected with neoplatonism and romanticism, it is not easily defined. In his book, A Religious History of the American People, Sydney E. Ahlstrom describes gnosticism and its sister variant neoplatonism as the two major components of that vast movement of esoteric, heterodox religion in Western history frequently referred to as the occult or hermetic tradition. Ahlstrom calls attention to the similarities between gnosticism and neoplatonism when he explains that both tend toward an idealistic form of pantheism and represent expressions of mysticism.¹⁰ In The Gnostic Religion, Hans Jonas points out another parallel between these closely related expressions of the harmonial religious impulse. Both subscribe to the doctrine of a negative theology, says Jonas, adding that a negative theology maintains that God is unknowable in any final or absolute way.¹¹

Despite these and other similarities between gnosticism and neoplatonism, one can draw some distinctions between them and thus arrive at a clearer idea about the nature of the gnostic imagination, about

which there is much controversy. The views of Jonas, Joseph Campbell,¹² Denis Saurat,¹³ Elaine Pagels,¹⁴ and Francis Yates¹⁵ lead one to conclude that, unlike neoplatonism, the purer, more sophisticated expressions of gnostic thought maintain that a dualism exists within a unity, and assert the reality of evil. Moreover, Saurat says that the purer expressions of gnosticism "[justify] . . . sensuality" and promote the ideals of freedom, individualism, and wholeness.¹⁶ The body of late Greek-Egyptian writings known as the Hermetic Corpus and the traditions of alchemy and the Cabala constitute some of the more notable expressions of gnosticism and represent another distinction between it and neoplatonism.

Samuel C. Chew and Richard D. Altick, the authors of the discussion of romanticism in The Literary History of England, contribute to the fundamental credibility of the theory that Melville was influenced by gnosticism in nineteenth-century America. They indicate that neoplatonism and gnosticism form the two most basic sources of romantic thought and call attention to the importance of gnostic ideas in romantic philosophy and literature. Paraphrasing Paul Elmer More, the author of The Drift of Romanticism, Chew and Altick state:

In the romantic mood there has been detected the influence of the Oriental mind which had flowed into the West through the channels of Neo-Platonic speculation. Whereas the classical mind of Greece had sought for the Divine in the qualities of order, restraint, and proportion, the East associated the Divine with the vast and vague. In Gnosticism and other ancient heresies, there are elements of what many centuries later came to be called romanticism.¹⁷

As the foregoing introduction to gnosticism reveals, the similarities between and interpenetration of gnosticism and neoplatonism are reasons why good, brief definitions of gnosticism are hard to come by, and students of Western culture meet with contradictory or quite diverse

interpretations of it. Another is the difficulty of studying a movement that throughout most of its history was suppressed and held suspect by orthodox Jews and Christians. Still others involve the fact that gnosticism found dualistic as well as monadic expression. It is highly syncretic; it has doctrine but no dogma; it frequently enjoins its adherents to secrecy; its preferred style of communication is cryptic and symbolical; it is apt to employ the Bible or other sacred literature as a vehicle for its own interpretation of reality; and, it is a type of religious impulse that encourages individual, subjective interpretation. All of these features of the gnostic imagination create problems for scholars.

Many critics have remarked on the confusion that exists in scholarship about gnosticism. Eric Voegelin¹⁸ and Michael Edwardes¹⁹ point out the problem as it relates to scholarship in general; Saurat²⁰ and Gordon E. Bigelow²¹ comment on its relation to literary criticism. But, despite the fact that the lack of understanding about gnosticism is the major impediment to resolving the controversy about Melville's metaphysical and psychological world view and fiction, no one has yet called attention to the problem specifically in relation to Melville criticism.²² The authors of seven works assert that Melville, consistently or for some period of his lifetime, maintained a gnostic approach to reality. These works will be reviewed now to illustrate the problem and to lay the foundation for advancing the premise that Melville's spiritual idiom and fictional themes represent his interpretation of gnosticism.

These seven studies relate Melville's world view and literature to gnosticism. In chronological order, they are American Renaissance, F. O. Matthiesson;²³ Melville's Quarrel with God, Lawrence Thompson;²⁴

The Way Down and Out, John Senior;²⁵ The Poet's Third Eye, Bigelow;²⁶ The Heresy of Self-Love, Paul Zweig;²⁷ "Gnostic Mythos in Moby-Dick", Thomas Vargish;²⁸ and Melville's Anti-Bible: Moby Dick Unveiled, Viola Sachs.²⁹ In similar and differing ways and to greater and lesser extents, these works reveal that even the scholars who do recognize that Melville's world view constitutes an expression of gnosticism are somewhat less than adequately informed about this important element in the romantic imagination. As a result, all of the critics in this group who generalize about or analyze Melville's literature misinterpret it to some degree.

This study, however, does not wish to come down too heavily on these scholars. Despite the inadequacies of their works, which vary greatly in nature and scope, their discussions represent an invaluable contribution to the subject of gnosticism as an influence on Melville and his art. To a large extent, the parameters of this discussion are established by the questions that these studies raise about Melville's world view and themes in relation to gnosticism. Therefore, this study is indebted to them all. To some, however, such as Matthiesson's American Renaissance, a greater debt is owed than to others. Consequently, although Matthiesson's study was published before the other works, being the best of them, it is saved for the last, and the criticism that is more hampered by an inadequate grasp of gnosticism is discussed first.

Thompson's Melville's Quarrel with God suffers the most from its author's inability to come to terms with the more religious and philosophical forms of the gnostic impulse. Yet one reason why Thompson's problems with gnosticism exert a stronger influence on his study than

the other critical works being considered here is that Thompson has attempted the most ambitious and detailed investigation of the relationship between gnosticism and Melville's world view and fictional themes. Dealing seriously with the relationship between Melville's understanding of reality and various forms of irony in his fiction, Thompson's study has much to recommend it. The lack of balance, however, in his treatment of gnosticism distorts the judgments that he makes about Melville's spiritual idiom and fiction to the extent that the primary value of his study lies more in the important issues that it raises than in the conclusions that it presents.

Thompson identifies gnosticism as the first heresy within Christianity. Moreover, he relates gnosticism to humanism and to the "Devil School" movement in literature, thereby making it clear that gnosticism has ramifications in the radical, liberal, and left-wing aspect of Western culture. Thompson specifies that one of its most abiding characteristics is a concern with freedom and individualism. And he indicates that throughout its history, the gnostic imagination has found itself in conflict with the Judeo-Christian tradition.³⁰

No one can fault Thompson's discussion in these particulars. What one must distrust, however, is his view that gnosticism is only anarchistic, antinomian, nihilistic, or anti-Christian in nature and that it has made no positive spiritual or socio-political contribution to Western society. Because the gnostic imagination has benefited the West in numerous ways, the credibility of Thompson's entire study is called into question. This is to say, because Thompson treats gnosticism in a decidedly biased way, one cannot expect that he will evaluate the gnostic-informed world view and fiction of Melville appropriately.

Some indication of the lack of balance in Thompson's presentation of gnosticism is given by the remarks of several scholars in relation to Christianity. According to Pagels, "The great German historian Adolf von Harnack" advanced the view in the late nineteenth century that the gnostics were "the 'first Christian theologians.'"³¹ This view has some substance to it. According to Williston Walker, the author of A History of the Christian Church, "Gnosticism was represented by some of the keenest minds in the church of the second century."³² And a survey of the occidental culture reveals that some of the more remarkable Christian mystics and religious philosophers in Western history, as well as in the Christian existentialist movement, were informed by the gnostic imagination.

Besides these views, Ahlstrom's observation that "in harmonial religion one can discern a wide spectrum of ideas ranging from the prudential to the profound," his acknowledgement of the "richness and variety" of the hermetic tradition, and his remark that the gnostic impulse in the twentieth century concerns itself not only with "filling the air with freedom . . . [but also with] exposing social cruelty . . . [and] asking deeply personal questions" serve to suggest that Thompson is not defining gnosticism appropriately when he presents it as religious philosophy devoid of positive implications.³³ Furthermore, Ahlstrom suggests that whereas the neoplatonic element in transcendental thought tended to promote various forms of cosmic optimism and "utilitarian piety," the gnostic element, which acknowledges the reality of evil, fostered the more significant interpretations of reality. Because of this, one feels justified in distrusting Thompson's grasp of gnosticism even while one surmises that it is correct to align Melville with

the gnostic rather than the neoplatonic element in romanticism.³⁴

Thompson's failure to come to terms with this variety of the harmonial religious impulse bears directly on his treatment of Melville's world view and themes. He passes the same heavy-handed judgment on Melville's beliefs and fiction as he does on gnosticism. According to him, both are antinomian, nihilistic, anarchistic, and anti-Christian. In particular, he argues that after the publication of Mardi, the primary concern of all of Melville's "blasphemous" fiction is with attacking his "two major enemies, society and God." The tools that Melville used, says Thompson, are those of satire and various complex forms of irony. Thompson demonstrates that with them Melville subverts the meaning of the Christian symbolism that he employs.³⁵

Melville does employ biblical themes and symbols to convey a gnostic rather than an orthodox Christian meaning. But his goal is not to destroy society or God. Rather, it is to convey gnostic doctrines about spiritual maturity, which Melville hoped would improve life and provide for the salvation of the soul. One specific sign in Thompson's book that he is not presenting as informed an interpretation of Melville's world view and fictional themes as is warranted by Melville's symbolism concerns his discussion of Melville's theological beliefs. As Thompson explains, Melville's spiritual idiom is not a form of ontological dualism. Instead, it expresses the idea, he observes, that God contains all opposites, including good and evil.³⁶ Yet despite this insight, Thompson does not explain and support the idea that Melville identifies the deity with good as well as evil. He only emphasizes that Melville is concerned with portraying the deity as malign power above and in nature that is bent on limiting humanity's desire for freedom. Furthermore, he does

not come to terms with the implications of his own findings.

The implications of Thompson's statement about Melville's concept of God suggest conclusions more complex than those that Thompson presents. For example, one learns from Saurat that the gnostic habit of identifying God with sets of polar opposites is intended first and foremost to convey the theological doctrine that reality is an ineffable, divine unity that transcends the duality in which it is manifest.³⁷ It is a doctrine that is intended to lead to the development of a higher consciousness wherein one sustains a moral vision and a nondualistic, affirmative, transmoral one.³⁸

Being misinformed or uninformed about the premises of the more interesting interpretations of gnostic religiosity, Thompson unfairly assesses Melville's world view. As a result, he misunderstands the significance of Melville's use not only of Christian myths and symbolism but also of the sacred scripture and symbolisms of a wide range of religious and philosophical traditions, the icons of which Melville, in true gnostic fashion, syncretically identifies and provides with a gnostic reading.³⁹

Thompson is right on one score. Without doubt, Melville considered his gnostic truth superior to that of orthodox Christianity and was interested in making people question orthodox belief and many of their assumptions about morality. From the gnostic point of view, however, moral and metaphysical justification exists for subsuming the truth of various mythologies and religions under the rubric of gnosticism. One of Melville's purposes in his treatment of Christian and non-Christian scripture and symbolism that relates to the gnostic theological doctrine about the unity of all reality is the advocacy of a religious univer-

salism and more freedom and tolerance in matters of faith and morals.

Ishmael is portrayed as expressing the views of a religious universalist when he and Queequeg board the Pequod. Preparing to sign on as members of the crew, they are stopped by Captain Bildad and Captain Peleg who do not want Queequeg's service if he is not a Christian. At this juncture in the narrative, Bildad fuels Queequeg's anger about the lack of dignity accorded him by the Christian world by referring to Queequeg as a "son of darkness" and conveying the view that only light-skinned Christians are saved. Since Queequeg has just undergone a strenuous religious ritual, the scene is highly ironical. But Ishmael awakens them all to a sense of unity and harmony by suddenly asserting that they all are members of "the same ancient Catholic Church; . . . the great and everlasting First Congregation of this whole worshipping world."⁴⁰

Yates, in regard to the Christian Hermetists of the Renaissance, and Ahlstrom, in regard to the gnostic impulse in the romantic and contemporary eras, relate gnosticism, with its doctrine of the ultimate unknowability of God, to religious universalism and to the desire for a society that fosters a strong sense of community at the same time that it allows for the greatest personal freedom.⁴¹ It is this ideal, as a political philosophy, that a majority of Melville's critics understand him to express in his literature, and it is this ideal that, with its themes of harmony and unity, finds expression in the encounter between Bildad, Peleg, Queequeg, and Ishmael. In this episode, the attempt is to destroy bigotry and intolerance--not God or society.

Thompson's reading of Melville's gnostic world view is justified insofar as he understands that the gnostic imagination places a premium

value on freedom; however, he fails to understand that the more sophisticated forms of gnosticism relate freedom to wholeness, balance, and a harmonious order. To arrive at his narrow, misguided interpretation of Melville's fiction, Thompson must ignore numerous passages in Melville's works that resemble the episode recounted from Moby-Dick and the positive implications of the action and image patterns in the literature that he discusses.

Some nine years after Thompson's book, another critic relates Melville's spiritual idiom to the gnostic circle of ideas and puts forth a variation of the theory that Melville hates the world. In "Gnostic Mythos in Moby-Dick," Vargish cites a number of occasions in Melville's literature in which Melville refers explicitly to gnosticism or to one of the numerous schools of gnosticism in the ancient world, but the focus of his discussion lies in demonstrating that Melville's negative attitude toward matter and the world, along with some obscure passage in Moby-Dick, finds its most basic source in the myths and doctrines of the Valentinian school of ancient gnosticism. As Vargish explains, but makes nothing of in regard to his analysis of Moby-Dick, the Valentinian school of gnosticism represents a Christian form of the gnostic impulse.⁴²

Vargish says that the word myth is employed in a special sense when it is applied to gnostic thought. This is so because the myths that formed the basis of the first wave of gnostic speculation had their origin in times remote from the Graeco-Roman period, but gnostic myths themselves are self-conscious literary creations of particular individuals and are not intended to be taken as literal truth. Quoting from Andrew Norton's Evidence of the Genuineness of the Gospels, one source

of Melville's information about ancient gnosticism, Vargish says that they were intended as mythos, meaning, "'an imaginary account of unknown things or events, not supposed to be true in its details, but intended to affect the mind in the same manner as the truth.'"⁴³

With his general claim that Melville's spiritual idiom resembles the beliefs of the Valentinians, and his analysis of some of the more obscure passages of Moby-Dick, Vargish makes a substantial contribution toward the understanding of Melville's world view and fictional themes. His lack of knowledge, however, about Valentinian gnosticism and the concept of evil in its doctrines results in his misinterpretation of Melville's attitude toward life. As he puts it, like the Valentinians, Melville identified the principle of evil with matter and the body.⁴⁴

Pagels' and other critics' views about the Valentinian gnostics correct Vargish's presentation of their beliefs. According to Pagels, while some gnostic sects of the ancient world did abjure the body and physical existence, the Valentinians, who represent the most influential and sophisticated expression of the gnostic imagination in the Graeco-Roman world, held a quite moderate attitude toward life and regarded women as the equals of men. From the Church Father Irenaeus and Pagels one gathers that this school of gnosticism accorded a metaphysical and psychological significance to sex and marriage, perceiving them to symbolize the re-unification of the male and female aspects of the Spirit.⁴⁵

What the Valentinians consider evil, Pagels continues, is not matter per se but "ignorance," which they identify with lack of freedom, individualism, and a dynamic wholeness or balance. Or, to express these beliefs about "ignorance" differently, the Valentinians, says Jonas,

especially identify it not only with a narrow rationalism but also with egotism, hubris, sensual desire, and rebellion. In their mythos, the cosmos is held to be the fallen Thought or distorted image of the deity. Believing that in this world the Spirit exists in an impaired condition, these gnostics, through the indirect means of self-reform, sought to participate in the salvation of the fallen aspect of the deity. With this goal in mind, says Pagels, they promoted an enlightened humanity.⁴⁶

One example of the mistakes in interpretation that Vargish makes as a result of his failure to attain a degree of knowledge about Valentinian gnosticism that is commensurate with his subject involves his discussion of "Fragment of a Lost Gnostic Poem of the 12th Century," which Melville includes in Timoleon. The two-stanza poem reads:

Found a family, build a state,
The pledged event is still the same:
Matter in end will never abate
His ancient brutal claim.

Indolence is heaven's ally here,
And energy the child of hell:
The Good Man pouring from his pitcher clear,
But brims the poisoned well.

According to Vargish, the poem proves that Melville identifies the principle of evil with matter and holds a negative attitude toward life.⁴⁷ But actually what the poem, which uses the gnostic mythos of Creation and the Fall to refer to gnostic doctrines of salvation, makes clear is that "ignorance" must be overcome if the Spirit that is man, God, and Nature is to exist in a condition of health and harmony.

The parallels between Melville's poem and the Creation mythos of the Valentinians are numerous. Like the Valentinian versions of the myths of Creation and the Fall, which Pagels and Zweig discuss, Melville's poem images the first act of creation which instigates the Fall

as an effort on the part of the Spirit to exist in its ideal state of Self-Integration.⁴⁸ In the Valentinian myths and in Melville's poem, this state of the Spirit is symbolized by a harmonious family or dyad of masculine and feminine energies. The first line of Melville's poem, "Found a family, build a state," refers to this ideal.

In the second line of the poem, Melville says that the Fall is a "pledged event." Discussing Valentinian creation myths, Zweig's remarks apply to this line. In order to manifest itself at all, the deity, whose names include the Unknown God, Man, and Love, must perceive an aspect of itself as the Other.⁴⁹ In other words, gnostic creation myths allude to the development of the rational consciousness. Consequently, they describe the Spirit's division into polar opposites, such as an acosmic Self-Integrated "heaven" and a Self-Divided heaven and earth, which form the cosmos. Furthermore, the gnostic imagination identifies dualism with various guilty inclinations, such as the desire to dominate and exercise absolute control. Melville's heavenly, indolent, naive "good Man" and his earthly, energetic, "brutal . . . Matter" symbolize the divided, rigid cosmos which is an impaired state of mind and spirit.

This poem, which recalls Blake's states of "innocence" and "experience," does not imply that material existence is categorically evil; rather, it implies that life is essentially a psycho-spiritual construct, all aspects of reality have the potential for good and evil, and humanity is to reform the fallen god-head. It maintains that life could be better if people were more poetically inclined and less materialistic, unbending, self-indulgent, and hypocritical. It suggests that if people would subordinate their dualistic habit of thinking and the narrowness and selfishness that it fosters to the realization of fundamental unity

and divinity of all forms of life, this world would more truly mirror the ideal state of Self-Integration.

Toward this end, the poem implies that the "guilty," subversive "Nature" and rationalism that cause the Fall of Man are the means by which the Spirit effects its own salvation. Thus, one perceives that a qualified reversal of values occurs in the poem and that "Matter" especially is identified as a saving principle as well as a destructive one. According to the gnostic imagination, what brings the One "down" also serves to bring it "up."

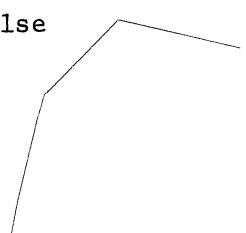
Another example of the inaccuracies in interpretation that occur when a critic partly comprehends his material is found in Vargish's views about some of the specific ways that Melville uses gnostic myth in Moby-Dick. Discussing the Valentinian myth of the Fall, Vargish maintains that it is ascribed to the female Thought of the gnostic deity--a figure who is called Sophia, which means Wisdom. As he accurately explains, the fall of the Wisdom (or Thought) of the Unknown God concerns the story about how the female aspect of the deity "conceives" an inferior thought of God and transforms into the material world where she becomes suppressed by her own demiurgical Intelligence and baser inclinations. Nevertheless, she (Truth = Nature = Life = Intelligence = Wisdom) retains the capacity to enlighten humanity and to lead women and men to a condition of "knowledge" (gnosis). Vargish points out that Ahab's references, in the "Candles" chapter, to his "sweet mother," and elsewhere to the sea as an "infidel Queen" are allusions to the gnostic Sophia--the world mother.⁵⁰

In these particulars, as well as in his general claim that Melville's world view shows a particular affinity with Valentinian

gnosticism, Vargish is not to be faulted. But his problems with understanding the gnostic imagination mar his essay. For example, he does not understand that if, as he says, the sea is a symbol of the female aspect of the god-head, the Soul, and "Truth," he cannot also assert that gnosticism in general and Melville's world view in particular maintain that the material world is categorically evil. As Vargish's own theories reveal, the sea in Moby-Dick is a symbol of materiality as well as of truth.

Therefore, in Melville's gnostic-informed world view and fiction, what readers must deal with is the idea, slighted by Thompson as well as Vargish, that nothing in itself is absolutely good or evil and that in fact what one considers evil ultimately may serve a higher and good purpose. This is the case in the Valentinian mythos of Creation and the Fall. As Jonas' discussion of it reveals, the Sophia's fall into Self-Division has the effect of actualizing the condition of Self-Integration in the Upper World from which she descended.⁵¹ Vargish's argument about the Sophia goes wrong because he does not understand that the fallen world-Soul is the Sophia and that this symbolic and mythical entity is both "an 'infidel' . . . to the Supreme Being" and a savior figure.⁵²

Besides Thompson and Vargish, another critic who identifies Melville's spiritual idiom and fictional themes with gnosticism is Zweig. In his book, The Heresy of Self-Love, Zweig provides one of the best short discussions of ancient gnosticism available. As he observes, some manifestations of the gnostic impulse take bizarre forms, but gnosticism is an expression of a religious psychology whose adherents made the most significant contribution of any religious tradition in the West to understanding the positive and negative aspects of the impulse



toward self-love. Moreover, Zweig notes that the gnostic impulse identifies the god-head in its mature or ideal form with the individual's pneumatic or spiritual soul--a person's innermost self (Self)--and Zweig reveals that this spiritual self is imaged by the gnostic imagination as "a spark" or "a mirror."⁵³

Despite the insight of his analysis of the more religious and philosophical forms of the gnostic imagination, Zweig's study indicates a degree of confusion about his subject. Not only does he admit to being in the dark about important aspects of the transmission of gnostic ideas from the ancient to the modern world, but also, in specific instances, his discussion about the nature and implications of the gnostic imagination is self-contradictory. An illustration of this is found in his discussion of the gnostic attitude toward God and nature or the world.

Although his discussion of gnosticism focuses on the class of gnosticism in the ancient world that holds the world to be a manifestation of the deity, defining it, Zweig categorically and without explanation asserts that according to gnostic doctrine "God [is] absent from the world."⁵⁴ Actually, as Pagels observes, these same gnostic myths reveal that the world or cosmos is the impaired image or Thought of the deity. Moreover, they describe the "withdrawal" of the transmundane deity into the world as if it were a seed in the earth. With such imagery, Pagels says, gnostic mythos maintains that deity in its original integrity is latent in the world-Soul, as well as transcendent to it; it specifies that the task of humankind is to "re-member" the lost integrity, and it adopts an evolutionary, progressive attitude toward history.⁵⁵ Pagels's view helps explain why it is inaccurate of Zweig to

assert that according to gnostic belief, the Spirit is outside the world.

Zweig's claim is self-contradictory in another sense. From Pagels, one learns that according to gnostic anthropological doctrines, although he is unaware of it, man in his true self is a microcosm of the highest god-head. Since, according to gnostic theory, the individual who realizes his or her "true self" manifests the Divine, God cannot be said to be missing from the world.⁵⁶

Zweig's confusion about gnosticism mars his discussion of Melville's world view, which he indirectly defines by an analysis of Moby-Dick. According to Zweig, neither Melville's world view nor the symbolism of Moby-Dick is coherent. Nonetheless, he describes Melville's philosophy as an amalgam of gnostic and stoic ideas that can be characterized as proto-existentialist in nature (following Jonas, Zweig states earlier in his discussion that existentialism is basically a modern form of the gnostic impulse).⁵⁷ The correspondence between existentialism and Melville's world view, which he implies is evident in Moby-Dick, emphasizes the dynamic, transrational nature of reality and a secular belief that salvation lies in finding one's true, innermost, autonomous self.

There is a great deal of truth in Zweig's views. He fails to recognize, however, that the image patterns in Moby-Dick do conform to the logic of gnosticism and that Melville's world view is a sensitive interpretation of the higher reaches of gnostic religiosity.

Zweig's analysis of Moby-Dick reveals that his failure to gain a sufficient amount of knowledge about the details of the gnostic imagination lies behind his stated belief that the symbolism of the novel is

too confused to yield to "human understanding" and his underestimation of the religious nature of Melville's psychological and anthropological beliefs. One of the more important items of evidence to support this claim concerns Zweig's treatment of the Narcissus myth that Ishmael relates at the conclusion of "Loomings," the first chapter of the novel. The storyteller Ishmael suggests that in this myth is found "the key to it all" (M-D, p. 26). Zweig believes that Moby-Dick has no "key."⁵⁸ He reads Ishmael's elliptically-rendered version of the gnostic myth of Narcissus only as a statement about the dangers of self-love and a reference to a secular belief that salvation lies in finding one's free, autonomous selfhood.

Credit can be given to Zweig for implying that the basic source of Ishmael's version of the Narcissus myth is that entire class of ancient gnostic literature that more or less directly images the deity as an androgynous, Narcissus-like figure whose creation, fall, and salvation involve a "death" by drowning. One, however, can fault him on another score.

As one learns from Jonas's discussion of Book I of the Hermetic Corpus and the literature of the Valentinian and Simonian schools of ancient gnosticism, this literature employs versions of the myth to express gnostic beliefs about Creation, the Fall, and salvation. Zweig himself begins his book with an analysis of Book I of the Hermetic Corpus and discusses both the Valentinian and Simonian schools of ancient gnosticism.⁵⁹ Yet he fails to perceive that Ishmael's version of Narcissus's myth, like its prototypes in the gnostic mythos of the ancient world, conveys the main doctrines of gnostic religiosity. Therefore, he fails to see the complexes of imagery and metaphors in

Moby-Dick that structure the novel and refer to this myth, and he underestimates the metaphysical and mystical nature of Melville's views. A more detailed discussion of this point is provided later in this study.⁶⁰

As is the case with the other critics who identify Melville's world view and themes with gnosticism, one has reason to suspect that Sachs's grasp of this variety of harmonial religion leaves something to be desired. While she is concerned with demonstrating that a magic square based on the number 16 underlies the structure of Moby-Dick and is referred to in numerous specific passages, she misinterprets the metaphysical implications of her own findings.⁶¹ As W. S. Andrews explains prosaically but succinctly in his book, Magic Squares and Cubes, a particular magic square may have one or more unique features but basically "a magic square consists of a series of numbers so arranged in a square that the sum of each row and column and of both corner diagonals shall be the same amount."⁶²

From Paul Carus, who writes the introduction to Andrews' book, Keith Ellis, the author of Number Power in Nature, Art, and Everyday Life, Yates, who mentions that magic squares are vehicles of the gnostic imagination in the Renaissance, and Senior,⁶³ one gathers enough information about the nature and function of mandalas, yantras, and gnostic-informed magic squares to distrust certain conclusions about Melville's theological views that Sachs sets forth and implies are typical of gnosticism.

A synopsis of these scholars' views that pertain to magic squares includes the following information: (1) A yantra is a variant type of mandala, and a magic square is a type of yantra. (2) All of these types of symbolic devices present an image of totality, the universe, or

wholeness. (3) Regardless of whether a gnostic, Buddhist, Hindu, or other esoteric religious reading is accorded these symbols, they all presume that the universe is the manifestation of the Ineffable One.

(4) Such symbols may serve mystical or magical ends. As "aids to contemplation" in gnosticism, Senior says, they are a means by which to re-integrate the parts of the self (Self) and come to a knowledge of ultimate reality--the Ineffable One.⁶⁴

Many of Sachs's findings are in keeping with these critics' views about the function and philosophic implications of gnostic-informed symbols such as magic squares. For example, Sachs maintains that the attainment of self-integration or wholeness is the dominant theme in Moby-Dick, and she indicates that this theme in the novel is given a cosmic as well as a psychological and socio-political reading. In this respect, Sachs's views are well taken. She betrays some confusion about gnosticism, however, when she states as one of the conclusions of her study that Melville reveres sexual energy and then neglects to support the idea that he deviates, in his use of a magic square, from expressing the theological presumptions that are typical of the higher forms of gnostic imagination.⁶⁵

As one learns from Jonas and other critics, such as Campbell and Pagels, the gnostic imagination of the ancient world employs sexual symbolism to describe its mixture of anthropological, theistic, and trans-theistic beliefs about God. These critics' discussions, however, suggest that it would be erroneous to equate the gnostic concept of God exclusively with sexual energy, for the purer forms of gnostic thought not only are based on a negative theology but also associate the deity with mind, thought, imagination, and intuition--mental states and

functions--as well as nature, sexual energy, and humanity.⁶⁶ And from Chew and Altick, one learns that the gnostic imagination in the romantic era identifies sexuality with intellectualism.⁶⁷

Since Sachs does not support her claim that Melville deviates from the higher reaches of gnosticism and reverences an energy that he thinks of as exclusively sexual in nature, one must theorize that what Chew and Altick claim to be true about the impact of gnostic thought on English romantic writers in one regard holds true for Melville as well: namely, that they tend to identify "the intellect with desire" and endow both with a metaphysical meaning.⁶⁸ Yet another aspect of the problem of Sachs's assessment of Melville's spiritual idiom is the difficulty of reconciling her notion of the life force with a magic square. According to Carus, because a magic square suggests pattern and "the cosmic order," it implies an intelligent universe.⁶⁹ Thus, one surmises that Sachs, in concluding that Melville equates God with sexual energy, misunderstands the theological implications of gnosticism.

Like the works of Thompson, Vargish, Zweig, and Sachs, those by Senior, Bigelow, and Matthieson exhibit varying degrees of confusion about gnosticism, and their difficulties in coming to terms with this form of the harmonial religious impulse inhibit the comprehension of Melville's world view and themes. Neither Senior's, Bigelow's, nor Matthieson's problems with gnosticism, however, affect the apprehension of Melville's spiritual idiom and themes to the same extent as do those of the other critics who identify Melville's world view with gnosticism. One reason why this is true of Senior and Bigelow is that neither of them specifically discusses Melville's approach to reality, and neither examines any of Melville's works. Instead, following Senior's example,

Bigelow simply lists Melville as among those writers whose world view and themes fall within the occult sphere of ideas (which, in each case, is treated essentially as an expression of gnosticism) and focuses his attention on the literature of authors other than Melville.⁷⁰

Because neither Senior nor Bigelow specifically discusses Melville's approach to reality or fiction, one cannot say much about the effect of their treatment of gnosticism on the comprehension of Melville's world view and themes. This can be said, however: Senior's study and that by Bigelow, which depends heavily on Senior's definition of the occult or hermetic world view, present a somewhat skewed discussion of gnosticism in that both slight the gnostic concern for liberty and downplay its rebellious, antinomian aspect. Furthermore, neither comments at any length on the relationship between Christianity and gnosticism or specifies that, unlike neoplatonism, gnosticism maintains the reality of evil.⁷¹

The aspects of gnosticism that Senior and Bigelow slight are important to the understanding Melville's fiction. Thus, while it should be stressed that both of these works do provide information that is helpful in coming to terms with Melville's religious philosophy, it should be stated that readers cannot depend on either of these two works for enough information about gnosticism to allow them to grasp the thoroughly gnostic nature of Melville's world view and themes.

Strange as it may seem, the first critic to suggest that Melville's world view and themes are expressions of the gnostic impulse is less hampered by his problems with defining gnosticism than any of the other critics who follow him in time and, like him, place Melville's world view within the gnostic sphere of ideas. Indeed, Matthiesson makes a

number of thoughtful comments about Melville's world view, and his overall judgment about it is the one that finds the most support in this study. Nonetheless, Matthiesson's treatment of gnosticism per se and his discussion of it in relation to Melville's world view and fiction also continue to display the now familiar pattern: A lack of knowledge about the gnosticism interferes with apprehension of Melville's gnostic-informed fiction.

Melville readers benefit greatly from the perspicuous comments that Matthiesson makes about Melville's spiritual idiom and fictional themes. For example, Matthiesson is the first critic to suggest that Melville was a student of ancient gnosticism. Matthiesson also introduces the theory that Melville's world view represents an expression of Christian gnosticism (gnosticism is found in pagan, Jewish, and Christian forms). He presents this theory by relating Melville's world view more emphatically to that of the Marcionites, a dualistic Christian school of ancient gnosticism, rather than to that of the Ophites, a pagan monadic variety of gnostic thought.⁷²

A third point that Matthiesson makes is that Melville's neo-gnostical spiritual idiom constitutes a sensitive and significant interpretation of reality. He treats it as a form of religious anthropology which is probably ontologically monadic but strongly moral and dualistic in nature. Furthermore, he observes that Melville's fiction indicates a primary concern with "the problem of human suffering."⁷³

Becoming more specific, Matthiesson elaborates on Melville's approach to reality with the following observation. Melville's Christian gnostic world view promotes freedom, equality, and the "ideal of a balanced society," and regards orthodox Christianity as its inferior.

The forces that inhibit the realization of the ideal are the adversary, but good and evil are treated as capable of undergoing reversals.

Melville's Christian gnosticism holds that human beings are divine and generally conveys the idea that life is tragic but that beauty and heroism redeem it.

With such observations, Matthiesson comes closer than any of the other critics to identifying Melville's world view with gnosticism by accurately delineating its nature and implications. But as valuable as his study is, it is flawed. The major inadequacy of Matthiesson's study is the same one that marks the works of the other critics who do more than simply assert that Melville should be classed as a gnostic. Like Thompson, Zweig, Vargish, and Sachs, Matthiesson fails to perceive the extent to which Melville's world view is mystical and metaphysical in nature, and he slights its transmoral, affirmative aspect.

Other deficiencies are apparent in Matthiesson's treatment of Melville's spiritual idiom. Matthiesson fails to discuss adequately the implications of maintaining that Melville was a Christian gnostic. For example, Matthiesson provides no systematic or formal comparison of orthodox Christianity with gnostic Christianity, and he avoids the subject of the role that Jesus or other gnostic savior figures play in Christian gnostic forms of thought per se and in Melville's fiction. Further, he gives the erroneous impression that the true basic source of Melville's world view and the form of Christian gnosticism with which it has the most affinity is the school of Marcionite belief, and he does not note that Melville believed in salvation by gnosis.⁷⁴

This study agrees with Matthiesson's suggestion that the gnostic literature of the ancient world is the most basic source of Melville's

spiritual idiom and literary themes, which is a view strengthened by Vargish's and Zweig's studies.⁷⁵ Moreover, this discussion is in agreement with Matthiesson's implicit classification of Melville's understanding of reality as an expression of Christian gnosticism. But it qualifies, clarifies, and builds on Matthiesson's findings.

Agreement in this study that Melville's world view is most appropriately classified as a nineteenth-century expression of Christian gnosticism does not include a suggestion that it resembles orthodox Christianity in any significant way. Moreover, there is no intention in this study to suggest that it is appropriate to regard only Christian expressions of gnosticism, such as the literature of the schools of the Marcionites or the Valentinians, as the basic sources of Melville's fiction. And certainly there is no implication intended that Melville's spiritual idiom finds its closest analogue in the ancient world's Marcionite school of thought.

Advanced in this discussion are the following views about the most important source of Melville's world view and literature. It is the entire class of ancient gnostic thought that derives dualism from a pre-existent unity. This class of gnostic thought includes Christian, Jewish, and pagan varieties of gnosticism and shows strong affinities with the great religious philosophies of the Far East. The Simonian and Valentinian schools of gnosticism, the literature of the Hermetic Corpus, and the apocryphal gospels of John and Thomas are in this class. There is evidence as well, in Melville's fiction, that he drew upon the literature of various dualistic as well as non-dualistic expressions of gnostic belief. Besides these expressions of pagan and Christian gnosticism, the traditions of alchemy and the Cabala, as Sachs, Senior, and

Bigelow suggest, are basic sources of Melville's world view. Both of these expressions of the gnostic impulse have their origin in the ancient world but are not elaborated on extensively in the West until the Middle Ages. Obviously, this study does not mean to imply that the sources of Melville's world view are limited to ancient gnosticism.

With the goal in mind of further clarifying Melville's world view and compensating for some of the inadequacies of the works which relate his life philosophy to gnosticism, the writer next contrasts orthodox Christianity with the monadic class of Christian gnosticism in general terms. After this, the new insights into Melville's fiction that result from recognizing that he consistently and sincerely subscribed to a Christian gnostic spiritual idiom will be discussed.

The attempt to establish that Melville was a religiously inclined Christian gnostic begins with a comparison of the tenets of a non-dualistic form of Christian gnosticism with some of those of orthodox Christianity. The relationship of Christianity to gnosticism is hotly debated by scholars. Certain things, however, seem fairly clear. The two have points of affinity because both gnosticism and Christianity, as Walker says, represent amalgams of Hellenic and oriental beliefs.⁷⁶ Some of the points of difference are as follows: Pagels says that unlike gnosticism, Christianity maintains that there is an essential difference between God, humankind, and nature. Christianity allows no theology of immanence, and it has historically opposed pantheism. Moreover, whereas gnosticism conceives of the highest god-head in terms of a dynamic balance of opposites within a general context of freedom or indeterminacy, and uses the Self-Integrated Androgyne as a symbol for this ideal state of consciousness, Christianity traditionally envisions

God in theistic, masculine terms.

Christian gnostics, like orthodox Christians, make use of the idea of Jesus as the Son of Man and as the pre-existent Logos, but gnostics believe that when people become mature, they themselves become the Logos by "re-cognizing" that in their true selves, they were and always had been, in essence, identical with the Divine. Christian gnostics regard Jesus in many ways, says Pagels, but chiefly as a teacher, a guide, a spiritual master--an incarnation of the Truth, to quote Pagels on Valentinian speculation, that "humanity itself manifests the divine life and divine revelation." Orthodox Christians, on the other hand, generally believe that Jesus was a completely unique being whose death on the cross redeemed humankind, and they believe in the reality of bodily resurrection. Gnostics deny the belief in bodily resurrection, maintaining that it is the spirit that is eternal. Pagels differentiates further between orthodox Christianity and monadic expressions of Christian gnosticism. Whereas the orthodox believe that the Kingdom of God is going to be a literal, historical event, gnostics interpret it to be a condition of self-transformation.⁷⁷

Melville's understanding of gnosticism is more complex than the comparison suggests. However, it serves to place his vision in the appropriate context. The next portion of this discussion is intended to serve this same purpose. In it, a definition of the nature, history, and implications of gnosticism is set forth. This definition is quite broad. It traces the gnostic impulse from the time of its inception to the present. The effort here is to provide readers with a good grasp of gnosticism that includes all of its more important ramifications before Melville's major fiction is analyzed.

A further examination of the Melville bibliography follows the definition of gnosticism. This review is limited to a consideration of the most eminent critics' views about Melville's religious imagination and themes. While only one member of this group (Thompson) explicitly links Melville's understanding of reality to gnosticism, this study demonstrates that the burden of these scholars' views suggests the appropriateness of doing so. Kept on an abstract level, this portion of the discussion serves systematically to compare Melville's world view in its general features with that of the higher reaches of the gnostic impulse as set forth in the definition of gnosticism and to strengthen the case for classifying Melville's spiritual idiom as a gnostic expression of religious psychology.

Building not only on the studies of Matthiesson, Thompson, Vargish, Sachs, Zweig, Bigelow, and Senior but also on those of Melville's most esteemed scholars, this study offers new insights into Melville's major fiction. This category includes Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Benito Cereno," "Bartleby the Scrivener," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd." The new insights presented in this study involve the gnostic implications of the characterization of the protagonists and their quest objects, the most important image patterns, and the monoplots of these works.

A somewhat more specific statement of the new insights yields the following information. The plots and image patterns of Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Benito Cereno," "Bartleby", The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" are a working out of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer. This myth is the basic source of Melville's major works in regard to the level of the "experienced landscape" in each. In keeping with this symbolic structure, the protagonists of these works are characterized as

the potential gnostic savior, and all of the quest objects of these protagonists are depicted as the gnostic concept of the fallen world-Soul (the fallen Thought of the Unknown God). Moreover, this discussion shows that (1) the myths of the potential gnostic savior that date from the ancient world provide an interpretation of gnostic ideas about the Creation, the Fall, and salvation; (2) Melville, in his major works, is more indebted to this body of religious but imaginative fiction than anyone has realized; and (3) Melville's works serve as a vehicle for his interpretation of these myths and the themes and doctrines of gnosticism.

With these views, this study builds onto the existing theories about gnosticism in regard to Melville's spiritual idiom and art. If the findings of this study are correct, the gnostic version of the Narcissus myth that Ishmael relates in "Loomings" is the "key" to Melville's major works and world view, for it is a cryptic, elliptical version of the gnostic myth of the potential redeemer.

NOTES

¹ Mary Rohrberger, Samuel H. Woods, Jr., and Bernard F. Dukore, "The Sociocultural Approach," in An Introduction to Literature, ed. Mary Rohrberger, Samuel H. Woods, Jr., and Bernard F. Dukore (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 9.

² Rohrberger, Woods, and Dukore, "The Devices of Fiction," p. 22.

³ Werner Berthoff, The Example of Melville (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1962), p. 7, n. 3.

⁴ Paul Brodtkorb, Jr., Ishmael's White World: A Phenomenological Reading of Moby-Dick (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1965), p. 3.

⁵ John Seelye, Melville: The Ironic Diagram (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 1-2.

⁶ James E. Miller, Jr., A Reader's Guide to Herman Melville (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1962), p. 4.

⁷ Richard Chase, Herman Melville: A Critical Study (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1949), p. 21. Chase says that Melville "was already intellectually committed to a naturalist and humanist view of things . . . before he was "thirty." However, as his comparison of Melville's world view with the organic philosophy of Arnold Toynbee indicates, Chase treats Melville as more of a humanist than a naturalist (pp. 36-37).

⁸ Dorothy Melitsky Finklestein, Melville's Orienda (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 59-60, 120, 175. Finklestein lists gnosticism as one element in Sufism (pp. 153, 191). Besides analyzing Melville's fiction, she demonstrates the influence of some of the literary expressions of Sufi mysticism and of the Arabian Nights on the romantic imagination of the America of Melville's day and on Melville himself. Finklestein's study is quite impressive. The mysticism and imaginative literature of the Near East undoubtedly affected Melville's world view. But the weakness in her study lies in its neglect of Melville's political ideals in relation to his spiritual idiom. Sufism lacks political ramifications. The gnostic impulse, which finds its most vigorous post-classical development in the West, most definitely does not. Its connections with liberalism contribute to the appropriateness of identifying Melville's world view with it.

⁹ Theresa Cullen Timmons, "Herman Melville: The Metaphor of Narcissus," Diss. The University of Georgia 1980, pp. 14-15. Timmons limits her study to Melville's first six novels, but she indicates that

she believes that the Narcissus myth "as a key to Melville's compositional method . . . does provide a ground plan for understanding Melville" (p. 200).

Like Timmons' study, this discussion argues that a myth of Narcissus informs Melville's fiction. However, Timmons follows other critics who identify the sources of Melville's references to this myth as Ovid and Plotinus. Without disputing this view, this study, however, demonstrates that the critically important source in question is an entire class of gnosticism in the ancient world which describes creation and salvation as acts of Self-reflection. Besides differing from Timmons' study in this regard, this discussion maintains that Melville uses the Narcissus theme especially to express gnostic metaphysical and psychological beliefs. Timmons provides this theme in Melville's fiction with a psychological and moral reading.

¹⁰ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (Garden City, New York: Image-Doubleday, 1975), II, 21-31, 528-70.

¹¹ Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity, 2nd ed. (1958; rpt. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), pp. 288-89.

¹² Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God, 4 vols. (New York: Viking-The Bollingen Foundation, 1959-1968). Occidental Mythology (III) and Creative Mythology (IV) contain most of Campbell's findings about gnosticism.

¹³ Denis Saurat, Literature and the Occult Tradition: Studies in Philosophical Poetry, trans. Dorothy Bolton, 2nd ed. (1930; rpt. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1966).

¹⁴ Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels, 1st Vintage Books ed. (1979; rpt. New York: Vintage-Random House, 1981).

¹⁵ Francis Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964).

¹⁶ Saurat, pp. 41-44, 75. See note 34 for other respects in which gnosticism and neoplatonism differ.

¹⁷ Paul Elmer More, The Drift of Romanticism (1913), as paraphrased by Samuel C. Chew and Richard D. Altick in The Literary History of England, ed. Albert C. Baugh et al., 2nd ed. (1948; rpt. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), p. 1125.

¹⁸ Eric Voegelin, Science, Politics, and Gnosticism: Two Essays by Eric Voegelin (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1968), pp. 4-5.

¹⁹ Michael Edwardes, The Dark Side of History: Magic in the Making of Man (London: Granada Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 1-5.

²⁰ Saurat, pp. 6-12 ff.

21 Gordon E. Bigelow, The Poet's Third Eye: A Guide to the Symbolisms of Modern Literature (New York: Philosophical Library, 1976), pp. 1-29.

22 The author of an unpublished dissertation about gnosticism in relation to various American poets and authors maintains that Poe, Emerson, Dickinson, and Whitman are writers whose world views should be approached as expressions of gnosticism while Hawthorne, Melville, Faulker, Flannery O'Connor, and Walker Percy are writers whose world views do not fit into that classification. See Michael Joseph Auer, "Angels and Beasts: Gnosticism in American Literature," Diss. Chapel Hill 1976, pp. 1-15. Auer's discussion is limited to the writers whom he identifies with gnosticism.

23 F.O. Matthiesson, American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman, 3rd ed. (1941; rpt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970).

24 Lawrance Thompson, Melville's Quarrel with God (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1952).

25 John Senior, The Way Down and Out: The Occult in Symbolist Literature (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1959).

26 See note 21.

27 Paul Zweig, The Heresy of Self-Love: A Study of Subversive Individualism (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968).

28 Thomas Vargish, "Gnostic Mythos in Moby-Dick," PMLA, 81 (1966), 272-77. Vargish begins his essay with the suggestion that Melville's world view was an amalgam of ideas derived from Hinduism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, and gnosticism and indicates that he does not want to be interpreted as claiming that Melville should be considered a gnostic (272). But this argument is implicit in his discussion. For example, he observes that Melville's "frame of mind" during the composition of Mardi was "well prepared to receive" the gnostic world view if Melville were not already exposed to gnosticism (274). Moreover, he says that Redburn implies attitudes with a strong affinity to gnosticism, and he states that Ishmael's beliefs about man, God, and nature, like Ahab's, resemble those of the gnostics (276). Critics usually take Ishmael's views about reality to be those of Melville himself. Therefore, I list Vargish with the other critics who more boldly put Melville's spiritual idiom in the realm of gnosticism.

29 Viola Sachs, La Contre-Bible de Melville: Moby-Dick déchiffré (Paris: Mouton, 1975). In the Preface to her book, Sachs acknowledges the help of her students and a colleague: "Notre travail n'aurait pas été possible sans le concours précieux apporté par l'équipe d'étudiants de l'Université de Paris VIII qui depuis quatre ans collaborent à notre analyse textuelle de Moby-Dick. Notre étude débuta comme une recherche interdisciplinaire avec le Département d'art. Je tiens à exprimer notre dette envers mon collègue du Département d'art de notre Université, Monsieur Michel Indergan: il nous aida à découvrir la malléabilité des

matériaux, la qualité physique des couleurs, problèmes sur lesquels il est rare de s'attarder le domaine de la critique littéraire (p. 7).

³⁰ Thompson, pp. 19-40. Thompson only lists two sources for Melville's information about ancient gnosticism: (1) Pierre Bayle, An Historical and Critical Dictionary. London, 1710, 4 volumes (p. 430, n. 11); (2) and Andrews Norton, The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels, Cambridge, Mass.: John Owen, 1844, 3 volumes (pp. 430-32, n. 14). Matthiesson in American Renaissance says that Melville purchased Bayle's Philosophical Dictionary in the summer of 1849 (p. 439). Thompson remarks that Melville could hardly "have escaped knowing Norton's Evidences" because his "work was a scholarly landmark of the period" (p. 430, n. 14).

Vargish presents Norton's works as a source for Moby-Dick, and he acknowledges that Thompson deserves the credit for this.

See Thompson, pp. 33-40, for a discussion of the "Devil School." The author of A Handbook to Literature notes that Southey uses the term "Satanic School" in his Vision of Judgment (1821) "to designate the members of the literary group made up of Byron, Shelley, Hunt, and their associates, whose irregular lives and radical ideas . . . suggested the term." See C. Hugh Holman, A Handbook to Literature, 3rd ed., (1936; rpt. Indianapolis: Odyssey-Bobbs-Merrill, 1972), p. 472.

³¹ Pagels, Introduction, p. xxxi.

³² Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, 3rd ed. (1918; rpt. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 53. Walker lists Valentinus, "one of the most gifted thinkers" of the second century A.D., and Clement of Alexandria, head of the famous Alexandrian catechetical school, as two of the best representatives of Christian gnosticism (pp. 53, 72-73). Origen (?182-254?), he says, who was Clement's pupil, produced "the first great systematic presentation of Christianity"; however, he suggests that Origen's thought is best considered an expression of neoplatonism (pp. 74-75).

³³ Ahlstrom, II, 548-49.

³⁴ Ahlstrom, II, 540. Ahlstrom distinguishes between the purer expressions of gnosticism and neoplatonism in nineteenth and twentieth-century American thought in the following way. Gnosticism leans toward more activist forms of mysticism and promotes world views which stress the dynamic, paradoxical, and transrational aspects of reality (pp. 549-70). More specifically, the gnostic impulses "either explicitly place themselves outside of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, or they claim to absorb the truths of all historical religions. They tend to relate themselves positively to the great Eastern religions," demonstrate stronger "rational and empirical interests," and "emphasize esoteric doctrines, astrology, flamboyant symbolism, occult power, and/or secret organizational structures" (p. 550).

Matthiesson in American Renaissance remarks that whereas "Emerson tried to establish the merely negative nature of evil," Melville opposed Emerson on this point, saying that "he had had 'enough of this Plato who talks thro' his nose'" (pp. 184-86).

35 Thompson, pp. 6; 3-7, 148. Thompson considers Melville a "profoundly disturbed" person whose attitude was "sophomoric" (pp. 122-34; 242).

36 Thompson, pp. 186-87. Elsewhere Thompson says that Melville was "enough of a transcendentalist to equate 'Nature' with 'God'" (p. 129).

37 Saurat, pp. 8-9; 76 ff.

38 Throughout this discussion, the symbol $A=B$ yet $A\neq B$ is used to represent the higher consciousness which is the goal of the gnostic. The symbol is referred to as the gnostic paradigm of the enlightened consciousness in this study. Senior terms this symbol a yantra. He equates $A=B$ with the principle of identify and $A\neq B$ with non-identity. According to Senior, any symbolic construct which expresses this paradoxical kind of logic is a yantra (pp. 19-20, 201). Bigelow observes that the gnostic imagination allows for dualism and hierarchy ($A\neq B$) as well as unity and paradox ($A=B$) (p. 26).

The editors and authors of The Search for Personal Freedom contrast this "eastern" type of logic with the Aristotelean law of contradiction which holds that "A is not both A and not-A." See Neal M. Cross, Robert C. Lamm, and Rudy H. Turk, "Ideas and Conflicts Which Motivate the Twentieth Century," The Search for Personal Freedom: A Text for a Unified Course in the Humanities, ed. Neal M. Cross, Robert C. Lamm, and Rudy H. Turk, 5th ed. (1948; rpt. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown, 1977), p. 261.

39 H. Bruce Franklin points out in The Wake of the Gods that Melville shows a preference for Christian myth but employs a wealth of mythological and religious imagery in his fiction, treating various symbolic entities as interchangeable icons. See his book, The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1963), pp. ix-x. "Syncretism," says Walker, is one of the key characteristics of the gnostic imagination (p. 52).

40 Herman Melville, Moby-Dick, ed., intro., and anno. Charles Fiedelson, Jr. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), p. 128. All subsequent quotations from Moby-Dick will be taken from this edition and will be noted in the text of this study by the abbreviation M-D.

For Typee and Mardi I will use The Writings of Herman Melville, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press; Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1968-71). The abbreviations T and M signify these works in this paper.

The edition of "Benito Cereno" which is cited in the text is one that is included in Melville's Benito Cereno: A Text for Guided Research. It is published by D. C. Heath and Company, ed. John P. Runden (Boston, 1965). References to "Bartleby The Scrivener" are to the Viking Press, ed. and intro. Jay Leyda, 2nd ed. (1952; rpt. New York, 1968). The Norton Critical Edition of The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade, ed. Hershel Parker (New York, 1971) is cited. And references to "Billy Budd" are to Billy Budd, Sailor (An Inside Narrative), ed. Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Sealts, Jr. (Chicago, 1962). The following abbreviations serve to identify these works in the text: "BC"="Benito Cereno"; "B"= "Bartleby"; C-M=The Confidence-Man; and "BB"="Billy Budd."

- 41 Yates, pp. 185-87, 315, 356. Ahlstrom, II, 550 ff.
- 42 Vargish, 273. "The gnostics were neither relativists nor skeptics. Like the orthodox," says Pagels, "they sought the 'one sole truth.' But gnostics tended to regard all doctrines, speculations, and myths--their own as well as others'--as only approaches to truth" (p. 137).
- 43 Andrews Norton, The Evidence of the Genuineness of the Gospels (Cambridge, Mass., 1844), III, 73, as quoted by Vargish, 274.
- 44 Vargish, 273, 277.
- 45 Pagels, pp. 44, 59, 61, 67-68, 72, 79, 155. Pagels observes that the Valentinians "married, raised children, [and] worked at ordinary employment." Irenaeus says that a Valentinian must "have intercourse with a woman, . . . since his action is an earthly symbol of the unions of the aeons above." Therefore, one concludes that the Valentinians held that marriage and sex held a mystical and metaphysical significance. See Pagels, p. 174; Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses I, 6.2-3, in R. M. Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity, 2nd ed. (1959; rpt. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1966), p. 138.
- 46 Pagels, pp. 151, 61, 64; Jonas pp. 174-75 ff.; Pagels, p. 175.
- 47 Vargish, 277.
- 48 Pagels, pp. 59, 64. Zweig, p. 11. See also Jonas, "The Valentinian Speculation," pp. 174-205.
- 49 Zweig, p. 11.
- 50 Vargish, pp. 274-75.
- 51 Jonas, p. 185.
- 52 Vargish, p. 275. See Pagels for a discussion of Sophia as a criminal-savior figure (pp. 64-65).
- 53 See Chapter i, "The Gnostic Mirror," in Zweig's book but especially pp. 15, 28-29.
- 54 Zweig, p. 6.
- 55 Pagels, pp. 25, 30, 59-60.
- 56 Pagels, pp. 147, 161.
- 57 See Chapter ii, "Melville's World of Change in Moby-Dick," in Zweig's study, but especially p. 209 and the Preface, p. vi.
- 58 Zweig, pp. 209-10.

⁵⁹ Zweig, pp. 212-13. See also "The Gnostic Mirror," pp. 3-21. Jonas, pp. 62, 174.

⁶⁰ See Chapter IV, pp. 151-56.

⁶¹ Sachs, pp. 7, 12: "Le lecture de Moby-Dick au niveau symbolique et au niveau de l'écriture nous a mis sur la piste inattendue d'un message codé inscrit dans le text

 Cette clef se trouve, comme nous le verrons plus loin, dans le carré magique de nombre 16."

And she adds: "Certaines analogies avec la Kabbale, à laquelle nous trouvons de nombreuses références, sont évidentes. Aussi est-ce dans cette optique que nous avons essayé de décoder le message, en nous livrant à une arithmétique très particulière mais à laquelle sont habitués les lecteurs de textes ésotériques. Nous voudrions insister sur le fait que l'architecture même de Moby-Dick a été conçue en fonction du message codé. L'auteur ne s'est pas contenté d'enfourir ce message dans un endroit secret du livre. Il s'étend à travers le texte entier et ajoute une dimension complémentaire à la signification proprement symbolique (pp. 12-13). Furthermore, Sachs observes that aspects of the book are "fort hermetique" (p. 17).

Concerning the alogical type of math employed in Moby-Dick Sachs says: "Quant aux règles d'équivalence des nombres, dans l'« arithmétique » melvillienne, sont équivalents les nombres composés de chiffres inversés (par exemple, 14 et 41), de chiffres réfléchis dans un jeu de double miroir (par exemple, 6 et 9), et les combinaisons diverses de ces règles d'équivalence. Ainsi l'on a 16=19=61=91" (p. 35).

Sachs states her opinion concerning Melville's beliefs about God in the following way: "Melville détrône le Dieu monotheïste qui n'est qu'une création de l'homme . . . pour réinstaurer les idoles phalliques. Le chapitre central du livre (68 «The Blanket») se termine par une sacralisation du phallus, centre du monde melvillien. Aucune Intelligence Suprême, aucun Créateur n'existe" (pp. 15-16).

⁶² W. S. Andrews, intro. Paul Carus, Magic Squares and Cubes: with Some Chapters by Other Writers, 2nd ed. (1917; rpt. New York: Dover, 1960), p. 1.

⁶³ Paul Carus, Intro. in Magic Squares and Cubes by Andrews. Keith Ellis, Number Power in Nature, Art and Everyday Life (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), pp. 204-08. Yates, pp. 134-35. Senior, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁴ Senior, p. 19.

⁶⁵ Sachs, pp. 15-16. See also note 61. She describes Moby-Dick as a cosmological myth with socio-political and psychological overtones. "La quête . . . [est] sur la nature de Dieu et du cosmos Moby-Dick recrée les origines du monde" (p. 59). "Le cosmos est divisé désormais en deux forces irréductibles: le bien et le mal, le blanc et le noir, la tête et le phallus, etc. Or Melville rejette cette conception Il [Moby-Dick] s'agit d'un livre profondément humaniste qui, à travers la quête du moi et de sa place dans le cosmos, se propose

de faire redécouvrir à l'homme moderne aliéné l'unité originelle formée doubles complémentaires et non pas d'une dualité destructrice, et de le réintégrer ainsi dans une totalité cosmique" (pp. 15-16).

⁶⁶ Jonas, pp. 42-43. See Pagels, Chapter iii, "God the Father/God the Mother," pp. 57-83. According to Campbell, the "Wisdom" attained by some gnostics is the equivalent of that characteristic of Mahayana Buddhism (IV, 158).

⁶⁷ Chew and Altick p. 1125, paraphrasing More, The Drift of Romanticism, pp. 21-31.

⁶⁸ See note 67.

⁶⁹ Carus, Intro., in Andrews' Magic Squares and Numbers, pp. vii-viii.

⁷⁰ Senior, p. 51, n. 11. Senior concentrates on illustrating how various works by Blake, Hugo, Nerval, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Huysmans, Villiers, Mallarmé, Yeats, and Eliot place them within the occult tradition, but he draws other writers in to make his point about the ubiquity of gnostic ideas in modern literature.

Bigelow, p. 26. Bigelow discusses four world views which he regards as influences on Western literature, but he says that the Hermetic world view is basic to romantic and symbolist literature (p. 3).

⁷¹ Senior's and Bigelow's formal presentations of the occult world view are weak in regard to the gnostic doctrine of a negative theology and the antinomianism in gnosticism. Their discussions of the literature and lives of several symbolist poets lead them into these areas. Senior's treatment of T. S. Eliot provides one with some insights about the way that Christian myths and symbols can be used to carry a gnostic vision of reality, but still the reader interested in the relationship between Christianity and gnosticism will not find his study adequate.

⁷² Matthiesson, pp. 439, 442, 450, 491.

⁷³ Matthiesson, pp. 442, 514.

⁷⁴ Matthiesson also suggests that Melville's world view was influenced by Manicheanism (pp. 439, 458) and suggests an affinity between Berdyaev's concept of humanitarian individualism and that of Melville (p. 459, n. 7).

⁷⁵ Unlike these critics, however, this study agrees with Franklin that Melville had a first-hand knowledge of various Renaissance and ancient works about gnosticism. See Franklin, pp. 8, 23. Sach's study implies this view. Yates discusses or mentions some of the more important works of the Renaissance that deal with the Hermetic-Cabalist imagination.

⁷⁶ Walker, p. 53.

⁷⁷ Pagels, pp. 143-69.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE, HISTORY, AND IMPLICATIONS OF GNOSTICISM

Referring chiefly to the Church Fathers Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Epiphanius, Pagels states that "the first to investigate the gnostics were their orthodox contemporaries."¹ Nevertheless, as Voegelin observes, the systematic investigation of both ancient and modern gnosticism began in the Enlightenment. He adds, however, that while "the research on ancient gnosticism has a complex history of more than two hundred years," despite auspicious beginnings, the research on modern gnosticism almost died out in the mid-nineteenth century and was not revived to a significant degree until after World War II.²

Scholars offer different opinions about why the research on modern gnosticism underwent nearly a century long moratorium,³ but generally agree on the two factors that brought the lack of investigation to an end. First, in 1945, in Upper Egypt a spectacular archeological discovery was made of fifty-two gnostic texts that date from the early Christian era. This important find helped to reawaken interest in the subject of gnosticism.⁴ The second reason is broad and general in nature. Since the Enlightenment, to no small extent because of the gnostic impulse itself, Western scholarship has devoted itself to self-understanding. Therefore, because gnosticism has had an extraordinary impact on Western culture, it was inevitable that the investigation of

the gnostic legacy would resume. That the research of modern gnosticism did resume is verified today by the wealth of works written about it in the last three decades.⁵ One result of this activity is that now it is possible to offer a more accurate and appropriate definition of gnosticism in terms of its nature, history, and implications, than had been possible in the past.

A definition of the word gnosis indicates that first and foremost, gnosticism in its higher expressions is a form of mysticism. Alluding to the affinity of gnosticism with the great religions of the Far East, Campbell explains that

the Greek word gnosis (whence 'Gnosticism') and the Sanskrit word bodhi (whence 'Buddhism') have exactly the same meaning, 'knowledge'--referring to a knowledge, however, transcending that derived either empirically from the senses or rationally by way of categories of thought. Such ineffable knowledge transcends, as well, the terms and images by which it is metaphorically suggested.⁶

"The emphasis on knowledge as the means for the attainment of salvation, or even as the form of salvation itself," Jonas says "and the claim to the possession of this knowledge in one's own articulate doctrine are common features of . . . numerous sects" of gnosticism that arose early in the Graeco-Roman period. Another outstanding characteristic of the various schools of gnostic thought, says Walker, is "syncretism."⁷

Because of these common features, as well as others, the term gnosticism, narrowly defined, is used as a collective heading for the widespread, highly diverse, and highly syncretistic movement of esoteric or harmonial religion in the ancient world, any single manifestation of which could be predominantly mystical, magical, or philosophical. Ahlstrom defines an esoteric or harmonial religion as one that holds that all good depends upon the rapport which one establishes with the

cosmos and the degree to which one is "'in tune with the infinite.'"⁸

This definition is helpful because it appropriately leads one to associate the gnostic imagination with the Greek idea of harmony or balance and the Chinese concept of yin and yang. As it assumed Christian forms and challenged from within the orthodox elements in the early church, thereby earning for itself the reputation of being the first heresy, gnosticism manifested itself in pagan and Jewish forms.

A theory prevailed for centuries that gnosticism was a religious movement that confined its impact to the ancient world. As Voegelin points out, however, during the Enlightenment when scholars began to research the history of heresy, they began to change their minds about the continuity and impact of the gnostic impulse, seeing evidence of it in their milieu. Today modern scholarship recognizes the validity of the studies of gnosticism done in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and gnosticism has been given a broader definition.⁹

Besides referring to a movement of esoteric religion in the ancient world, now the term gnosticism is understood to refer to the most important element in vast movement of occult ideas that has existed as a secret stream throughout most of Western history. It surfaced in its purer forms with great strength in the Renaissance and the romantic era, however, taking on many new rational and political forms in the process. During this phase of its history, it inspired radical and liberal movements. In short, when the gnostic imagination strips itself of some of "bizarre" features that, as Ahlstrom says, frequently attend on it in "specific instances"--features such as an emphasis on "flamboyant symbolism, occult powers," and "complicated institutional structures,"¹⁰ one can see that it has influenced virtually every area and aspect of

modern life.

Some of the most notable mystics, theologians, philosophers, scientists, and revolutionaries embody its spirit. A list of those whose works or activities bear close witness to the gnostic impulse should include these names: Meister Eckhart, Jacob Boehme, Paracelsus, Pico della Mirandola, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Benjamin Franklin, William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Friedrich Schelling, Annie Woods Besant, C. J. Jung, and Nicholas Berdyaev. Some of the philosophers, scientists and revolutionaries whose works are further removed from direct links with gnosticism but show the effects of its influence or a particular affinity with it are John Locke, Karl Marx, Freud, and Albert Einstein.

Eckhart and Boehme, along with Schelling and Berdyaev, are the key figures in the line of development that produced the philosophic expression of romanticism, German idealism, and then existentialism from the gnostic impulse. Eckhart, whom Steven E. Ozment refers to as a "brilliant alleged heretic,"¹¹ and Boehme, whom Maurice Friedman describes as "a Lutheran gnostic," are considered the Fathers of German idealism and existentialism. According to Friedman, it was Schelling (1750-1854) who "partly under the influence of Boehme began the movement beyond German idealism" toward existentialism.¹² Both Jonas and Voegelin discuss existentialism as a modern form of gnostic thought.¹³ Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Berdyaev, whom John Macquarrie chooses as the figure most representative of existentialism,¹⁴ is the subject of two dissertations that relate his world view to gnosticism: the Reverend Paul Vincent Kennedy's "A Philosophical Appraisal of the Modernist Gnosticism of Nicolas Berdyaev," and Charles C. Knapp's "Nicolas Berdyaev: Theologian of Prophetic Gnosticism."¹⁵

The inclusion of Paracelsus, Franklin, Freud, Jung, and Einstein in this list fleshes out Ahlstrom's observation about the gnostic imagination that it frequently exhibits "strong rational and empirical interests."¹⁶ Edwardes lists Paracelsus, whose involvement with alchemy is well known, as the father of chemotherapy and hence one of the founders of modern medicine.¹⁷ According to a study by N. Hans, referred to by James H. Billington, in 1776, Franklin became the head of an occult lodge of Freemasonry in Paris. Noting that some of its members held "a magical faith in the transforming power of science," Billington reminds readers that revolutionism in science, as well as politics, was related to occultism in the eighteenth century.¹⁸

In the figure of Franklin, one obtains an idea of how the gnostic impulse, which is essentially subjective, metaphysical, and psychological in nature, could transform into a rationalistic, scientific approach to reality and eventually look coldly on its former self. Nevertheless, as Ahlstrom points out, in its purer forms, gnosticism insists on "the spiritual unity of all things" and thus is as uncomfortable with pure science and a narrow rationalism as the scientific, materialistic world view is with it.

Voegelin and June Singer (a former student of Jung), as well as Bigelow, agree that psychology and psychoanalysis are modern forms of the gnostic imagination passed through the alembic of rationalism.¹⁹ And putting Einstein's name on the list of persons whose ideas show a certain affinity with the gnostic imagination suggests yet another direction in the area of science gnosticism points to. As Campbell remarks, the basic principle of Einstein's physics was anticipated in a twelfth-century gnostic text.²⁰

The inclusion of Pico della Mirandola, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Karl Marx, and Annie Woods Besant in this list suggests the ramifications of gnosticism in the socio-political arena. According to Yates, Pico della Mirandola's essay, the "Dignity of Man," a primary document of Renaissance humanism, is permeated with gnostic ideas.²¹ The discussions of gnosticism by Pagels, Norman Cohn (The Pursuit of the Millenium),²² Voegelin, and Ozment, among others, indicate that anarchism, feminism, communism, and democracy all take their inspiration from it. Relating left-wing social and political changes to the gnostic impulse, Voegelin states that the belief that human beings are "supermen" who have the right and power to transform this world into a heaven and bring about "a community of autonomous persons" is the fuel in the Western utopian tradition. It is this ideal, he says, that "is most clearly recognizable in communism," but he believes, too, that "the idea of democracy . . . thrives not inconsiderably on the symbolism of a community of autonomous men."²³

Billington's discussion of the gnostic impulse in relation to Masonic and other "secret" societies of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries²⁴ lends weight to Voegelin's views, while Mervyn Jones's article on "Freemasonry" supports yet mollifies them.²⁵ Thus, keeping in mind the revelation, in Ozment's discussion, that Christian millennial beliefs mixed freely with the gnostic impulse in many of the historical manifestations of the utopian and perfectionist drive, one can say of gnosticism what he says of the sixteenth-century dissenters who are the subject of his book: it sowed "the seeds of social disintegration" and encouraged the desire to either reform or reject the world, but it plucked the fruit of "those truths most men

would now hold to be self-evident."²⁶

Locke, of course, is one of the Fathers of the Enlightenment and of democracy. Rousseau is one of the philosophers of the French Enlightenment who helped set the stage for the French Revolution (as well as for romanticism). That their political philosophies stem from different branches of the same impulse is a point made by Neal M. Cross, Robert C. Lamb, and Rudy H. Turk. Godwin is known as England's first political anarchist while Wollstonecraft is her first political feminist, and Marx represents communism to most people today. Locke is related to gnosticism through humanism, liberalism, and nominalism, which, according to Jonas, the gnostic impulse promotes.²⁷

Without directly linking them, Zweig discusses Rousseau in connection with the heresy of the Free Spirit, a gnostic-inspired movement of the Middle Ages that proclaimed the only thoroughly revolutionary social doctrine that existed in the later Middle Ages.²⁸ Zweig's study prepares one to find England's first political anarchist linked to gnosticism, such as occurs in James Henry Rieger's unpublished dissertation, "The Gnostic Prometheus: A Study of Godwin and the Shelleys."²⁹ And Voegelin includes Marxism as a modern form of the gnostic vision of reality in his book.³⁰

Edwardes and Ahlstrom discuss Besant as a revolutionary and a disciple of the mother of modern theosophy, Madame Helena Blavatsky. To quote Ahlstrom, gnosticism "is the fountainhead" of this movement. Their treatment of Besant and modern theosophy reveals connections between the gnostic imagination, anti-colonialism, the human rights movement in the twentieth century, the recognition of the value of India's sacred scripture, and the increase of interest in the great

religious philosophies of the Far East. They also link modern theosophy with the concern for the environment, the tendency toward religious and political forms of universalism that invoke the unity of humankind, and a host of phenomena associated with the counter-culture movement of the 1960s.³¹

A list of poets and writers whose works have acted as vehicles for the gnostic imagination can only begin to suggest its ramifications in the area of art. Saurat demonstrates that this list must include, among others, Spenser, Milton, Goethe, Blake, Shelley, and Victor Hugo.³²

Vernon Stauffer, the author of New England and the Bavarian Illuminati, would have one add Herder. According to him, both Goethe and Herder were members of the legendary neo-gnostical Illuminati society.³³ As Zweig observes and The Tempest makes plain, Shakespeare, too, expressed gnostic ideas in his poetry and plays.³⁴

Pointing out that "the strong attachment of Blake and Yeats to the occult is well known," Bigelow follows Senior in maintaining that other writers whose works express gnostic or a mixture of gnostic and neo-platonic philosophic and cosmological ideas are Coleridge, Poe, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, Henry James, "possibly Emily Dickinson," Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot, W. C. Williams, Joyce, Conrad, Faulkner, and Steinbeck. Senior would have one add to this group Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, and Thomas Mann.³⁵ Some studies suggest that other writers whose fiction bears the imprint of the ongoing movement of the gnostic imagination include Browning, Carlyle, George Bernard Shaw, Nabokov, Dylan Thomas, Camus, Sartre, Hesse, Kafka, and Walker Percy.³⁶ And certainly, if they have not received it, the works of Emily Bronte and Gabriel Garcia Marquez deserve investigation

as significant interpretations of the gnostic world view.

This list helps explain and justify Bigelow's claim that "in the literature of the present century, hermetic ideas are to be found nearly everywhere."³⁷ This is a thesis that Ihab Hassan helps support in his book, The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature, and in his article, "The New Gnosticism: Speculations on an Aspect of the Postmodern Mind."³⁸ As a review of the creative talent directly or indirectly associated with the gnostic impulse implies, Voegelin's statement that gnosticism constitutes "the essence of modernism" may not be as much of an exaggeration as it first appears to be.³⁹

Scholars propose a number of reasons to explain why gnosticism has had a lot of influence on Western culture. Ahlstrom points out that it "has in fact been a great religious and cosmological alternative to Christianity ever since apostolic times" and that "from earliest times even orthodox Christians and Jews have taken it into account, incorporating what they could, denouncing what was unacceptable, and disagreeing as to which was what." He believes that gnosticism has persisted as a religious force because it offers "an enormously imaginative and unitive world view" that appeals to those dissatisfied with orthodox forms of faith.

Campbell, in his discussion of this question, suggests that gnosticism has exercised a lot of influence because it has promoted the viewpoint that people have the right to their own version of the truth and because it regards truth as ongoing and progressive. Furthermore, he specifies that gnosticism focuses interest on the self. Commenting on the great "diversity and multiplication of cults," which characterize ancient gnosticism, Campbell explains this diversity on the basis of the

gnostic adherence to a negative theology, but his explanation underlines as well the subjectivism of the gnostic imagination. Believing that God at the ultimate level is unknowable in any final or absolute way, he says, engenders the view that the terms and images or speculative systems by which one attempts to "capture" the Divine may say more about the level of one's own spiritual development than such efforts may say about the Divine itself.⁴⁰

Voegelin holds to the theory that gnosticism has shaped the modern consciousness because it has given rise to the belief that human beings are grand god-like beings who have the power and right to transform themselves, their psyches, their institutions, or their environments in any way they see fit. The gnostic, he says, is interested in power.⁴¹ In keeping with Voegelin's views, one might recall the gnostic dictum that salvation is based on "knowledge";⁴² for many today who are influenced by the belief that knowledge is the key to the future imbue scientific knowledge with an aura of religiosity.

Taken collectively, the broad, general reasons offered by these critics to explain its impact emphasize that gnosticism promotes a human-centered, activist orientation to reality. Certainly that is true. But more specifically one might say, and thus attempt to get closer to the key doctrines and characteristics of the purer forms of the gnostic imagination, that gnosticism has been closely involved with revolutionary cultural change because it kept alive some quite ancient ideas about the self, God, and nature even while it promoted the modern ideals of freedom, individualism, and wholeness and a subjective, dynamic, and paradoxical approach to reality. Because the older and newer elements in the gnostic world view are implicit in the mythos that

is basic to the gnostic imagination, one can get a fair idea of its nature by discussing it and elaborating on these elements. Before focusing attention on them, however, readers should have more information about the way that gnosticism traveled from the Graeco-Roman to the modern world and the routes that most clearly demarcate its passage.

Besides the figures already mentioned, many basic sources of the gnostic imagination have acted as transmitters, witnesses, or interpreters of its thought and mood. Some of these sources are listed as follows: the legendary Emerald Tablet on which were inscribed the main principles of the hermetic doctrine, (e.g., "Things above [spirit] are the same as things below [matter]";⁴³ the treatises that make up the Hermetic Corpus;⁴⁴ the alchemical literature;⁴⁵ the Jewish Cabala;⁴⁶ the mystery religions of late antiquity, such as are represented by Orpheus, Isis, and Mithra;⁴⁷ and the literature and iconography of the Vikings, from the early Christian era to approximately the eleventh century.⁴⁸ Also, Jones includes "some of the New Testament Apocrypha, like the Acts of Thomas and the Odes of Solomon," and, to Pagels, parts of the Bible as well.⁴⁹

These materials and traditions were reinforced by the Ptolemaic cosmology, which, as Bigelow remarks, "is basically occult in nature"⁵⁰ Ahlstrom adds that astrological lore, "necromancy, magic . . . the 'black arts,'" and numerology were other increments.⁵¹ The writings of some of the Church Fathers gave accounts of the early gnostics; Jonas says that several of these writings contain whole portions of gnostic originals.⁵² The religions of neoplatonism, Manichaeism, Shi'ism and Sufism, all of which were inspired to some extent by the gnostic impulse and could be re-interpreted to yield a gnostic wisdom, helped to

move gnosticism through history.⁵³ The persistence of gnostic practices and beliefs in various parts of semi-Christianized Europe in the Middle Ages;⁵⁴ the whole wave of Oriental influences in the modern world;⁵⁵ and, last but by no means least, Rosicrucianism, theosophy, and Freemasonry joined to carry gnosticism on its way from the Hellenistic period to the twentieth century.⁵⁶

Campbell and Pagels may come to an agreement that Valentinian gnosticism (Christian), rather than Mithraism (pagan gnosticism), constituted "the most influential and sophisticated form of gnostic teaching" in the second century A.D., the period during which gnosticism reached its apogee in late antiquity.⁵⁷ In all likelihood, however, scholars will continue to disagree for quite some time about which of the purer forms of the gnostic imagination has exercised the most influence in the shaping of Western culture. Campbell makes the claim for alchemy,⁵⁸ Hassan believes it Orphism;⁵⁹ Saurat argues that it is the Cabala;⁶⁰ and Ahlstrom, Jonas, and Yates assert their claim in behalf of the Hermetic Corpus.⁶¹

The view taken in this study is that this dispute may not be resolvable. There is agreement, however, with Jonas and Yates that the Hermetic Corpus exercised the greatest impact during the Renaissance. This work was not available in the West until the Renaissance, but it was quoted and referred to by a number of pagan and Christian classical writers of the later period, including Hermas and Augustine, who assumed that Hermes Trismegistes, the legendary author of the Hermetic Corpus, was an actual person.⁶²

Before the Renaissance and even after it, in its purer forms, gnosticism had been and remained "a vast 'Secret Tradition,'" as Ahlstrom

calls it.⁶³ With the Renaissance itself came the rediscovery of fourteen treatises of the Hermetic Corpus, and their publication in 1471 by the Florentine Academy. Because of the extraordinary prestige with which these writings were regarded and the wide dissemination and attention they received, gnostic ideas, hitherto the domain of the elite in their most sophisticated expressions, poured out into the public domain.

From the fifteenth to the early seventeenth centuries, Yates remarks, they became a mandatory area of study for anyone with any intellectual pretensions. It was believed that their alleged author, Hermes Trismegistes, certainly had been Plato's instructor in the mysteries or possibly might have initiated Moses into the secret wisdom of the Egyptians. According to Stephen Vincent Hopper, who quotes Albertus Magnus to support his point, some people believed that Hermes Trismegistes was "before Pythagoras" and might have been the teacher of Pythagoras.⁶⁴ Yates notes that people were disabused of these ideas and the Hermetic Corpus lost some of the awe with which it had been regarded for centuries when in 1614, a Swiss scholar by the name of Isaac Causabon, placed the date of its composition at no earlier than the second century A.D. Nonetheless, to quote Saurat, by that time gnostic ideas had become "the microbes of the moral world." Despite the accurate dating of the texts, for better or for worse, gnostic ideas had been set free, "to be advanced still farther in each succeeding century by both Protestants and Catholics," says Ahlstrom.⁶⁵

With this much of the history of the gnostic imagination and some of its greater implications, the readers' attention is now directed to the myths basic to it. Implicit in these myths are the main tenets of gnosticism, which can be explained less formally in terms that somewhat

arbitrarily distinguish the "old" ideas from the "new" ones. The older elements include a negative theology and pantheistic, idealistic pantheistic, organic, anthropomorphic, and magical ideas. They suggest that the gnostic vision of reality is not only highly unitive but also that it tends to stress a subjective, dynamic, paradoxical, and relativistic world view.

A simplified version of gnostic mythos helps initiate readers into the arcana of gnosticism. As both Jonas and Saurat note, the mythos basic to gnosticism describes reality as a process wherein the Unknown God, that which is unmanifest, in an act of reflection or self-mirroring manifests itself as a potentially Self-Integrated Androgyne or "Upper World." Part of this "world" undergoes a "fall" and splits or fragments into its male and female parts, so that it actually becomes the Self-Divided Androgyne or "lower world" (the cosmos). The subsequent history of the Unknown God, one of whose secret names is Man, involves the struggle of man (Man) for and against the return to the condition of Self-Integration.⁶⁶ This history is related in its soteriological mythos. Such are the bare bones of the gnostic imagination.

In her paraphrase of part of a cosmology ascribed to Valentinus (fl. 137-166 A.D.), who appears to have been the most remarkable of all the remarkable gnostics of late antiquity, Pagels provides a glimpse of the abstract character this mythos attains.

Valentinus, the teacher and poet, begins with the premise that God is essentially indescribable. But he suggests that the divine can be imagined as a dyad; consisting, in one part, of the Ineffable, the Depth, the Primal Father; and, in the other, of Grace, Silence, the Womb, and 'Mother of the All.' Valentinus reasons that Silence is the appropriate complement of the Father, designating the former as feminine and the latter as masculine because of the grammatical gender of the Greek words. He goes on to describe how Silence receives, as in a womb, the seed of the Ineffable Source; from this she

brings forth all the emanations of divine being, ranged in harmonious pairs of masculine and feminine energies [the Self-Integrated Androgyne].⁶⁷

Ultimately, as Jonas points out, the last emanation produced in this series, who in Valentinian speculation is called "Sophia," which means "Wisdom," undergoes a fall. The fall of this entity, who also is called Nature, Life, and the Thought of God, leads to the creation of the visible world, the Self-Divided Androgyne or Man. In other systems, Jonas says, it is the Narcissus-like Unknown God who (in part) falls and becomes suppressed yet challenged by his own "Nature," "Thought," or "reflection."⁶⁸ But these figures are metaphorical equivalents. As the terms being used here imply, the typical gnostic myth of creation refers to the origin of consciousness, but moral impulses are involved as well.

A second glimpse of the gnostic imagination is obtained from another of Pagels' paraphrased versions of part of a gnostic cosmological myth which dates from the first century A.D. This version points up the dynamic, paradoxical, and relativistic character of the gnostic approach to reality, and it prepares one for a discussion of some of the key characteristics, themes, terms, and images that are found in gnostic-inspired or gnostic-informed literature.

Another gnostic writing, called the Great Announcement, quoted by Hippolytus in his Refutation of All Heresies, explains the origin of the universe as follows: From the power of Silence appeared 'a great power, the Mind of the Universe, which manages all things, and is male . . . the other . . . a great Intelligence . . . is a female which produces all things.' . . . This author explains that these powers, joined in union, 'are discovered to be duality . . . This is Mind in Intelligence, and these are separable from one another, and yet are one, found in a state of duality.' This means, the gnostic teacher explains, that 'there is in everyone divine power existing in a latent condition . . . There is one power divided above and below; generating itself, making itself grow, seeking itself, finding itself, being mother of itself, father of itself, sister of itself, spouse of itself, daughter of itself, son of itself--mother, father, unity, being a source

of the entire circle of existence.'⁶⁹

Jonas says that the Great Announcement, which he calls "The Great Exposition," is ascribed to the infamous Simon Magus, the legendary prototype of Faust, and he gives a more subtle and detailed account than does Pagels, which runs like this:

The one root is unfathomable Silence, pre-existent limitless power, existing in singleness. It bestirs itself and assumes a determinate aspect by turning into Thinking (Nous, i.e., Mind), from which comes forth the Thought (Epinoia) conceived in singleness. Mind and Thought are no longer one but two: in his Thought the First 'appeared to himself and thereby became a Second.' Thus through the act of reflection the indeterminate and only negatively describable power of the Root turns into a positive principle committed to the object of its thinking, even though that object is itself. It is still One in that it contains the Thought in itself, yet⁷⁰ already divided and no longer in its original integrity.

Reduced to absolutes, the basic idea in these myths remains the same despite the differences in terms and images. A pre-existent, limitless, indeterminate power which, besides the name Unknown God is also called the Alien Man and Love, manifests itself in two conditions: (1) a relatively Self-Integrated Androgyne, and (2) a relatively Self-Divided Androgyne. Whereas the Self-Integrated Androgyne is a symbol of "knowledge"--gnosis--the Self-Divided Androgyne is a symbol of "ignorance," which are two of the most important symbolic terms in the gnostic vocabulary. The former represents the ideal condition of consciousness and Spirit ($A=B$ yet $A \neq B$). The latter represents the opposite ($A \neq B$ yet $A=B$).

Implicit in the cosmological and soteriological myths of gnosticism, one finds the main tenets of the higher reaches of gnostic religion. Simplified and stated abstractly, these tenets include an emphasis on the mysterious unity and divinity of all reality, which, nonetheless, is perceived to allow for dualism and hierarchy; the belief that the world

is the necessary but imperfect manifestation of the highest god-head that cannot be radically altered but can be improved; the claim that an individual, although she does not know it, in her or his true, innermost self (Self) is identical with the highest god-head--the Self-Integrated Androgyne; the view that the goal of the individual is to rediscover his true identity and become the perfected mirror image of the deity; the identification of the dualistic, analytic mode of consciousness especially with the impulse of self-love; and the idealization of freedom, individualism, and wholeness.

In an abbreviated, general way, these statements set forth the main theological, soteriological, cosmological, anthropological, moral, and psychological doctrines of the more religious and philosophical level of the gnostic imagination. Beyond this, it is helpful to know that the gnostic religious impulse usually includes various doctrines of reincarnation. It conceives of the salvation of the fallen Spirit, the world-Soul, as taking place chiefly by means of special individuals who are elected by the highest god-head for this purpose. However, the view that the Spirit operates in Nature also is maintained. It holds that the true, inner self is a unique, transmudane entity that is eternal. And the concept of time promoted by it tends to be cyclical.

One important feature of the gnostic imagination that follows on its unitive and imaginative interpretation of reality--or rather on its interpretation of reality as a mysterious duality-in-a-unity, for it is a world view that with its "upper" and "lower" worlds contains a strong secondary element of dualism within a unitive framework--is the idea that ultimately there is only One Player in the cosmic drama of life: the Unknown God. At the deepest level of the symbolism in gnostic

mythos, it is the Unknown God who takes all the parts in existence and acts as both its own protagonist and antagonist. This feature of gnostic thought explains the presence of symbolisms in its higher literary forms that stress the themes of appearance versus reality, games, metamorphic transformations, epiphanies, and the imagery which frequently attends on them: masks, disguises, and costumes. As Yates points out, one "wonderful novel" of the gnostic imagination in the Hellenistic period, which presents the initiation of its protagonist into the "higher mysteries" and makes use of the above mentioned themes and motifs, is Apulius' The Golden Ass.⁷¹

A radical emphasis on the ineffable unity of the All insures that paradox and movement are characteristics of the imagination of gnosticism, and these features of gnostic thought are conveyed by a wealth of striking images. At the deeper level of this symbolism, gnostic myths suggest that God, the "Nothing" who is "Everything," is a highly paradoxical force that gives rise to and is the life process. On one level of their symbolism, these myths suggest that the deity is a self-consuming, self-renewing cycle of energy. This idea is sometimes given graphic representation in the image of a serpent descending from aloft and ascending from below.⁷² Thus, in addition to the themes of the hunt or the quest, self-division, self-multiplication, self-creation, self-magnification, and self-mirroring, and the symbolism which attends on them, such as mirrors, lamps, and numbers, one can expect the gnostic imagination to employ the motif of eating and the imagery which frequently attends on it, such as is conveyed by the carnival.⁷³

Other key characteristics of the gnostic imagination follow on the gnostic emphasis on unity. These characteristics, too, point to the

highly paradoxical and dynamic character of the gnostic vision of reality.

To quote Saurat, being more concerned with the unity of God than with the idea of God's goodness, the gnostic imagination stresses the idea that "God contains all opposites--even good and evil." In the gnostic world view, evil, which is identified as "ignorance," is treated, in the words of Zweig, as a "strange twin" of good rather than its absolute contrary.

More themes and images accompany the idea that God contains all opposites. For example, the theme of progress or a process as taking place through the dialectical interplay of forces, attends on the gnostic theological doctrine of unity.⁷⁴ Moreover, one finds the idea that nothing in and of itself is absolutely good or evil; every aspect of existence in the more philosophic forms of gnostic expression is marked by "doubleness." Furthermore, in connection with this idea, a pronounced symbolism of reversals and inversions is an outstanding feature of gnostic thought; for, as the portions of the myths quoted above suggest, the Unknown God, in giving rise to the universe out of its own inner dynamic becomes its own opposite, which, in turn, "crosses over" or eventually reverts or inverts to become its own opposite, and so forth. Thus, the graphic form that this patterning creates becomes a cosmological symbol.⁷⁵

The gnostic doctrine of negative theology contributes a special vocabulary of terms and images to expressions of this form of religious impulse, which introduces the negative way to enlightenment to the Western world as part of this theology. These aspects of the gnostic vision of reality are commented on in a most interesting passage by

Jonas. Moreover, because this passage suggests a motive on the part of the Unknown Self for manifesting itself in and as the world of Being and becoming, the quotation casts light on one important item in the content of gnosis, and it reminds one that although gnosticism promoted rationalism and secularism, it was and remains a religious psychology or anthropology. Speaking generally about gnosticism, Jonas says:

The beginning and end of the paradox that is gnostic religion is the Unknown God himself who, unknowable on principle, because the 'other' to everything known, is yet the object of a knowledge and even asks to be known. He as much invites as he thwarts the quest for knowing him; . . . The knowledge of him itself is the knowledge of his unknowability; the predication upon him as thus known is by negations: thus arises the via negationis, the negative theology, whose melody, here first sounded as a way of confessing what cannot be described, hence swells to a mighty chorus in Western piety.

Then Jonas quotes the following gnostic-Coptic hymn:

Thou art the alone infinite
and thou art alone the unknowable
and thou art he after whom every man seeks
and they have not found thee
and none can know thee against thy will
and none can even praise thee against thy will . . .
Thou art alone the non-containable
and thou art alone the non-visible⁷⁶
Thou art alone the non-subsistent

As Jonas discusses the gnostic doctrine of a negative theology, his observations and the poem that he quotes suggest that the Unknown or Alien Man becomes manifest and falls in order to engage in creative play, to explore its own potential for being, or to "know" itself. Since all is "One," it seems that the Unknown God is playing a cosmic game of hide and go seek with itself in "losing" itself. In some versions of the Valentinian myth of creation, it is "the will of the Father, who wanted to lead . . . all to pondering on . . . him and to a desire to seek after Him" that at the deep level accounts for a motive behind Creation.⁷⁷

Describing the Fall, Jonas observes that in gnostic myths "there is a voluntary element in the downward movement of the divine: a guilty 'inclination' of the Soul (as a mythical entity) toward the lower realm, with various motivations such as curiosity, vanity, sensual desire, is the gnostic equivalent of original sin."⁷⁸ Hence, according to the gnostic reading of reality, the Unknown God--not humankind--is the Original Sinner. But the Fall is justified in the Valentinian mythos with the portrayal of the idea that the state of Self-Integration is not actualized until the state of Self-Division comes to be. As Jonas observes, obtaining control over the guilty impulses and learning about a negative theology are portrayed in gnostic mythos as prerequisites for attaining the salvation of self-integration and gnosis.⁷⁹

Besides the doctrine of a negative theology, other elements in the admixture of gnosticism are apt to impress the modern consciousness as either archaic or foreign. These elements, too, contribute to the unitive, paradoxical nature of the gnostic imagination. For example, Jonas describes the dominant form of ancient gnostic belief as a form of idealistic pantheism but an unusual form of this kind of approach to reality. As Jonas says, the most sophisticated and influential forms of gnostic thought in late antiquity conceive of the world chiefly in mental or psycho-spiritual terms "but [do] not deprive it of reality as in certain teachings of Indian mysticism."⁸⁰ Further, this impulse perceives nature (the fallen Spirit) as having a "double" value. The gnostic attitude toward nature encompasses the idea that the immaterial but paradoxically material world is the self-divided, self-estranged, debased form of God. But, as Campbell also notes, it could express the gloriously affirmative passages about the material world that are

characteristic of a classic pantheism.⁸¹

The following passage from Book XI of the Hermetic Corpus essentially illustrates the affirmative attitude that the gnostic imagination could promote in regard to the fallen god-head. Later in this discussion, in connection with analyzing Melville's major fiction, the striking terms and images employed in it to designate the dualist's negative, moral vision of life are set forth.

If then you do not make yourself equal to God, you cannot apprehend God; for like is known by like. Leap clear of all that is corporeal, and make yourself grow to a like expanse with that greatness which is beyond all measure; rise above all time, and become eternal; then you will apprehend God. Think that for you too nothing is impossible; deem that you too are immortal, and that you are able to grasp all things in your thought, to know every craft and every science; find your home in the haunts of every living creature; make yourself higher than all heights, and lower than all depths; bring together in yourself all opposites of quality, heat and cold, dryness and fluidity; think that you are everywhere at once, on land, at sea, in heaven; think that you are not yet begotten, that you are in the womb, that you are young, that you are old, that you have died, that you are in the world beyond the grave; grasp in your thought all this at once, all times and places, all substances and qualities and magnitudes together; then you can apprehend God. But if you shut up your soul in your body, and abase yourself, and say 'I know nothing, I can do nothing; I am afraid of earth and sea, I cannot mount to heaven; I know not what I was, nor what I shall be' then, what have you to do with God? Your thought can grasp nothing beautiful and good, if you cleave to the body, and are evil.

For it is the height of evil not to know God; but to be capable of knowing God, and to wish and hope to know him, is the road which leads straight to the Good; and it is an easy road to travel. Everywhere God will come to meet you, everywhere he will appear to you, at places and times at which you look not for it, in your waking hours and in your sleep, and when you are journeying by water and by land, in the nighttime and in the daytime, when you are speaking and when you are silent; for there is nothing which is not God. And do you say 'God is invisible'? Speak not so. Who is more manifest than God? For this very purpose he has made all things. Nothing is invisible, not even an incorporeal thing; mind is seen in its liking, and God in his working.

So far, thrice-greatest one, I have shown you the truth. Think out all else in like manner for yourself, and you will not be misled.

With gnosticism, says Campbell, "we are in the realm . . . of myth" where "the world itself is known as divine, a field of inexhaustible spiritual depth."⁸²

Other "old" elements in the makeup of the gnostic world view include organicism and anthropomorphism. Paraphrasing Senior, Bigelow remarks that the gnostic imagination holds that "the created universe is composed of paired opposites--male-female, light-dark--which generate through dialectic process their own equilibrium or harmony." Or, to put it another way, it maintains that "the image of the created world is the human body, and the universe itself is, in fact, a living [androgynous] man." But as Jonas explains, being the estranged image or Thought of the highest god-head, the universe is often termed the impaired Alien Man in gnostic literature, where it is contrasted with the mature, integrated condition of the Spirit.⁸³

Bigelow's and Jonas's remarks indicate why many expressions of the gnostic imagination are replete with terms and images relating to growth, development, and patterned alterations in states of being, such as the cycle of death and rebirth, which is termed by some the "law of periodicity" or the pattern of "withdrawal and return."⁸⁴ In regard to gnosis, as Bigelow says, which constitutes a person's second birth, the way that a person becomes aware of "his god-like . . . nature is through self-knowledge, a penetration into the dark and unknown layers of the psyche, which is often symbolized as a descent into hell." It is on the journey into and in the depths of the fallen (world-)Soul that one discovers the most profound Truth about the identity of the self with the highest god-head, says Zweig.⁸⁵

Complexes of images and themes are used in gnostic expressions of

thought to convey the elements of organicism and anthropomorphism in it. For example, one finds the idea in expressions of the gnostic imagination that all growth and life depends on sex and death. According to Jonas, who speaks about the gnostic imagination in the ancient world, both death and sexual intercourse function as important symbols in gnostic thought. Besides relating to the Fall, they are used as equivalent symbols of the necessity of overcoming or reconciling opposites as the basis for recovering from the effects of this event. The reconciliation of opposites or "sacred marriage" is the most important of the "constitutive moments" of existence, to quote from Ahlstrom's discussion of modern theosophy.⁸⁶

As Saurat observes and Jonas corroborates, many expressions of the gnostic imagination describe the coming to be of the world in terms of the division and sexual union of the Divine Androgyne. And since the male and female parts are twin aspects of the One beyond all terms and images, one finds that the themes of incest and twinship are features of gnostic-informed literature.⁸⁷

Many readers will recognize the antiquity of the symbolism expressing the organic, anthropomorphic elements in the gnostic imagination. Yet another ancient idea continued in gnosticism is a principle derived from the oldest level of its beliefs. This idea, which is a form of sympathetic magic, according to Senior, is that only like cures like.⁸⁸ The passage quoted earlier from the Hermetic Corpus begins with a variant of this expression: "If then you do not make yourself equal to God, you cannot apprehend God; for like is known by like."⁸⁹ On the basis of this principle, the gnostic impulse tends to hold that the cause of a problem is also its cure. For example, says Zweig, the gnostic imagina-

tion holds that to "cure" the effects of the Soul's descent into Self-Division and Ignorance, in a qualified way one repeats the Fall.

Using the principle of "only like cures like," those inspired by gnostic sentiments have reasoned that what brings the One "down" also brings the One "up." In other words, according to Senior, the way "out" of the world is through life and experience.⁹⁰ Therefore, if sensuality is the motive ascribed to the Divine for the Fall, then indulging in sensuality is part of the cure. If self-love, vanity, and curiosity are motives, then they also are part of the cure. Similarly, if an act of rebellion that involves the rejection of a world is symbolic of the Fall, then the repetition of that act becomes the prelude necessary to renewal.

These ideas, of course, implicate the gnostic impulse in manifestations of bizarre, antinomian, and nihilistic behavior. But they have been given sensitive readings, too. In Creative Mythology, Campbell comes to the defense of sensuality as a way of spiritual enlightenment. In contrast to the ascetic or "right-hand path" to mystical wisdom, there is the "left-hand path," the way to spiritual maturity and renewal through the body and the senses--the way "of nature." He places its origin with the gnostics of the Hellenistic world and maintains that it achieves one of its most refined manifestations in the literature and practice of alchemy.⁹¹

In connection with rebellion and self-love, Jonas notes that it is highly characteristic of the gnostic imagination to elevate the outcasts and "dark" figures of Jewish or Greek tradition to the status of heroes and heroines. As he observes, the heroes and heroines of some of the gnostic literature that dates from late antiquity include the serpent

(i.e. Jesus), Eve, Cain, Sophia, and Prometheus. According to Zweig, Narcissus should be listed here as well.⁹²

Similarly a pattern of the rejection of the relatively known, fallen condition of Being and the journey to the Unknown God, which involves the theme of the "stripping" of the self (Self) to one's naked, inner, transmundane ego--the integrated self (Self)--also are features of the way of "knowledge" (gnosis) to spiritual maturity. This idea of rejection of the worldly nature in gnostic literature is called the negative way to Illumination. It is usually combined with the "left-hand path."⁹³ But the gnostic imagination not only justifies sensuality, rebellion, rejection, and self-love on the basis of the claim that "only like cures like," but also, combined with the precept that one must strive to "become equal" to God and the gnostic emphasis on reflection, it makes use of these ideas to meditate on the self (Self) and to obtain gnosis, the content of which ultimately includes the entire history of the Spirit.

If gnosticism had done nothing more than act as a carrier of the older elements in its world view, it would not qualify for being considered a revolutionary transformation of the basic stock of ideas common to the oldest mystery religion traditions. It is correct, however, to speak of gnosticism in these terms. Because of its unique interpretation of and emphasis on the concept of negative theology, the gnostic imagination of late antiquity serves as the most important basic source of the modern ideals of freedom, individualism, and wholeness and of the vision of reality shared by the contemporary intellectual community.

In gnosticism, as readers have seen, the Unknown God or Unknown Self, the acosmic First Cause or Principle of the universe, is imaged as

a pre-existent, infinite, indeterminate Spirit which, in giving rise to the universe, transforms into its own opposite out of its own inner dynamic. In manifesting itself, that which is "free" becomes "bound" as it achieves existence, finitude, and determinancy--the limitations of material being.

Using the principle of the identity of the macrocosm and microcosm, gnostics applied to themselves whatever they prognosticated about the Unknown Self. Therefore, just as they thought of the universe as the determinate "body" of God, so too, they thought of their own bodies as determinate; and, just as they assumed that the spirit which manifests itself as the universe is "free," balanced, and indeterminate so, too, they believed that their spirit (the spark or mirror in the center of the soul) was free. As a result of their interpretation of a negative theology as a metaphysic of freedom, Jonas concludes, the gnostics of the Hellenistic period asserted an entirely new idea of human freedom.⁹⁴ In his book, Gnosticism and Early Christianity, R.M. Grant concurs with Jonas when he discusses the devotion of the gnostics to freedom and maintains that the experience of gnosis "issues in freedom and a fresh sense of creativity."⁹⁵ Cohn's discussion of the movement known as the heresy of the Free Spirit in the Middle Ages, and Yates's discussion of Pico della Mirandola's famous "Essay on Man," in which the humanist declares that man is free, assure one not only of the continuity of the gnostic impulse but also of its persistent regard for freedom.⁹⁶

Given the high regard for freedom that marks the gnostic imagination, one is encouraged to ask of its scholars if any evidence suggests that gnosticism should be associated with the Western ideal of the individual. As a survey of opinion shows, their answer is a definite

yes. Moreover, that their answers have ramifications for the romantic imagination will be obvious. Few will read the following passage without thinking of the romantics' conception of the poet as a prophet, of Blake's statement, "I must create my own system or be enslaved by another man's," or of M. H. Abrams' well known definition of the romantic concept of the mind as a lamp.⁹⁷

After beginning his account of the tradition of "subversive individualism" with an analysis of the gnostic version of the Narcissus myth, Zweig observes that the gnostics understood the word initiated to mean "mature," and he specifies that they believed that when one became mature, one "rejected all authority to become his own ultimate source."⁹⁸ Pagels agrees with Zweig that becoming an individual was a matter of paramount concern to the gnostics of Alexandria, Rome, and Lyons. Discussing one ancient "extraordinary text, called Allogenes," she notes that the title "means 'the stranger' (literally, 'one from another race')" and that, among other things, it referred to "the spiritually mature person."

In a passage that links the gnostic impulse with the romantic imagination, she adds that the gnostics of late antiquity proved their spiritual maturity by creating original literary compositions. "Like students of a painter or writer," she says, the student of a gnostic teacher in the ancient world eventually was "expected to express his own perceptions by revising and transforming what he was taught. Whoever merely repeated his teacher's words was considered immature."⁹⁹ Jonas expresses views similar to those of Zweig and Pagels:

The leading Gnostics displayed pronounced intellectual individualism, and the mythological imagination of the whole movement was incessantly fertile. Non-conformism was almost a principle of the gnostic mind and was closely connected with the doctrine of the

sovereign 'spirit' as a source of direct knowledge and illumination.¹⁰⁰

Besides the concept of the "free" spirit, certainly the desire to be "equal" to God and the conviction that "only like cures like" played a role in the creative activity of the gnostics of the Graeco-Roman period, but regardless of the reason for their inventiveness, it verifies the theory that they were quite concerned with acting and thinking for themselves in a self-directed manner. Hence, it is appropriate to associate the gnostic impulse with the origins of the Western ideal of the individual and to find strong parallels between it, romanticism, and existentialism.

Some of the gnostics of the ancient world not only developed the ideals of freedom and individualism, which are some of the benchmarks of Western civilization, but also they appear to have anticipated the modern ideal of psychological and socio-political wholeness, by which is meant maturity.

Singer explains the modern view of the brain and of good mental health in terms of wholeness and maturity and relates this concept to the gnosticism of antiquity. As she observes, the view current in psychology is that the brain is made up of two hemispheres that generate two modes of perception: the so-called "masculine" mode is believed to function in linear, analytical, rational thought; and, the so-called "feminine" mode is believed to function in spatial, mythic, and wholistic thought. She points out that good mental health involves the ideal of psychological androgyny, which is to say, the dynamic, harmonious interaction or "balancing" of these two modes of perception within an overall context of "freedom" or indeterminacy. One of the most basic sources for the views about the mind and good mental health held by psychologists

today, she says, is gnosticism.¹⁰¹

Singer's assertions are supported by Pagels' discussion of gnosticism. Explaining what the gnostics intended to convey with their symbol of the Unknown Self, which remains alien or "unknown" yet manifest as a Self-Integrated Androgyne, Pagels says that regardless of the variations in terms and images that the gnostics of the Hellenistic period used to describe the ideal state of the spiritual consciousness, they "agreed that the divine is to be understood in terms of a harmonious, dynamic relationship of opposites--a concept that may be akin to the Eastern view of yin and yang, but remains alien to orthodox Christianity."¹⁰²

Besides being a basic source of the modern psychological ideal of wholeness or maturity, the gnosticism of old is a source of the modern socio-political ideal of wholeness. As readers have seen, in a context of "freedom" or indeterminacy, many gnostics associated the Divine in its ideal aspect with a dynamic balance of opposites. There is evidence that some gnostics gave a socio-political reading to this symbolism. Surprising as it may seem, the "opposites" which they appear to have recognized as needing to be reconciled include order and freedom, as well as community and individualism and hierarchy and equality--the same opposites that democratic societies with some sincerity and success are striving to integrate now.

Some of the gnostics of the Graeco-Roman period knew that freedom depends on recognizing limits to freedom. This indicates the level of sophistication that gnosticism reached in its first manifestation. To explain how some of them attained this level of sophistication, one should recall, as Jonas notes, that gnosis involved knowing that there are limits to knowledge. To quote Jonas again, gnosis involves the

"knowledge of his [the Unknown God's] unknowability." In several versions of the Valentinian creation myth, the desire to know the Unknown God in absolute terms is the cause of the Fall of Wisdom, the Thought of God. As a result of this act, the "Upper World," symbolized by the potentially Self-Integrated Androgyne, is balanced and harmonized, for its masculine and feminine energies are "enlightened" by being brought the gnosis of the infinite and indeterminate nature of the Self.

According to this gnostic myth, the "criminal" Sophia saves and stabilizes the ideal state. Through her rebellious behavior, the energies of the Self learn that they are a spiritual unity and are equal in spite of their individual differences and rank.¹⁰³ Whereas formerly they were willed and willing to pursue a ruthless individualism, after Sophia's attempt to know the Unknown Self in a dogmatic, unequivocal way, they achieve a humanitarian individualism. Surely one has here an anticipation of the ideology of the modern secular democratic state.

Pagels' and Campbell's observations about the socio-political implications of gnosticism in its first flowering reveal that one of its goals was to promote an enlightened humanity. Their discussions reveal that this ideal not only was translated into practice but also that it raised the quality of life in the Antonine period of the Roman Empire.¹⁰⁴ Hence, readers should consider the purer forms of gnosticism as being both a religious psychology and a religious anthropology.

The "new" elements in the gnostic world view--freedom, individualism, and wholeness--are major themes in gnostic-informed and gnostic-inspired literature. Other related ones, to quote and paraphrase Pagels, are "the discovery of the divine within"; the belief in self-salvation; the journey into the self as instigated by feelings of "fear, confusion,

and grief"; the goal of improving society by raising the number of "mature" people in it; the view that the spirit transcends suffering; and the conviction that "humanity itself manifests the divine life and divine revelation."¹⁰⁵

That the gnostic impulse of the Hellenistic period is one of the most important basic sources of the modern ideals of freedom, individualism, and a psychological, spiritual, and socio-political wholeness or maturity is supported by evidence that establishes a relationship between it and the scientific world view and dominant philosophical view of the twentieth century--Einsteinian and post-Einsteinian physics and existentialism. The relationship between the gnostic impulse, existentialism, and Einstein's physics has been alluded to at the beginning of this discussion. However, by way of signaling its completion, the basis of this relationship can be made clearer.

The foundation for the relationship that exists between gnosticism in the second century A.D., existentialism, and Einstein's world view centers in the subjective, dynamic, paradoxical, and relativistic view of reality that each posits. In the persons of Eckhart, Boehme, Schelling, and Berdyaev, the links between gnosticism and existentialism, both of which maintain a central doctrine of freedom embedded in a vision of reality that stresses movement, paradox, and the perspectival point of view, have been sketched out.

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to investigate in any detail the links (if there are any specific ones) between the gnostic imagination, post-Einsteinian, and Einsteinian physics. However, one can say this much: while many today grope to understand the basic principles of Newtonian physics, a group of theoretical physicists is

investigating the similarities between esoteric mystical philosophy and physics and finding a remarkable number of parallels.¹⁰⁶ But it is Campbell who specifically relates the gnostic impulse to Einstein. As he observes, centuries before Einstein formulated his principle of relativity, it

had been defined already in mythopoetic, moral, and metaphysical terms in that sentence from the twelfth-century hermetic Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers, "God is an intelligible sphere, whose center is everywhere and circumference is nowhere," which has been quoted with relish through the centuries by a significant number of influential European thinkers; among others Alan of Lille (1128-1202), Nicholas Cusanus (1401-1464), Rabelais (1490?-1553), Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), Pascal (1623-1662), and Voltaire (1694-1778).¹⁰⁷

With these observations, the most formal presentation in this study of the nature, history, and implications of gnosticism comes to an end. But more information, especially about the gnostic concept of salvation and the terms and images which the gnostic imagination employs, is set forth later in this discussion in the analysis of Melville's major fiction. Still, no single study can hope to do justice to this subject. Obviously, a truly adequate discussion of it would require volumes.

As some of the events that occurred during the centuries following the Renaissance suggest, when Pico della Mirandola and the Florentine Academy made gnostic ideas available to everybody in the fifteenth century, they offered to all "spirits too strong for some to imbibe."¹⁰⁸ However, wherever and whenever the gnostic imagination has manifested itself with a show of strength, a burst of energy has been released. This was true, as Campbell says, of "the high flowering time of the Gnostic movement" in the middle of the second century, "which Edward Gibbon marked as the apogee of the glory of the Roman Empire." It was true also of India from the fifth to the mid-thirteenth centuries.

During those centuries, says Campbell, due primarily to the influence of the gnostic impulse, India experienced "a golden age of Hindu and Buddhist art, literature, and temple architecture" while gnostic sentiments and ideas were "being suppressed during the same centuries in the West."¹⁰⁹ And, of course, an explosion of creativity occurred in the Renaissance and the romantic era, the two periods in the history of the modern world in which the higher forms of the gnostic impulse asserted themselves most forcefully.

In the next chapter, the extent to and ways in which Melville's most eminent critics lend weight to the theory that Melville should be considered a nineteenth-century gnostic is discussed. Following that, for the best proof that Melville himself was stimulated by the gnostic impulse to produce his most significant fiction, the study will turn to an examination of Melville's major works.

NOTES

¹ Pagels, Introduction, p.xxxi. The confusion about gnosticism is pointed up by the dispute about whether certain of these Church Fathers were orthodox in their beliefs. Walker maintains that Clement of Alexandria (?-c.215) should be considered a Christian gnostic while his famous successor and pupil leaned heavily toward a form of Christian neoplatonism. Origen's views were condemned as heretical around 400 A.D. (pp. 72-77). Besides the Church Fathers whom Pagels names, Jonas lists Justin Martyr and the writings "purporting to be by Clement of Rome" as critics of the first phase of gnosticism (p. 104). Furthermore, he adds a "Selected Bibliography" which provides a list of these writers' works, and he points out that Plotinus also wrote against the gnostics (p. 38). Although I do not agree with his inclusion of Manichaeism in the gnostic circle per se, I recommend consulting his "Survey of Sources" (pp. 37-42).

² Voegelin, pp. 6, 4-5.

³ Ahlstrom appears to believe that gnostic ideas which make up the occult movement have not been studied sufficiently because they have tended to constitute "a vast and highly diffuse religious impulse that cuts across all the normal lines of religious division." Having entered popular culture, these ideas influence people in forms which make it difficult to place them in terms of their origin (II, 529).

Voegelin blames the lapse of scholarship on modern forms of the gnostic impulse on "the reign of positivism in the sciences of man and society," which is to say, on gnosticism itself. He maintains that all forms of positivism are expressions of the gnostic imagination (pp. 4, 83).

⁴ In the introduction to her book, Pagels recounts the history of this discovery. Because the treatises were found near the ancient monastery of St. Pachomius, she believes that they were hidden by a monk during the fourth century. It was at that time that "possession of books denounced as heretical was made a criminal offense" (pp. xi-xxxix, xviii).

⁵ In addition to Voegelin's and Pagels' works, some of the other studies on which this discussion depends heavily for the following definition of gnosticism in terms of its nature, history, and implications include Jonas' The Gnostic Religion, Saurat's The Occult Tradition in Symbolist Literature, Bigelow's The Poet's Third Eye, Ahlstrom's A Religious History of the American People (II), Campbell's four-volume series The Masks of God, and Yates's Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition.

⁶ Campbell, IV, 158.

⁷ Jonas, p. 32. Walker, p. 52.

⁸ Ahlstrom, II, 528.

⁹ Several of the pioneering works on the nature, history, and implications of gnosticism which Voegelin mentions include Johann Lorenz von Mosheim's Versuch einer unparteiichen und gründlichen Ketzergeschichte (Second Edition, 1748); Johann August Neander's Genetische Entwicklung der vornehmsten gnostischen Systeme (1818); Jacques Matter's Histoire critique du Gnosticisme et son influence sur les sectes religieuses et philosophies des six premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne (1828). But the study which Voegelin singles out for special mention is Ferdinand Christian Baur's monumental work Die christlich Gnosis, oder die Religions-philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung (1835). It is in this work Voegelin says that "the speculation of German idealism is correctly placed in its context in the gnostic movement since antiquity." See Voegelin, pp. 4, 3.

¹⁰ Ahlstrom, II, 500, 528.

¹¹ Steven E. Ozment, Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), p. 1. Campbell removes the qualifying adjective "alleged" from Ozment's description of Eckhart and states that Eckhart's views were not considered orthodox by his contemporaries. According to Campbell, Eckhart was excommunicated in 1329, two years after his death. After that, "His writings passed . . . into the underground, to become . . . the inspiration of . . . John Tauler (1300-1361), Suso (1310-1365), and Ruysbroek (1329-1381)" (III, 515). Elsewhere he notes that Eckhart's views imply a pantheistic approach to reality, a concept of a God beyond God, and a doctrine of the essential identity of the self and God (IV, 585). If this is so, Eckhart was a Christian gnostic.

¹² Maurice Friedman, ed. and intro. with an Afterword, The Worlds of Existentialism: A Critical Reader (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 17-19. Friedman compares the views of Eckhart with Boehme and finds them quite similar in many important respects; however, he says that Boehme is "more dialectical in his attitude toward evil than Eckhart, and this teaching of progression through the energy of contraries has had a strong influence on a vast range of thinkings, including such existentialists as Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Buber, Heidegger, Berdyaev, and Tillich." Moreover, Boehme "had enormous influence on the German idealists" (pp. 17-18).

¹³ Jonas, "Epilogue: Gnosticism, Nihilism, and Existentialism," pp. 320-40; Voegelin, "The Murder of God," pp. 53-73. These discussions of the relationship between the gnostic imagination and existentialism are well worth reading; however, Jonas and Voegelin fail to respond to the positive aspects of either existentialism or gnosticism, and they oversimplify both. For example, both tend to equate existentialism with atheism. As John Macquarrie says, existentialists are a diverse group: some are Christian, some categorize themselves as humanists, some, such

as Sartre and Camus, are self-avowed atheists, and some, like Heidegger, refuse to be categorized. However, Macquarrie notes that there are mystical elements even in the views espoused by the atheists. There are strong mystical elements in the writings of Heidegger, Tillich, and Berydaev. He concludes, "Existentialism when developed ontologically does in fact suggest new possibilities for a concept of God, perhaps more viable than a traditional theism." See John Macquarrie, Existentialism, 3rd ed. (1972; rpt. Great Britain: Penguin Books-The Chaucer Press, 1976), pp. 248-52.

In regard to gnosticism and atheism, there can be no doubt that the gnostic impulse is implicated in its rise. After all, as Bigelow says, it is a basic premise of gnosticism, as well as all forms of esoteric mysticism, that human beings in their true selves are God (p. 25). As Zweig says, the gnostic spiritual master becomes God. However, he continues, while it is true that throughout the post-classical history of the West, some who have come in contact with this idea have experienced mythic inflation rather than mythic identification and thus come to claim that human beings "create God," others always have gone beyond this stage, being aware of it as a danger, and have envisioned a concept of mutual interdependency and synchronicity (pp. 23-36).

¹⁴ Berdyaev is a Christian existentialist. Macquarrie explains that in using Berdyaev's views as an especially profound expression representative of existentialist assumptions, he omits many of Berdyaev's specifically Christian beliefs (pp. 178-81).

¹⁵ Reverend Paul Vincent Kennedy, "A Philosophical Appraisal of the Modernist Gnosticism of Nicolas Berdyaev," Diss. St. Louis University 1936; Charles C. Knapp, "Nicolas Berdyaev: Theologian of Prophetic Gnosticism," Diss. Victoria University of Toronto, Canada 1948.

¹⁶ Ahlstrom, II, 550.

¹⁷ Edwardes, pp. 47-50, 88.

¹⁸ N. Hans, "Unesco of the Eighteenth Century, La Loge des Neufs Soeurs and Its Venerable Master, Benjamin Franklin," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, XCVII, 1963, Oct 30, 515-6, in James H. Billington, Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith (New York: Basic Books, 1980), p. 108. Edwardes discusses the close relationship between scientific and socio-political revolutionism, magic, and the occult throughout his book.

¹⁹ Ahlstrom, II, 552. Voegelin, p. 83; June Singer, Androgyny: Toward a New Theory of Sexuality, intro. Sheldon S. Hendler (Garden City, New York: Anchor-Doubleday Press, 1977), pp. 27-29; Bigelow, in addition to relating Freud and Jung to the gnostic impulse, points out that through its interest in the mind, consciousness, and the unknown, the gnostic imagination promoted not only the development of psychology but also "the intensive study of myth," the rise of a number of social sciences, and "an explosive proliferation of symbolism in many areas" (pp. 24-25, 27).

²⁰ Campbell, IV, 30-31.

21 Yates contends that the importance of Pico's essay, which was published in 1487, "can hardly be overestimated." It "boldly formulated a new position for European man" by maintaining that man is free to be a god or a devil and to control his destiny. It proposed a new, refined kind of magic which was subjective and imaginative. She believes that the deepest roots of the Renaissance lie in gnosticism (pp. 86, 110, 116). Zweig links the gnostic impulse to the romance, the lyric, and the mystical literature of love composed in the late Middle Ages and maintains that this body of literature with its erotic individualism foreshadows the Renaissance (pp. 64, 99). That the Western world was looking for a new vision of reality in the late twelfth century is understandable, says Voegelin, in connection with discussing the rise of gnosticism at that time. According to him, the twelfth century was a vigorous, optimistic age, and the philosophy of history articulated by St. Augustine simply did not suit the temper of the day. To quote Voegelin, "According to the Augustinian construction, the phase of history since Christ was the sixth, the last earthly age . . . , the time of the senility of mankind. The present had no earthly future; its meaning was exhausted in a waiting for the end of history through eschatological events But twelfth-century western European man could not be satisfied with the view of a senile world waiting for its end" (p. 105).

22 Pagels discusses the feminist symbolism and the tendencies of the Christian gnosticism of the early Christian era. "Gnostic Christians often take the principle of equality between men and women into the social and political structures of their communities. The orthodox pattern is strikingly different: it describes God in exclusively masculine terms, and typically refers to Genesis 2 to describe how Eve was created from Adam, and for his fulfillment. Like the gnostic view, this translates into social practice: by the late second century, the orthodox community came to accept the domination of men over women as the divinely ordained order, not only for social and family life, but also for the Christian churches." However, she adds, "Gnostics were not unanimous in affirming women" (p. 79).

Norman Cohn relates the gnostic imagination to a movement which began in the eleventh century and had a long afterlife. It is known as the heresy of the Free Spirit. Made up of women and men, the heresy of the Free Spirit, he says, in the main constituted a form of heterodox mysticism, gnostic in nature, which espoused a "quasi-mystical anarchism." Some of its heirs are the English Ranters, Bakunin, Nietzsche, and the "bohemian intelligentsia of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." Women played a large role in this movement. Some, such as Matilda of Magdeburg, claimed that God was best served in freedom and wrote "subtle treatises" on liberty. Elsewhere he observes that they believed in communally owned property, claimed to belong to "the liberty of Nature," promoted egalitarian ideals, and attached a mystical significance to the sex act." See Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium (London: Secker and Warburg, 1957), pp. 149 ff.

Cohn is quite critical of this movement and its ramifications. For an alternate view, see Zweig. Zweig admits that the heresy of the Free Spirit expressed itself on occasion in extreme forms, but he says that the movement was necessary in an overly authoritarian society. At one point he states that its members were "far closer to reality than were

the schoolmen." He believes that the Ranters and Quakers constitute part of the legacy of this movement (pp. 37-50).

²³ Voegelin, pp. 96, 99. For a view which relates Marxism to Christianity, see Edwardes, p. 241. And for a view which suggests a relationship between gnosticism, Christianity, Marxism, Nazism, and the utopian tradition, see Ozment's discussion of Thomas Muntzer, the sixteenth-century dissenter whom "Marxist historians and theorists . . . continue to embrace . . . as the first modern revolutionary" (pp. ix, 61-93, 221). Zweig discusses the relationship between the gnostic imagination and social and political revolutions in the West (pp. 246-47).

²⁴ Throughout his book, Billington demonstrates that Masonic, semi-Masonic, and other "secret" societies were involved in the political revolutions in Europe and Russia in the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries (pp. 6, 123, 196 ff). His purpose is "to trace the origins of a faith -- perhaps the faith of our time." The faith that he is interested in is "the belief that a perfect secular order will emerge from the forcible overthrow of traditional authority." His conclusion is the "the revolutionary faith was shaped not so much by the critical rationalism of the French Enlightenment (as is generally believed) as by the occultism and proto-romanticism of Germany" (p. 3).

²⁵ See Mervyn Jones's article on "Freemasonry," in Secret Societies, ed. Norman MacKenzie (U.S.A.: Aldous-Macmillan, 1967). He suggests connections between the gnostic impulse, Freemasonry, the rise of liberalism, the ideology of the Enlightenment, and social and political revolution in Europe, Great Britain, and America from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries (pp. 128-51).

²⁶ Ozment, Preface, pp. ix, 247. The six "master theoreticians of dissent in the sixteenth century" discussed by Ozment are Thomas Muntzer, Hans Hut, Hans Denk, Sebastian Franck, Sebastian Castellion, and Valentin Weigel. He traces their views to people such as Eckhart and Joachim of Floris, and makes it clear that the gnostic metaphysic of freedom figured large in social and political change in the West, for it became a feature of orthodox mysticism in the Middle Ages. (pp. ix-13, 53, 70-71, ff.).

Voegelin emphasizes the importance of Joachim of Floris in political revolutionism. According to him, in the late twelfth century, under the influence of the ideal of a community of freely self-directing people which was being promoted by the heresy of the Free Spirit, an abbot by the name of Joachim of Floris fused The Book of Revelations with gnostic beliefs and arrived at the idea of a "Third Age," the age "of the Holy Spirit." It was to be an age, Voegelin says, "of a spiritualized mankind existing in community without the meditation and support of institutions," and it was to be ushered in by a new leader. Voegelin sees the effect of these beliefs in almost all of the social and political changes that have occurred in the West since the twelfth century but especially in philosophies which are positivist or progressivist in nature and interpret history in terms of a triadic movement. As Voegelin observes, "The Christian idea of perfection" informed Joachimism's gnostic-inspired conception of the Third Age (pp. 92-99).

²⁷ Cross, Lamb, and Turk, II, 105-06; 108-09; Jonas, p. 338. The justification of revolution and the ideals of individualism, freedom and wholeness are features of Locke's political philosophy which link it to the gnostic impulse as it manifested itself in the Renaissance.

²⁸ Zweig, pp. 143-65, 36-50.

²⁹ James Henry Rieger, "The Gnostic Prometheus: A Study of Godwin and the Shelleys," Diss. Harvard Univ. 1963. See Jonas, pp. 96-97, for a discussion of the elevation of Prometheus by the gnostics of the early Christian era.

³⁰ Voegelin, pp. 23-28, 34-38, 78. However, as Edwardes observes Marxism like Christianity, rejected pantheism. For both, he believes, "Nature has to be brought to heel" (p. 241).

³¹ Edwardes, pp. 4, 172-73 ff.; Ahlstrom, "Piety for the Age of Aquarius: Theosophy, Occultism, and Non-Western Religion," II, 545-570.

³² Saurat, p. 6. Saurat thinks all but Spenser were influenced sufficiently by the gnostic impulse to consider them in the occult tradition.

³³ Vernon Stauffer, New England and the Bavarian Illuminati, Columbia Studies in the Social Sciences (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1918), p. 172. According to Stauffer's and Jones's research, the Order of the Illuminati was founded by Adam Weishaupt (1748-1830) in 1776. From Jones one learns that Weishaupt was a professor of canon law at the University of Ingolstadt (p. 143). In 1777, the Illuminati society affiliated with several Masonic lodges in Bavaria.

Stauffer believes that its aim was to counteract the influence of the Jesuits in Bavaria as well as to combat a narrow rationalism, and to promote moral and intellectual reform (pp. 142-58 ff.). According to his findings, by 1784 the organization had been declared illegal in Bavaria; by 1790, it had either gone underground or was defunct. In 1798, two books were written about it alleging that the French Revolution was organized and inspired by the members of the Illuminati, and the organization and its influence soon took on mythical proportions. In the United States, conservatives began to associate the various manifestations of liberalism with the Illuminati, whom they identified with a radical liberalism (pp. 142-228). Not only Masons but also Quakers became suspected carriers of its propaganda (p. 263). Attempts were made to implicate Jefferson and so discredit him (pp. 253, n.3, 358-59). Stauffer notes that Jefferson defended Weishaupt in a letter in which he said that Weishaupt, like Godwin, seemed to be only "an enthusiastic philanthropist" who believed in "the infinite perfection of man" (pp. 162-271, 312). See Thomas Jefferson, A Letter to Bishop James Madison, Writings of Thomas Jefferson, col. and ed. by Paul Leicester Ford (New York: n.p., 1892-1899), vol. vii, 419.

Also, it is interesting to note that one of Melville's contemporaries, William Henry Channing (1810-1884), writing his contribution to the Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli (1852), refers to his fellow Transcendentalists as "Illuminati." See William Henry Channing, "A Participant's Definition," in The American Transcendentalist: Their

Prose and Poetry, ed. Perry Miller (Garden City, New York: Anchor-Doubleday Books, 1957), p. 38. With this comment and the information Stauffer provides, one perhaps gains an insight into Melville's reasons for specifying that his revolutionist Ahab had been raised as a Quaker and for relating the quest for the whale to the French Revolution. See note 47 for more information about the relationship between gnosticism and the French Revolution.

³⁴ Zweig, pp. 100-08 ff. Yates, allowing herself briefly to speculate on the influence of Renaissance Hermeticism on Shakespeare, asks, "Was it not Shakespeare who created Prospero, the immortal portrait of the benevolent Magus, establishing the ideal state?" (p. 357).

³⁵ Bigelow, p. 26; Senior, pp. xiv-xv. Also see Auer's unpublished dissertation.

More evidence of the awareness among Melville's contemporaries that gnosticism was a basic source of romantic and transcendentalist speculation is set forth by Auer. An interesting fact which Auer presents in his study is that when Orestes Augustus Brownson (1803-1876), who had been a charter member of the Transcendental Club, repudiated his former beliefs, to quote Auer, Brownson "called Emerson and his fellow Transcendentalists Gnostics . . . and supported the charge in articles which have long laid unread or unappreciated if read" (Preface, p. 1).

³⁶ See the following studies:

David Lewis Bergman, "Robert Browning and the Gnostic Tradition," Diss. Johns Hopkins 1977.

Richard Jack Bishirjian, "Carlyle's Political Religion and Nineteenth Century Gnosticism," Diss. Notre Dame 1972.

Richard K. Pankhurst, The Saint Simonians, Mill and Carlyle, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1957).

Barbara Deane, "Shaw and Gnosticism," The Shaw Review, 16 (1973), pp. 104-22.

Ludmila A. Foster, "Nabadov's Gnostic Turpitude: The Surrealistic Vision of Reality in 'Priglasenie Na Kazn,'" Festschrift (1976), pp. 117-29.

Robert Kenley Burdette, "Dylan Thomas and the Gnostic Religion," Diss. Univ. of Michigan 1964.

Josephine Campbell Donovan, "Gnosticism in Modern Literature: A Study of Selected Works of Camus, Sartre, Hesse, and Kafka," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin 1971.

Cleanth Brooks, "Walker Percy and Modern Gnosticism," Southern Review, 13 (1977), pp. 677-87.

³⁷ Bigelow, p. 26.

³⁸ Ihab Hassan, The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971). Hassan both defends and criticizes the gnostic impulse in this study of "the literature of silence" and nihilism. He discusses de Sade at length as an example of the dark side of gnostic imagination, and he remarks that there is much in de Sade which reminds him of Ahab (p. 40). See also Hassan's article, "The New Gnosticism: Speculations on an Aspect of the Postmodern Mind," Boundary 2, 1, 3 (Spring 1973), p. 547-69.

³⁹ Voegelin, The New Science of Politics (Chicago 1952), p. 126, in G. Douglas Atkins, "The Ancients, the Moderns, and Gnosticism," International Congress on the Enlightenment 4th, Transactions (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1976), p. 149. In this work, Atkins demonstrates that Dryden, Swift, and Pope satirize some of the manifestations of the gnostic and Christian gnostic impulses current in their age, such as were represented by some of the radical, left-wing Protestant sects and the spirit of militant reform.

⁴⁰ Ahlstrom, II, 551, 443; Campbell, III, 378, 365-66.

⁴¹ Voegelin, pp. 85-88, 10-12, 42-43.

⁴² See Jonas, p. 32.

⁴³ Bigelow, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁴ These treatises are available in a set of volumes entitled Corpus Hermeticum, trans. Walter Scott (Oxford, 1924, 1925, and 1926). In the text it is referred to as the Hermetic Corpus.

Book I, known as the Poimandres, is quoted, paraphrased, and interpreted by Jonas in a chapter entitled "The Poimandres of Hermes Trismegistus" (pp. 147-69). Zweig does as Jonas in the first chapter of the book; however, their interpretations and opinions vary considerably. See Zweig, "The Gnostic Mirror," pp. 1-21.

Yates, too, discusses the Hermetic Corpus at length. As she says, these treatises were not written by a single author, and they do not present a consistent philosophic system. Some are pessimistic while others are optimistic in tone. They are variously dated at around the second century A.D., and they represent a pagan gnosticism which mixes Greek and Egyptian philosophy, magic, and mysticism (pp. 32-33). Elsewhere she states that "many of the most influential of the Hermetic treatises . . . are far from dualist and tend more in the direction of pantheism." The Cabala, too, is optimistic (p. 128).

⁴⁵ Campbell quotes from, paraphrases, and interprets alchemical treatises extensively in Creative Mythology (IV), depending heavily on C.G. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, trans. R.F.C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX, Vol. 12 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953).

⁴⁶ See Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, Kabbalah: Tradition of Hidden Knowledge (The Netherlands: Thames and Hudson, 1979). Saurat provides a simplified version of the main features of the Cabala, which is primarily a body of mystical interpretations of the Old Testament (pp. 79-149).

Yates and Senior discuss the use of numbers and letters as the basis for a highly complex, cryptic form of symbolism called gematria which is a prime example of the involved nature of Cabalist thought. One of the most complicated mystical or magical techniques of the Cabala, says Yates, was gematria "which was based on the numerical values assigned to each Hebrew letter involving a mathematics of extreme intricacy, and by which, when words were calculated into numbers and numbers into words, the entire organization of the world could be read off in terms of word-numbers" (pp. 92-94 ff.).

Senior explains that "the En-Soph [the Unknown God] creates by means of numbers and letters. The thirty-two 'instruments of God' are the ten primordial numbers to which all numbers can be reduced and the twenty-two fundamental letters of the Hebrew alphabet to which all words can be reduced" (p. 25). Ultimately, the ten primordial numbers reduce to the divine Monad, the pre-existent "Nothing" which hypostasizes the universe.

The Cabala has its origins in the Graeco-Roman period, but, as Ahlstrom states, its greatest period of development occurred during the Middle Ages. "During the Renaissance," he remarks, "men like Pico della Mirandola, Paracelsus, and Reuchlin stimulated a vertiable 'hermetic' and 'Cabalistic' revival which was advanced still farther in each succeeding century by both Protestants and Catholics. Jacob Boehme . . . was a vital link in the tradition" (II, 552).

47 Jonas includes the religions of Orpheus, Isis, and Mithra in the gnostic sphere "in a qualified way" because he defines gnosticism as a dualistic, transcendent, other-worldly religion, and these manifestations of the gnostic imagination do not fit his definition (p. 38). However, he oversimplifies and distorts gnosticism. According to Pagels, "Some scholars today consider gnosticism synonymous with metaphysical dualism--or even with pluralities of gods But Clement of Alexandria . . . tells us that there was a 'monadic' gnosis; and . . . the most influential and sophisticated form of gnostic teaching . . . [Valentinian gnosticism] differs essentially from dualism" (p. 37). Moreover, Jonas divides ancient gnostic sects into two classes based on whether or not a specific group's views are examples of an ontological dualism. Therefore, one is not quite sure why he defines gnosticism as a form of dualism (pp. 31-32, 61).

In The Secret Teachings of All Ages, Manly P. Hall quotes Alexander Wilder in regard to the connection between gnosticism and Mithraism. Wilder believes that "the Mithraic rites superseded the Mysteries of Bacchus, and became the foundation of the Gnostic system, which for many centuries prevailed in Asia, Egypt, and even the remote West." See Alexander Wilder, Philosophy and Ethics of the Zoroasters (1885), as quoted by Manly P. Hall, The Secret Teachings of All Ages: An Encyclopedia Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy, 20th ed. (1962; rpt. Los Angeles: The Philosophical Research Society, 1975), p. XXIV.

The later history of Mithra becomes interesting when one finds that this manifestation of the gnostic impulse is mentioned by Sir Thomas More in his famous work Utopia (1516). In the section entitled "Of the Religions of Utopia," More, describing the religious views of his Utopians, states that the wisest among them "believe that there is a certain godly power unknown, everlasting, incomprehensible, inexplicable, far above the capacity and reach of man's wit, dispersed throughout the world, not in bigness, but in virtue and power. Him they call the father of all Yea all the others also, though they be in diverse opinions, yet in this point they agree all together with the wisest sort, in believing that there is one chief and principal God, the maker and ruler of the whole world: whom they all commonly in their country language call Mithra" (my italics). See Sir Thomas More, Utopia, in Cross, Lamb, and Turk, 65-69.

Voegelin and Yates discuss More's Utopia as a work inspired if not informed by the gnostic impulse. See Voegelin, pp. 90, 100-01. What is fascinating about More's work is that in it one finds Mithra related to the Unknown God, to religious tolerance, to the utopian drive, and to communism and Christianity. The Utopians accept Christ apparently as the latest and highest manifestation of truth, maintaining, nonetheless, their negative theology. According to Yates, the Utopians "already display the distinctive badge of religious Hermetism in the sixteenth century, the disapproval of the use of force in religious matters," and she speculates that they are "perhaps . . . Christian Hermetists" (p. 196).

I italicize the word point in the above quoted passage because in keeping with the Pythagorean element in gnosticism, as Singer notes, the words point, jot, tittle, and monad are all key words referring to the Unknown God who generates the universe. See Singer, "Monad, Jot, and Tittle: The Gnostic Vision of the Fall," pp. 119-27.

Yet another interesting feature of the later history of Mithraism is recounted by Campbell. After pointing out that the statues of the god Mithra that were made during the Hellenistic period show him as a man "in loose Iranian garb, and wearing the characteristic Phrygian cap" in the act of slaying a bull, Campbell says that this same style cap was adopted and worn "(and not at all by accident) by the prophets of the light of reason of the French Revolution" (my italics, III, 258). The leader of these "prophets," as Jones says, was Denis Diderot, a Freemason and the philosophe who organized and wrote large portions of the Encyclopedia (p. 142).

Some of the other works dating from the Hellenistic period which Yates includes in the gnostic circle include Apulius of Mandura's novel The Golden Ass, which was a primary source of information about the mystery religion of Isis of late antiquity; the Orphic Hymns, and the Asclepius, a Greek-Egyptian magical and prophetic work which mourned the decline of the true Egyptian religion but forecast its return, which was to signal the onset of a golden age. According to Yates, the Renaissance humanists responsible for the Hermetic-Cabalist revival, Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and Giordano Bruno, included the Chaldean Oracles in the gnostic circle, too (pp. 1-18, 44-61, 78). The book of the Cabala in which they were most interested was the Zohar, a work compiled in the Middle Ages. "The Hermetica and the Cabala," Yates says, "are both gnostic in origin" (p. 108).

There is rather wide agreement among critics that the Orphic mysteries of late antiquity were reinterpreted to carry a gnostic wisdom. For example, Campbell leans to this view (III, 8-27). Stephen Vincent Hopper regards Orphism and the Hermetic Corpus as the two major expressions of the gnostic imagination in the Hellenistic period. See Stephen Vincent Hopper, Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression, Columbia Univ. Studies in English and Comparative Literature, No. 132, 2nd ed. (1938; rpt. New York: Cooper Square, 1969), pp. 52-53.

48 From Campbell one learns that the Vikings, whose this-worldly mystical wisdom "was generally of a Neoplatonic, Gnostic-Buddhist order," colonized and raided throughout Europe and along the coastal waterways of England and Ireland from the seventh to the tenth centuries, bringing their views and practices with them, of course, when they founded settlements (III, 482-96).

Cohn traces the later history of the ancestors of these Vikings in connection with demonstrating the longevity and continuity of gnosticism from the classical period to the Middle Ages and beyond, and he specifies that the heretical impulses of the members of the weaving industry, which was composed primarily of the offspring of the Vikings, were gnostic in nature (pp. 1-29 ff.). Here there is probably much that could be said about Chaucer's Wife of Bath (and Chaucer himself); however, that is beyond the scope of this discussion.

⁴⁹ Jonas, p. 41. Pagels mentions in The Gnostic Gospels what she explores in depth in an earlier book, The Gnostic Paul, which is the theory that Paul should be regarded as a Christian-Gnostic. She herself does not accept this theory, but she does believe that Paul expressed some ideas derived from gnosticism, and she is fascinated by the fact that Paul was the favorite apostle of the Christian gnostics. In The Gnostic Gospels she notes that Valentinus, "the gnostic poet who traveled from Egypt to teach in Rome (c. 140), even claimed that he himself learned Paul's secret teaching from Theudas, one of Paul's own disciples" (p. 18). But see her book The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). Voegelin is not as sure Pagels that Paul should not be considered a gnostic. "Gnostic influences and terminology are . . . clearly recognizable in St. Paul," he says (p. 86).

Elsewhere in The Gnostic Gospels, Pagels discusses aspects of the Gospel of John as gnostic-inspired. "Many gnostic Christians," she says, "used it as a primary source for gnostic teaching" (p. 143). See Campbell, III, 371-75, for a discussion of the gnostic apocrypha of the Acts of John. His discussion includes some portion of the primary source. This materia, he says, was deleted from the Johannine gospel at the Council of Nicaea (III, 371). Concerning the gnostic Acts of Thomas, Campbell says that a Greek text dates from c.140, but "its Coptic manuscript is of c.500 A.D." (III, 370).

⁵⁰ Bigelow, p. 25.

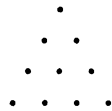
⁵¹ Ahlstrom, p. 552. Yates discusses the "refined" (i.e. imaginative and psychological) kind of magic which the gnostic impulse in the Renaissance inspired (pp. 103, 107-08, 331).

She also observes that due to the prestige of the Hermetica and its magical texts, a new attitude which was essential to the rise of a pure science developed. In the Middle Ages, she says, "the only occupation worthy of the dignity of man" was theological and philosophical inquiry. "Quite apart from the question of whether Renaissance magic could, or could not, lead on to genuinely scientific procedures, the real function of the Renaissance Magus in relation to the modern period . . . is that he changed the will. It was now dignified and important for man to operate; it was also religious and not contrary to the will of God that man, the great miracle, should exert his powers. It was this basic psychological reorientation towards a direction of the will which was neither Greek nor medieval in spirit, which made all the difference It is magic as an aid to gnosis which begins to turn the will in the new direction" (p. 156).

For another discussion of gnostic magic in the Renaissance, see Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance, 2 ed. (1958; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968).

In connection with gnosticism and numerology, Hopper maintains that the dominant element in ancient gnosticism was Pythagoreanism. Hopper notes that the gnostics made use of the Pythagorean generation of the decimal system by the monad as a cosmology. Like the Pythagoreans, he says, they believed that number was the eternal essence of reality (pp. 51-53). However, unlike the interpreters of the Pythagoreans before the Hellenistic period, as Jonas points out, the gnostics of the ancient world associated the One, the Monad, with infinity (p. 288).

Ellis confirms that "the ideas of Pythagoras and Plato," mixed with much else, formed the basis of gnosticism (pp. 182-83). He explains the Pythagorean generation of the decimal system by the monad in terms of the division yet "multiplication" of the one. "Most of all," he says, "the Pythagoreans revered the tetraktys, a triangular figure consisting of rows of one, two, three, and four dots (Figure 1). It was as important to them as the Cross to Christians, for it symbolized the four elements --earth, air, fire, and water. The first four numbers also symbolized the harmony of the spheres and added up to ten It is said that initiates were required to swear a secret oath by the tetraktys" (pp. 175-76). Ellis adds the following illustration:



"Figure 1. The tetraktys, symbolizing to the Pythagoreans the four elements" (p. 176).

In a passage which Reginald E. Allen quotes, Aetius, discussing the Pythagorean emphasis on the tetraktys, explains that "If . . . one takes the unit, adds two, then three and then four, one will make up the number ten. So that number by the unit resides in the number ten, but potentially in the number four. And so the Pythagoreans used to invoke the tetrad as their most binding oath: 'Nay, by him that gave to our generation the tetractys, which contains the fount and root of eternal nature.'" Aetius, I, 3, 8 in "Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism," in Greek Philosophy, ed. and intro. Reginald E. Allen (New York: The Macmillan-Free Press, 1966), p. 38. As Senior observes, ten is "the perfect cabalistic number" (p. 28).

According to Jonas, in the Valentinian speculation, the first Tetrad is made up of the Unknown God, Abyss/Silence and Mind/Truth (p. 180). From them, says Pagels, emerge "The Word (Logos) and Life" (p. 160). Hence, one perceives the basis for number-word symbolisms and a reason why some Christian authors revered gnostic texts as prophecies of Christianity. For some discussion of the verb or Word as the Son of God in the Hermetic Corpus, see Yates, p. 85.

In analyzing Moby-Dick, Sachs has demonstrated that Melville was well versed in number-word symbolism.

There is an interesting biographical note to include here in relation to Melville and his literary associates and the word tetractys, for the

key word in the Pythagorean (gnostic) oath is also the key word in the name of the literary circle to which Melville belonged.

Although he never seeks to explain it, Perry Miller in The Raven and the Whale states that the fiercely democratic and cosmopolitan New York literary club to which Melville belonged after Typee was published called itself the Tetractys Club for some years before Melville became a member, and then changed its name to the Young Americans. Miller says that Melville was adopted into this group, which was headed by Evert Duyckinck, an editor and reader for the New York publishing firm Wiley and Putnam, in 1846, but the club itself was begun in 1836. Miller comments on the surprising degree to which the American literary scene of Melville's era was involved in politics, but he does not speculate that the Tetractys Club might have taken a direct interest in gnosticism, and, in fact, might have thought of themselves as a brotherhood involved in the investigation and dissemination of a "secret wisdom" which justified their liberal but patient socio-political sentiments. However, Miller's own findings point to this being the case.

He describes the club in semi-masonic terms and notes that Duyckinck wanted writers to form a "fraternity." He tells us that, besides literature, the club members were interested in metaphysics, politics, economics, and theology; that they enjoyed coarse humor and defended "rudeness" as a cure for the genteel conventionality of their era; that they indulged in and justified "Rabalaisian" sensuality; and that they formed long-lasting, intense friendships. Some of Duyckinck's favorite writers, he says, were Herder, Richter, and Goethe.

Since Melville and Duyckinck were good friends throughout most of Melville's literary career, Duyckinck's outlook on life is of interest to the Melville critic. According to Miller, Duyckinck was progressive in his outlook: he thought that American culture was becoming ruder but at the same time that the present was better than the past and that if there were enough highly educated people, (meaning perhaps educated in the sense that Melville was educated), "they could control the manners or ignorance of the rest" by acting as a leaven. Moreover, Miller says that the group was suspicious of Emerson's Transcendentalism because it placed itself outside of the Christian sphere and denied the reality of evil, but the club's members recognized Emerson's genius.

Miller repeats several times that Duyckinck was a strong Episcopalian, and he never successfully reconciles Duyckinck's religious affiliation with the aspirations and activities of the literary club over which he presided. But it seems clear enough to me that the Tetractys or Young Americans Club was a semi-masonic group whose members were affected by the view that gnosticism subsumed the truths of all other religions and/or represented a higher form of Christianity. Perhaps like the Valentinian gnostics of the second century which Pagels discusses, the majority of members of the Tetractys Club, following Duyckinck, defended Christianity as an institution but insisted on their right to go beyond the teachings and rituals which appealed to the many, believing that theirs was the subjective, non-dogmatic way to spiritual enlightenment and cultural improvement through "knowledge" whereas the orthodox way was the way of dogma, ritual, and faith.

More parallels exist between the Valentinians and Melville's literary club. Like Duyckinck's literary club, the goal of the Valentinian gnostics was to promote, as Pagels says, an enlightened humanity. Moreover, both groups were concerned with upgrading the status of women.

However, the Tetractys Club was throughly masculine in character and had no female members while the Valentinians were composed of women and men members; and both groups believed that truth was ongoing and progressive. As Miller says, the Tetractys Club's members, like Melville, were themselves either attempting to be the new messiah or, like Duyckinck, they were attempting to create the possibility of such a poet-prophet. See Perry Miller, The Raven and the Whale: The War of Words and Wits in the Era of Poet and Melville (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1956), pp. 4-6, 71-76, 105, 110, 132. See Pagels, pp. 25, 29-30, 47, 49.

Other links between gnosticism, numerology, and Melville exist.

Edwin Haviland Miller in his biography of Melville makes use of an article from the Berkshire County Eagle (n.d.) which describes a picnic that Melville and his wife attended with some of their Berkshire neighbors. Miller speculates that this event took place in September, 1855. According to the article, Melville's wife appeared at this "costume" picnic with "ciphers" pinned on her dress. The article says archly enough: "Cypherina Donothing, in a costume of cyphers, was no cypher, found naught to amuse her; and was one of the most successful characters of the day, although she did nothing well." See Edwin Haviland Miller, Melville (New York: George Braziller, 1975), p. 270. Miller regards this as a hostile trick which Melville played on his wife. However, in the light of the esoteric meaning of "cipher" in the Cabala, he should re-think this episode.

A variant of the myth of the One that becomes two, the Pythagorean idea of a One which generates all opposites forms the basis of the cosmological symbolism of the Cabala where, as Halevi states, the God who is the "Absolute Nothing," manifests itself in "ten distinct stages of emanation," which is known as the "Sefirot." According to Halevi, "The word 'Sefirah' (the singular form) has no simple equivalent in any language, although its root relates it to the words 'cipher' (i.e. number) and 'sapphire.' Some have seen the Sefirot as Divine Powers or Vessels; others regard them as the instruments or tools of Divine Governance. Mystics have pictured them as the ten Faces, Hands or even Garments of God. All agree, however, that the Sefirot express Divine Attributes, which from the primal moment of Emanation are eternally held in a set of relationships until God wills them to vanish with the Void [the Cosmos] into Nothingness again" (my italics, p. 5). The last emanation is the world of matter--nature--which is called the Shekinah and is symbolized as female. However, the entire cosmos also is termed the Shekinah (pp. 7-8).

The incident of Mrs. Melville wearing ciphers pinned to her dress suggests that Melville was thinking of her as the Shekinah, the manifestation of the Unknown God in and as nature. Perhaps it suggests, as well, that they had a closer relationship than some of Melville's biographers have theorized. Moreover, the language of the newspaper article implies that Melville's interest in the Cabala was well known among his Berkshire neighbors.

⁵² Jonas, pp. 37-38.

⁵³ Campbell observes that two movements within Islam, the Shi'ite and Sufi traditions, contain elements of "Christian, Gnostic, Manichaeic, and Neoplatonic thought" (IV, 440); Manichaeism is a mixture of

Zoroastrian, Buddhist, and Christian gnostic ideas (IV, 403); Campbell specifically associates neoplatonism with the Samkhya philosophy of Kapila as its Eastern counterpart, which is to say that neoplatonism, unlike the purer forms of gnosticism, has no true doctrine of immanence but is an ontological dualism (IV, 146).

⁵⁴ Campbell discusses the wave of gnostic and Manichaeic forces that moved into southwestern Europe from eastern Europe in the eleventh century, reinforcing the heretical impulses that were indigenous. This wave of forces, he says, helped touch off the "outbreak of Manichaeic, Gnostic, and other heresies" which occurred in the twelfth century throughout Europe but "most conspicuously in southern France" (IV, 162-63). He quotes John Rutherford, who, in connection with theorizing about the rise of the tradition of courtly love, suggests that this movement was inspired by the Valentinian gnostics. According to Rutherford, at least certain of their beliefs and practices were preserved in southern France from the second century on into the Middle Ages. See John Rutherford, *The Troubadours* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1861), I, 195, in Campbell (IV, 162-63; 166-67).

⁵⁵ See Ahlstrom, "Piety For the Age of Aquarius: Theosophy, Occultism, and Non-Western Religion," II, 549-70. As Ahlstrom observes, gnostic impulses "tend to relate themselves positively to the great Eastern religions" (II, 550).

⁵⁶ Ahlstrom says that the "alleged Founder of Freemasonry," is the legendary occultist, the Comte de Saint-Germain (1710-80); however, Jones maintains that speculative Masonry began to develop probably early in the seventeenth century in England (Ahlstrom, II, 556, n.6; Jones, p. 135). Ahlstrom agrees with Jones that, to quote Ahlstrom, "Masonic Lodges and other secret fraternal orders often provided an institutional setting" for the gnostic impulse (II, 552). But Jones places the date of Masonry's involvement with occultism earlier than Ahlstrom does. Ahlstrom maintains that "after 1750 Rosicrucianism found an important institutional 'home' in many Masonic lodges." During the eighteenth century, he adds, Masonic lodges in America continued an interest in "theosophical and cabalistic doctrines" (II, 558).

Jones's opinion is that even in the seventeenth century, some people joined lodges "on the conviction that they might obtain access to a hidden wisdom" (p. 135). In his discussion, however, he suggests that the stronger trend of the lodges in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was deistical in nature. According to his findings, at the same time, a growing interest in mysticism was at work, so that by at least the 1730s, the same time at which lodges were founded in America, Freemasonry "had absorbed something of the Hermetic-Cabalistic tradition and had begun to relate itself to the ancient Egyptian mystery cults. While some lodges adopted Rosicrucian mysticism, and studied the Cabala, others adopted Rosicrucian magic and devoted themselves to practical alchemy." The gnostic impulse was frequently expressed through Christian symbols and scripture, he adds (p. 136). By the early nineteenth century, English and American lodges became more orthodox in their views (pp. 137-38). However, as Billington demonstrates, in the nineteenth century, particularly in Italy, France, and Russia, Masonic and semimasonic societies became more radical and political.

Yates, reaching for a connection between Giordano Bruno's gnostic world view in the late sixteenth century and the origins of Freemasonry, in the early seventeenth century, comments on Bruno's regard for the Middle Ages and the past, his interest in philosophy, mysticism, and magic and his program of social reform. This combination of features, she says, mark the Renaissance Magus as different from the Renaissance humanist as represented by Erasmus, and she asks, "Where is there such a combination as this of religious toleration, emotional linkage with the medieval past, emphasis on good works for others, and imaginative attachment to the religion and symbolism of the Egyptians? The only answer I can think of is--in Freemasonry." She admits that she is "fumbling in the dark," but she suspects that Bruno's Hermetism in the late sixteenth century inspired "the spiritually dissatisfied in England" to form speculative lodges (p. 274).

The subject of Melville and Freemasonry warrants investigation. I have mentioned that I think that Melville's literary club was an organization deliberately patterned on Masonry, with which it shares many basic affinities. But there is an actual, documented family relationship between Melville and Freemasonry which adds to the circumstantial evidence of Melville's interest in and knowledge of Masonry. Indeed, I suspect that Melville was a Mason; however, I have not been able to prove this. For this, lodge records showing the date of a person's initiation are needed. What I can point to as an interesting fact in his biography is that his grandfather, Major Thomas Melville, was initiated into the St. John's Lodge in Boston on February 3, 1772. This grandfather, who became a major in the American Revolution, is believed to have been a member of the Boston Tea Party. See William R. Denslow, 10,000 Famous Freemasons (Transactions of the Missouri Lodge of Research Board of Publications, 1959), III, 101. A lot of internal evidence exists in Melville's fiction for the claim that he was a Mason, and oftentimes, membership in Masonry runs in families.

⁵⁷ Campbell, III, 5. Pagel's study, which is more recent, claims that the gnostic library unearthed at Nag Hammadi in 1945 suggests that Valentinian gnosticism was more influential than any other form of gnosticism during the period at which it was at its zenith (p. 37).

It is interesting to note that while Mithraism excluded women from its rituals, in Orphism, to quote Campbell, women "were essential . . . as inciters of the mystic rapture , . . as vehicles of revelation , . . [and] as guides and divinities" (IV, 97). In Valentinian gnosticism, says Pagels, which was highly philosophic and almost devoid of rituals, women were accorded complete equality (p. 72).

⁵⁸ Campbell, IV, 287.

⁵⁹ See Hassan, The Dismemberment of Orpheus.

⁶⁰ Saurat, p. 74.

⁶¹ Ahlstrom, II, 551; Jonas, p. 41; Yates, p. 1.

⁶² Jonas, p. 41. Yates discusses the number and kind of references made to Hermes Trismegistes in Christian writings, particularly those of Augustine and Lactantius. Whereas Augustine believed that Hermes Tris-

megistes was an actual person and a philosopher to be revered, Augustine criticized him for his involvement in magic. Augustine, Yates observes, does not comment about the references to God as the Father who manifested Himself as the Son of God and the Word (Logos) which are expressed in the first book of the Hermetic Corpus. Yates contrasts Augustine with Lactantius on the basis of their attitudes about Hermes Trismegistes. Lactantius treats Hermes Trismegistes as the most revered of the Gentile seers precisely because he took the first book of the Hermetic Corpus to be a prophecy of Christianity. As Yates says, this book of the Hermetic Corpus describes creation as occurring by means of "the Son of God . . . and the Word." Moreover, she continues, since Lactantius did not condemn magic, he became the favorite Church Father of the Renaissance Magus who was trying to work out a synthesis between Hermetic-Cabalist beliefs and Christian beliefs (pp. 6-12).

63 Ahlstrom, II, 552.

64 Albertus Magnus, De caedoe Mundi, I, 1, 2, in Hopper, p. 96.

65 Yates, pp. 1-168 ff.; Saurat, p. 34; Ahlstrom, II, 552.

66 Jonas distinguishes between dualistic and monadic expressions of gnosticism and observes that the monadic systems, which he calls the "Syrian Egyptian type of gnostic speculation," in contrast to the "Manichean or Iranian type," make up "the majority of gnostic systems," (pp. 62, 174). The monadic systems are based on this myth.

For some information about the antiquity and ubiquity of this myth, see Campbell's discussion of "The Shared Myth of the One That Became Two," in The Masks of God: Oriental Mythology, 6th ed. (1962; rpt. U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 1977), II, 9-23.

Saurat discusses the myth in relation to Spenser, Milton, Goethe, Blake, etc., pp. 8-17 ff; M.H. Abrams maintains that this myth, which he calls the myth of Primal Man, is the "central myth of romantic poets," and elsewhere he notes that this "myth of sexual division, opposition and reconjunction is basic to occult thought." See M.H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), pp. 55, 168. See Jonas for "Man" as one of the secret names of the Unknown God (pp. 117, 124).

67 Pagels, p. 59.

68 Jonas, pp. 176, 150-51.

69 Pagels, p. 60.

70 Jonas, p. 105.

71 This novel was written around 160 A.D. Yates remarks that it was translated into English by William Adlington in the sixteenth century (p. 9 ff.).

72 Campbell discusses the serpent in connection with gnosticism as he analyzes the meaning of a golden Thaler which was made in Germany in the sixteenth century. One side of the coin depicts Nehustan, the bronze

serpent mentioned in the Old Testament; the other side shows Christ crucified on the cross. According to Campbell, an orthodox reading of these symbols is that just as "the serpent of bronze lifted up by Moses on a staff counteracted the poison of a plague of serpents, so the lifting up of Jesus on the cross countervailed the poison of the serpent of the Garden"; however, he says that a gnostic reading of these images yields a quite different meaning, which is "that the two are alternative manifestations of a power transcending both"; and it implies a theology of immanence in which "nature is revered as self-moving." In the gnostic context, he says, "The serpent is revered as symbolic of its divine life" (IV, 152-54 ff.).

As Jonas points out, the serpent was an extraordinarily important symbol of the "downgoing" and "upcoming" divine energy to many gnostic sects in the Hellenistic period. "More than one gnostic sect," he notes, "derived its name from the cult of the serpent ('Ophites' from the Greek ophis; 'Naaseenes' from the Heb. nahas)--the group as a whole being termed 'ophitic.'" More specifically, in many systems, the serpent was a symbol of "'knowledge.'" And some sects, like the Peratae, he adds, "regarded Jesus as a particular incarnation" of the principle of "knowledge." Jonas says that such a use of the serpent shows the gnostic tendency to invert "the value-system" of the Greek, Jewish, and other myths on which the gnostics frequently based their allegories (pp. 92-93).

73 Zweig, discussing the gnostic myth of Narcissus, comments on the symbolism of doubling, inverting, reversing, and multiplying, conveyed by imagery involving mirrors and sparks (i.e. lamps), found in gnosticism. He also mentions the theme of the hunt in gnostic literature in which "the seeker is identified with what he seeks." See Zweig, pp. 6-21.

Yates observes that in Bruno's "marvelously complex and beautiful" philosophical and mystical gnostic poem Eroici furori (1585), which deals with the theme of the hunter and the hunted, "the hunter becomes converted into what he hunts after, that is to say, he becomes divine" (p. 278).

Abrams' famous definition of the romantic concept of the mind functioning as a lamp points up again the centrality of the gnostic imagination to the romantic impulse. See M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: W. W. Norton, 1953).

74 Saurat, p. 76. Alan Watts believes that all profound religious and philosophical thought employs this concept, but he also discusses the amoral attitude it can engender in people when they do not or cannot distinguish between an abstract, aesthetic, metaphysical concept and everyday reality. See Alan Watts, The Two Hands of God: The Myths of Polarity, 6th ed. (1963; rpt. New York: Collier Books, 1975), p. 40.

Zweig, p. 17; Friedman discusses how the doctrine of progress through a dialectical interplay of forces, such as good and evil, through the Cabala and Boehme's mystical theology, comes to have an extraordinary impact on the German idealists and existentialists (pp. 17-18).

75 Jonas describes this "crossing over" as a feature of gnostic cosmological myths of late antiquity: see "Simon Magus," pp. 103-12; "The Poimandres of Hermes Trismegistus," pp. 147-73; "The Valentinian

Speculation," pp. 174-94. In discussing the Cabala, Halevi describes the process of the Unknown God's emanation "in ten distinct stages," which collectively are called the Sefirot, and says it "can be visualized as a zigzagging in a 'Lightning Flash' from a central position (Balance) to the right (Expansion) and across the left (Constraint)," with the whole pattern thus formed being referred to as "the Tree of Life" (pp. 5-7). Saurat, too, discusses this feature of the gnostic imagination. He gives it the name of "sacred inversion" (p. 96).

In Natural Supernaturalism, Abrams discusses the concept of "one contrary" evolving to the point at which it becomes its own opposite, which he specifically relates to Hegel's views (p. 191).

⁷⁶ Jonas, pp. 288-89. The poem he quotes is identified as a "Gnostic hymn" preserved in Coptic; see C. Schmidt, Koptisch-gnostische Schriften, 1906, p. 358. Speaking of the content of gnosis elsewhere, Jonas says that even though it is "called simply 'the knowledge of God,'" the "knowledge . . . comprises . . . everything about God, man, and the world" (p. 45).

⁷⁷ As quoted in Jonas, p. 181.

⁷⁸ Jonas, pp. 62-63.

⁷⁹ Jonas, p. 185.

⁸⁰ Jonas, pp. 174, 252. See Campbell, III, 366, for an abbreviated comparison of gnosticism and Mahayana Buddhism. In this portion of his discussion, Campbell suggests that Shakespeare was influenced by gnosticism. For a general comparison of gnosticism with Buddhism, see IV, 155-59.

⁸¹ Campbell, IV, 155-59; III, 366. Yates discusses the mixed nature of the Hermetic Corpus, pointing out that some of the treatises are magical in nature, and some are philosophic; some are optimistic, and some are pessimistic (pp. 22, 33, 155). Saurat believes that the gnostic imagination historically has tended to promote an optimistic materialism, for most occult systems, he says, espouse reincarnation theories and do not show much interest in "the idea of individual immortality in another world" (pp. 9 ff.), or they regard death as "an expansion of personality" (p. 38). However, as Jonas notes, some of the ancient gnostic literature deals with the soul's journey after death to the "Pleroma," the acosmic sphere of the Unknown God symbolized by the Self-Integrated Androgyne. In this after-death journey, the soul "travels upwards, leaving behind at each sphere the physical 'vestment' contributed by it." In other words, in the process of traveling "downward" at birth, the soul received qualities and characteristics from the seven planets or aeons as it passed through their spheres, and these qualities and characteristics are returned as the soul travels upwards out of the universe after death (pp. 44-46). Elsewhere, citing a poem by Omar Khayyam, Jonas remarks that the "gnostic conception of the journey [after death] as a gradually subtractive ascent through the spheres had a long mystical and literary afterlife" (p. 167). Still, as Campbell says, some gnostics attained the ultimate wisdom of Mahayana Buddhism, which he describes as being a totality non-dualistic vision of reality in which "the dualistic notions

of matter and spirit, bondage and release, being and non-being have been left behind as illusory" (IV, 158).

⁸² Book XI, Corpus Hermeticum, in Campbell, III, 366-67. This passage, too, helps one understand how the gnostic impulse could promote rationalism and empiricism. Nevertheless, according to Pagels, gnostics have tended to be more interested in the "perceived meaning" of events than in the events in and of themselves (p. 160). Thus, although the passage helps one understand the gnostic interest in science and nature, it speaks more definitively for the parallels between ancient gnosticism and the romantic imagination. In both instances, there is a paradoxical attraction to the concrete and particular and the transcendent and universal. Certainly the passage encourages its readers to expect an epiphany, the moment, to quote Senior, "when everything is seen as connected" (pp. xi-xiv), or the moment when the noumenal shines through the phenomenal.

⁸³ Bigelow, pp. 24-35; Jonas, pp. 49-50 ff.

⁸⁴ The phrase "law of periodicity" evidently was coined by Madame Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), whom Ahlstrom describes as being the mother of modern theosophy. It was she, he says, who founded theosophy in America in 1875" as a specific organized religion." As he observes, she wrote two highly influential books on the occult: Isis Revealed (1877) and The Secret Doctrine (1888). The latter work Ahlstrom calls "a vast compendium of theosophic teaching." It was in the "Proem" to it that Blavatsky listed the three main principles of her version of the gnostic imagination. They include, says Ahlstrom, the idea of an Unknown God; the idea that everything, including the universe, follows "the law of periodicity"; the belief in metempsychosis and reincarnation, through which the individual "soul" perfects itself, according to its own efforts; and the doctrine of the soul's "obligatory pilgrimage," to quote Blavatsky, to the "Unknown Root." Annie Woods Besant was Blavatsky's student and colleague for several years before Blavatsky's death (II, 551; 551, n.3; 553-54).

As Blavatsky states them in another of her books, The Key to Theosophy (1889), the aims of modern theosophy are, to quote Ahlstrom's paraphrase, "to establish a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, to promote the study of comparative religion and philosophy, and to make a systematic investigation of the mystic potencies of man and nature" (II, 553).

⁸⁵ Bigelow, p. 25; Zweig, p. 15. See Jonas, too, for a discussion of the gnostic imagery associated with the experience of self-transformation and "ecstatic illumination" (pp. 284-87).

⁸⁶ Jonas, pp. 284-87; Ahlstrom uses this term as he defines the viewpoint of modern theosophy (II, 551).

⁸⁷ Saurat provides a good discussion of the sexual symbolism which is a prominent feature of gnostic thought, and he also discusses the theme of incest (pp. 6-17 ff.). Abrams in Natural Supernaturalism discusses the symbol of sexual union. He terms it the "holy marriage," and connects it with the depiction of an epiphany in romantic literature (p. 56).

88 Senior, p. 4.

89 Book XI, Corpus Hermeticum, in Campbell, IV, 366. In Natural Supernaturalism Abrams says that the concept of "'only like cures like' almost became a cliché" in romantic thought (p. 219).

90 Zweig, p. 15; Senior, p. 13 ff.

91 Campbell, IV, 266, 272.

92 Jonas, pp. 92-97, 161. Zweig, Preface ff. In connection with the gnostic interest in the figure who threatens order to renew it, it is interesting to consider Pagel's remarks about the reasons why Christians were suspect in the Roman Empire of the first century A.D. As she explains, "First, they identified themselves as followers of a man accused of magic and executed for that and for treason; second, they were 'atheists', who denounced as 'demons' the Gods and who protected the fortunes of the Roman state . . . ; third, they belonged to an illegal society" (p. 92).

93 See Jonas' discussion of the gnostic concept of the negative way to gnosis (pp. 285-87). And Senior discusses this throughout his book. See especially pp. 15-17 ff.

94 "Jonas, p. 46. "However profoundly man is determined by nature, of which he is part and parcel," comments Jonas about the gnostics of the ancient world, they believed that "there still remains an innermost center which is not of nature's realm and by which he is above all its promptings and necessities" (p. 160).

While I disagree with Jonas in regard to his assertion that gnostics could not find this freedom in "nature's realm," for they made great use of the serpent as a teacher and guide in many of their mytho-poems, and, as Campbell says, the serpent in a non-Christian context is almost always associated with nature and the life force, I do agree with him about the discovery of a new sense of freedom (IV, 154-55). Cohn's discussion of the gnostic movement known as the heresy of the Free Spirit in the Middle Ages, a movement whose women and men members believed in communally owned property, claimed to belong to "the liberty of Nature," promoted egalitarian ideals, and attached a mystical significance to the sex act (p. 150 ff.), supports my position, which is thoroughly in harmony with pantheism and much else that I have theorized about the gnostic imagination. Furthermore, the Soul (= Nature) in gnostic thought contains the highest truth of gnosis in its depths.

95 Grant, p. 12.

96 Cohn, 150 ff.; Yates, p. 41.

97 William Blake, as quoted in English Romantic Writers, ed. and intro. David Perkins (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), p. 41; Abrams in The Mirror and the Lamp analyzes the history of the shift from the mimetic to the expressive theory of art which occurred in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He notes that Coleridge acted as the theorist of the expressive theory for the English-speaking world.

According to Abrams, Coleridge's views were derived from Herder, whom we have already connected directly with gnosticism in that he was a member of the Illuminati order, and Kant, whom Voegelin discusses as an interpreter of the gnostic impulse. See Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, pp. 1-16; Voegelin, p. 90.

Carl A. Raschke says that "in Boehme's writings, which heavily influenced seventeenth-century English mysticism and later German romanticism, we see an attempt of the mortal mind to delve into the secrets of the Absolute God, to 'know' the unknowable. Knowledge of God comes preeminently through knowledge of the self, which is created as a mirror of the divine and contains the inner light or divine spark of its Maker Boehme exhorts man . . . to magnify the 'little spark' of vitality and wisdom within him." See Carl A. Raschke, The Interruption of Eternity: Modern Gnosticism and the Origins of the New Religious Consciousness (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1980), p. 71.

⁹⁸ Zweig, pp. 2, 23-24.

⁹⁹ Pagels, pp. 166, 22.

¹⁰⁰ Jonas, p. 42.

¹⁰¹ Singer, pp. 1-22, 212-19 ff.

¹⁰² Pagels, p. 61.

¹⁰³ Jonas, pp. 288, 182-85. Saurat discusses the idea of limit in connection with the gnostic character of Milton's and Blake's views (p. 25).

¹⁰⁴ Pagels observes that whereas orthodox Christians believed that the Kingdom of God was to take place as a literal, historical, cataclysmic event, the gnostics either interpreted the Kingdom of God in terms of a state of mind which is "'within you,'" as Luke, Pagels says, has Jesus remark, or "some gnostic Christians, extending that type of interpretation, expected human liberation to occur not through actual events in history, but through internal transformation" (pp. 147-48, 153-56). Furthermore, she adds that some of their orthodox critics, such as Irenaeus, recognized, as she puts it, that the gnostics were "attempting to raise the level of theological understanding" (p. 118).

The Antonine period, as Campbell says, is from 130-180 A.D. He quotes Edward Gibbon's evaluation of this period in history when gnosticism was exercising the most influence. Gibbon speaks of the period in terms of high praise, citing it for its tolerance and regard for freedom. See Edward Gibbon, The Decline And Fall of the Roman Empire, from Chapters i and ii, in Campbell, III, 370-71.

Melville, too, regarded the Antonine period as the golden age. See his poem "The Age of the Antonines," originally published in Timolean, in Collected Poems of Herman Melville, ed. Howard P. Vincent (Chicago: Hendricks House, 1947), p. 235.

¹⁰⁵ Pagels, pp. 29, 48, 90, 146, 169, 172.

106 See the following works: Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism 4th ed. (1976; rpt. U.S.A.: Bantam Books, 1977). George Leonard, "In God's Image," Saturday Review, 22 Feb. 1975, pp. 12-14; Capra, "The Tao of Physics: Reflections on the Cosmic Dance," Saturday Review, 10 Dec. 1977, pp. 21-28; Kenneth Woodward and Gerald C. Lubenow, "Physics and Mysticism," Newsweek, 23 July 1979, pp. 85, 87.

107 Campbell, IV, 30-31.

108 Campbell makes this comment about the gnosticism of late antiquity as a defense of its diversity and as a criticism of the orthodox Christian position based on dogma. See III, 378.

109 Campbell, III, 370; IV, 169.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPLICIT SUPPORT IN THE WORKS OF MELVILLE'S MOST EMINENT
CRITICS FOR THE THEORY REGARDING THE Gnostic NATURE OF
HIS SPIRITUAL IDIOM AND AN ABSTRACT DEFINITION
OF MELVILLE'S WORLD VIEW

Few writers have received attention from a more outstanding group of critics than has Melville. For this reason, students of Melville's world view may have difficulty in selecting several works for careful study from among the numerous excellent ones written about Melville and his fiction. Robert E. Spiller, the editor of the Literary History of the United States (1975), offers some good advice, however, in this regard. According to him, if one can read only a limited number of the many fine critical studies of Melville's fiction, one should consult first Chase's Herman Melville (1949), Thompson's Melville's Quarrel with God (1952), Milton R. Stern's The Fine Hammered Steel of Herman Melville (1957), Merlin Bowen's The Long Encounter (1960), Berthoff's The Example of Melville (1962), Miller's A Reader's Guide to Herman Melville (1962), Brodtkorb's Ishmael's White World (1965), and Seelye's The Ironic Diagram (1970).¹

Of these eight critics, only Thompson maintains that Melville's world view represents an expression of nineteenth-century gnosticism. Hence, assuming that Thompson accurately places Melville's world view within the gnostic circle of ideas, one might think that little benefit

would be derived from consulting the other critics whom Spiller recommends. But this is not the case for three reasons. First, as is indicated in Chapter I, Thompson's confusion about gnosticism so clouds his judgment that his entire discussion of Melville must be taken with several grains of salt. Second, although all of these critics overemphasize the secular nature of Melville's thought, and all except Thompson identify his world view as an expression of naturalism, humanism, nihilism, romanticism, Calvinism, and/or phenomenology rather than more accurately specifying that it represents a form of gnosticism,² their studies contain insights into Melville the man and the artist that are of lasting value.

But a third important reason exists why the opinions of Melville's most highly regarded critics are worth careful study. It is that while these critics do not overtly maintain that Melville's definition of reality is a sincere expression of gnostic religiosity, the burden of their views suggests that they do support that idea. A demonstration of this claim strengthens the case for considering Melville a Christian gnostic, and it provides the opportunity to compare Melville's spiritual idiom in an abstract, general way with the definition of gnosticism set forth in the preceding chapter. But a more specific statement of the points emphasized in the next segment of this discussion helps prepare readers for this argument.

In this portion of the discussion, an effort is made to show that the aforementioned critics' views indicate that the mythic story underlying Melville's fiction describes reality as a process wherein the Unknown God, having fallen into a rigid condition of division and imbalance, strives to regain unity and a harmonious balance. Moreover, these

critics' studies support the opinion that Melville's world view, like that of the gnostic imagination in its higher reaches, stresses not only the unity of reality but also its dynamic, relativistic, and paradoxical nature and intermixes the same "old" and "new" elements that one finds in gnostic forms of thought. For example, judging from these scholars' studies, in addition to a pronounced concern for freedom, individualism, and wholeness, Melville's world view implies that reality is an immaterial construct. Besides this, the investigations of these scholars lead one to realize that his approach to life is comprised of organic, anthropomorphic and magical elements. The conclusion shows critics' theories imply that Melville's world view includes a belief in the basic tenets of gnosticism.

Melville's critics make some points about his world view and symbolism implying that Melville maintained a religious belief in the Unknown God of gnosticism. One may infer from their observations that Melville's personal version of gnostic mythos informs his fiction. Some of the many aspects of their discussions that offer strong support for this claim involve the status of Non-being in Melville's thought, the references in his fiction to the symbolic term Silence, the evidence of a belief in the divinity of humankind, and the myth central to his fiction.

Brodtkorb and Stern both maintain that Non-being and Non-existence have an ontological status in Melville's philosophic idiom. According to Brodtkorb, the view that "Being is radically dependent on Nonbeing" is implicit in Moby Dick.³ Stern maintains that Melville's symbolism reveals that his vision of reality includes the doctrine that all existence derives from Non-existence.⁴ Since the gnostic imagination accords

ontological status to "Nothing" and tends to describe reality as a cyclic process or eternal condition wherein "Nothing," the Unknown God, manifests itself as "Everything" (i.e. the realm of Being), Brodtkorb's and Stern's observations about the status of "Nothing" in Melville's world view lend credence to the claim that Melville maintained a religious belief in the mysterious Self of gnosticism.

Besides Brodtkorb's and Stern's observations about Melville's ontological views, portions of the discussions by Chase and Seelye of Melville's use of the term Silence afford evidence that Melville's world view includes a gnostic concept of a negative theology. As readers have noted in connection with the discussion of gnostic mythos in the preceding chapter, Silence is one name which the gnostics of late antiquity used to refer to their Unknown God.⁵ Hence, although Chase misinterprets the connotations of the remarks about Silence that the intrusive, omniscient narrator of Pierre makes, he aids in the process of arriving at a more appropriate reading of this important symbolic term in Melville's fiction by drawing attention to the following passage in Pierre:

All profound things and emotions are preceded and attended by Silence Silence is the general consecration of the universe. Silence is the invisible laying on of the Divine Pontiff's hands upon the world Silence . . . is that peculiar mood which prevails at a solitary traveler's first setting forth on a journey.⁶

The capitalization of the word Silence,⁷ the decidedly religious nature of the allusions, and the terms and images that suggest a cosmology are some of the more notable features of this passage by which Melville suggests his religious belief in Silence. Sometimes replaced by or conjoined with the term Depth and sometimes employed singly, the word Silence or Depth represents the First Cause and Principle in any approach to reality informed by the purer strains of the gnostic imagin-

ation.

Like Chase, Seelye shies away from regarding any of the occasions on which Melville refers to Silence as expressions of a gnostic form of the harmonial religious impulse; however, Seelye takes Melville's metaphor of Silence more seriously than Chase does. Seelye notes that Melville's fiction is replete with allusions to Silence and that "Melville knew that silence was for the ancient Greeks 'the vestibule to the higher mysteries,' was aware of Carlyle's obsession with silence, and was deeply affected by its power himself, regarding it as 'a strange thing.'" He quotes the storyteller Taji's remarks about the alpha and omega of reality being an "Ineffable Silence, proceeding from . . . [an] unimaginable remoteness."

Although Seelye believes that to Melville the term suggests "the possibility of ultimate nothingness, the 'trick' of the universe," actually Taji's remark is an explicit statement by Melville of an abbreviated version of gnostic cosmology and a theological reference to the Unknown or "remote" God of gnostic religiosity who emanates by means of Silence, its female consort.⁸ As the passage previously quoted from Pierre suggests, the capitalization of the word Silence alerts the reader to the religious meanings that the term had for Melville.

The burden of Brodtkorb's and Stern's comments about the status of "Nothing" in Melville's world view and Chase's and Seelye's consideration of the term Silence in his fiction helps confirm that Melville was indebted to the "Secret Tradition" in regard to his philosophical and cosmological beliefs. But consider as well the implications of the comments that several of his critics make about his opinions of humanity and the myth central to his fiction.

How did Melville regard humankind? That, of course, is a complex question, but at this point in this study, what one most needs to know is that, as is traditional with the gnostic impulse, he insisted on the inherent divinity of the human race. Bowen says that the symbolism in Melville's works indicates that he is asserting "man's divinity." He quotes the following passage from Mardi in which Melville compares human nature with alchemy and describes humanity in terms of the myth of the One that becomes two--the myth on which the gnostic imagination is centered--thus more evidence is obtained that Melville's world view can be most accurately described as a religious anthropology or psychology that is gnostic in nature. As Bowen explains, humankind to Melville is a godlike, unfathomable riddle which "must nevertheless be attempted, a 'more cunning compound . . . than an alchemist's . . . twain--yet indivisible.'"⁹

Besides Bowen's observations, those of Stern and Chase concerning Melville's spiritual idiom and his views about the relationship of God and humanity lend more support for the claim that Melville's world view is best understood as a gnostic expression of religious psychology and anthropology. Although there are numerous references in Melville's fiction to a concept of a supernatural agency which directs the events in life, according to Stern, when Melville "refers to God in man he means that man must be his own God." Melville, he says, believed that humankind is "the life principle, by which the nothing derives its identity."¹⁰ However, as Chase implies, Melville's works portray the idea that man and God redeem one another.¹¹

Pagels, Saurat, and Jonas point out that the gnostic imagination sustains the paradoxical view that humanity manifests the divine life

and that the human and Divine, being identical in essence, redeem each other. To be more specific, Jonas says that the savior figure of gnostic belief is a symbolic and mythical entity who is "the prototype of man" and an emissary of the transmundane, highest Being. Moreover, the gnostic mythos of salvation usually treats the transcendent savior and the man (Man) to be saved as one entity that plays "an active-passive double role." Thus, he continues, in gnosticism, "The salvation of man is that of the deity itself," yet, "the transcendent Supreme Being is still a particular."¹² Especially when taken into account with Bowen's assertion that to Melville human beings are mirror images of the god-head, Stern's and Chase's views about Melville's concept of salvation suggest Melville's adherence to gnostic doctrines.

Melville's belief in the essential divinity of human nature and on interdependence of the transcendent and immanent aspects of the deity are reasons to place his philosophical views within the gnostic circle. Yet another reason to do so is pointed up by Chase. According to Chase, "The myth which was central in Melville's mind during his whole lifetime was . . . the Fall of Man and the symbolic polarities of Light and Dark . . . and so on, which derive from it." And he proceeds to explain that Melville's fiction refers to "the Fall of Man" from the ideal state of a dynamic balance of opposites into a profane state of a static war of opposites and that it portrays the effort to regain unity. Chase insists that there is "nothing esoteric" about Melville's themes or world view, yet, except for a reference to the Unknown God, he describes the mythos central to Melville's fiction in terms of the imaginative core of the gnostic world view.¹³

The similarity between gnostic myths and the myth central to

Melville's fiction extends further. Just as gnostic myths imply that people should read reality more emphatically in psychological, metaphysical, and poetic terms than in a narrow, rationalistic way, so Melville's mythic fiction makes the same point. Melville's most highly regarded scholars slight or misinterpret the metaphysical implications of his works, but they do make comments which imply that the myth underlying these works can be interpreted as a myth of the mind. Chase states that Melville regarded hell as a state of mind, and acknowledges that the theme of the quest of consciousness for reality runs throughout Melville's works.¹⁴ According to Berthoff, Melville's great theme is the same one voiced by Goethe, Emerson, Hawthorne, Coleridge, and Carlyle--"as the mind grows, so all existence unfolds its secret logic."¹⁵

In this study, the intention is to demonstrate that the dominant theme in Melville's major fiction is the self (Self)-salvation of the deity, which is the theme typifying the gnostic mythos of the late classical period. These comments, however, as well as those of Brodtkorb and Bowen, serve to highlight the psychological character of Melville's fiction (this subject is taken up again in connection with specifying that Melville's understanding of reality represents a gnostic expression of idealistic pantheism). Brodtkorb's interpretation of Moby-Dick leads him to conclude that the novel portrays Ishmael in the process of coming to terms with his own consciousness, and Bowen believes that "self-realization" is the dominant theme in Melville's novels, short stories, and poetry.¹⁶

Confidence in the appropriateness of the claim that Melville's world view does belong in the sphere of sincere expressions of gnostic

religiosity is strengthened by the demonstration that several of Melville's most eminent critics characterize his vision of reality in the same terms that this study holds are appropriate to describe the vision of reality promoted by the gnostic imagination per se. Like the vision of reality traditionally promoted by the purer forms of the gnostic impulse, Melville's philosophic idiom stresses the unitive, dynamic, paradoxical, and relativistic character of existence. Moreover, as their discussions reveal, the themes and images typical of Melville's artistry are those which one recognizes as attending on the gnostic world view.¹⁷

Bowen calls attention to "the dynamic complexity of Melville's attitude toward life" when he states that Melville portrays man as "capable . . . of an endless growth," a being whose "life proceeds by imbalances constantly redressed."¹⁸ To Stern, Melville's vision of existence portrays the "relativity of infinite experience" even while it may depict the cosmos as "a product of the All."¹⁹ Seelye demonstrates the consistent use of "a system of paradoxical contrasts" which Melville employs throughout his fiction, and he and Brodtkorb agree that Melville describes reality as a field of infinite depth, unknowable in any final sense.²⁰

Pointing out the dynamic, paradoxical, and relativistic character of Melville's thought, Stern and Bowen articulate in explicit terms what Chase's description of the mythic core of Melville's fiction implies: Melville visualized reality as a mysterious duality contained within a highly unitive frame. Remarking on the symbolism of doubles in Melville's third novel, Stern concludes that Mardi's theme is "of unity in diversity." One way that Bowen illustrates the view that Melville's

vision of reality is that of a mysterious duality-in-a-unity is to cite the verse from Clarel "'Evil and good they braided play/Into one cord.'" He interprets this verse as indicating that good and evil are relative to Melville, "two aspects fused in a single integral vision of life."²¹ Readers have met with this vision of reality before. It is the same as that promoted by many of the gnostics of Alexandria, Rome, and Lyons in the second century A.D. which encourages a subjective view of life.

With such good, if perhaps unintended, support for the opinion that Melville's vision of reality matches that typical of the gnostic imagination, one is encouraged to ask of his critics whether, in their opinion, Melville's fiction reveals that he makes use of the gnostic version of the idea that "One Player acts all the parts in the Game of Life," and its accompanying themes and imagery. The answer to this question is a qualified yes. None of Melville's critics offers unequivocal support for the view that Melville's storytellers are mirror images of gnosticism's Unknown God, who is the One Player in the drama of existence. But they do suggest this in their discussions of some of the important themes and images of Melville's fiction. Indicating that some of his themes involve appearance versus reality, games, and metamorphic transformation, they remark, also, that some of Melville's imagery composes a pattern of masks, disguises, and costumes. These themes and images, as shown in this study, attend on the gnostic version of the mythic metaphor that One Player performs all the roles in the tragi-comedy of life.²²

With their common use of the term mask, Thompson, Chase, and Miller call attention to the pervasiveness of the themes of appearance versus reality in Melville's fiction. Investigating the "various subterfuges

of rhetoric and symbol" that Melville employed in his fiction as "self-protective riddle-masks" to slander Christianity and attack traditional values, Thompson erroneously concludes that Melville hated God and society.²³ But if one disregards the overly negative reading that Thompson gives to Melville's indirect style and gnostic symbolism, one can appreciate that insofar as Thompson succeeds in calling attention to the extensive use of verbal and situational irony in Melville's fiction, he makes the reader sensitive to its theme of appearance versus reality.

Chase observes that "the masked Ishmael confronts us" in all of Melville's novels and thus reveals that he is aware of the appearance versus reality theme in Melville's works being conveyed by Melville's manipulation of tone and point of view.²⁴ Like Thompson and Chase, Miller is concerned with the "masked" nature of Melville's world view. Taking this theme as a structuring principle of his study, he demonstrates that "Melville wrote book after book in an extended drama of masks" to express the idea that regarding good and evil as absolutes is ultimately destructive to individuals and societies.²⁵

Like the themes of "appearance versus reality" and "life is a game played by a Cosmic Joker," the theme of metamorphic transformation follows on the gnostic version of the metaphysical idea that ultimately the Unknown God is the One playing all the roles in the life experience, engaged as it is, to quote gnostic myth, in "generating itself, making itself grow, seeking itself, [and] finding itself."²⁶

Certainly one of the most obvious depictions of this theme in Melville's fiction involves his treatment of the Confidence-Man. Seelye suggestively describes him as a "character . . . as infinite in its manifestations (and implications) as 'that multiform pilgrim species,

man,'" thereby unintentionally calling to mind the metamorphic gnostic deity, man (Man). However, Seelye believes that Melville's thematic use of the principle of metamorphic transformation indicates that Melville believed that life was a meaningless rather than a divine and meaningful "nothing." Reeling off a catalogue of Israel Potter's occupations-- "first farmer, then surveyor, pioneer, trapper, trader, sailor, harpooner, soldier, prisoner, spy, beggar, gardener," and so on--Seelye concludes, "The hero is whirled through a kaleidoscope of costume changes signifying nothing."²⁷

Actually, as will be demonstrated later, Melville's pervasive use of the symbolism of metamorphosis, which he frequently depicts not only by means of role and status changes (Ishmael's numerous occupation and role changes, Pierre's reversal of roles, and others), but also by means of changes in clothing (Redburn's hunting jacket, Taji's Eastern garb, White Jacket's symbolic garment, and the Confidence-Man's costume changes), relates to his depiction of the theme of the self-salvation of the deity. For the present, suffice it to say that Seelye argues almost as much in favor of recognizing positive metaphysical and psychological implications in Melville's thematic use of metaphoric change, which relates to reincarnation and re-birth, as he does against this view. For example, Seelye observes that "there is not much difference between Moby-Dick, The Confidence-Man, Pierre, and Billy Budd," that "both Moby-Dick and Clarel end with a 'swimmer rising from the deep,'" and that "Melville's last novels and short stories . . . [reveal an] increasing emphasis on natural images of flowering, growth, and resurrection." Thus, his investigation of Melville's symbolism of transformation helps indicate that Melville's gnostic religiosity remained strong throughout

his life.²⁸

Another proof of this claim is the consistency with which Melville made use of other themes and motifs typifying the gnostic imagination. As shown in the discussion of gnosticism, because of its emphasis on the constitutive metaphor of and pun on the idea of reflection, a thematic use of the principle of inversions and reversals and of symbols that function as mirrors and lamps are dominant characteristics of gnostic-informed literature. Therefore, it is of great interest to note that his most highly regarded critics recognize that this thematic principle and its accompanying symbols pervade Melville's works.

Chase's discussion of the myth central to Melville's works implies that the myth, which he refers to as Melville's myth of "the Fall of Man," involves inversion and reversal. Chase observes that this myth describes the loss of a unitive state, which can be visualized as a dynamic balance of opposites, and the attempt to return to this ideal condition.²⁹ One of the structuring ideas of Thompson's book is that Melville's fiction portrays the principle of inversion and reversal. As Thompson demonstrates, Melville makes repeated use of Christian scripture and iconography in his fiction, in each instance inverting them, in a manner typical of the gnostic imagination, so that they convey a non-traditional meaning. Jonas comments on the gnostic habit of borrowing the myths of various traditions and "turning the intended meaning upside down," so that "a siding with the underdog" occurs.³⁰

Seelye, too, describes Melville's artistry as being based on the thematic principle of inversion and reversal. His effort to describe the symbolic pattern that this theme assumes in Melville's works is not successful. He does not understand that with this pattern Melville is

portraying not only the gnostic cosmological process whereby the Unknown God, in manifesting itself, gives rise to its own opposite out of its own inner dynamic and thus brings about the dialectic of the life process, but also is referring to the way in which one re-attains the higher vision (A=B yet A≠B). However, Seelye does understand that with this pattern Melville portrays the reversal of values, which, as readers have seen in the discussion of gnosticism, is an outstanding characteristic of the gnostic imagination.³¹

The pervasiveness of the thematic principle of inversion and reversal in Melville's fiction ensures image patterns of mirrors and lamps. In their discussions of the symbols in Melville's works, his most highly esteemed critics do not always make it clear that any symbol that functions to reflect also functions to illuminate, but they do provide evidence that Melville's fiction is replete with such imagery.

Melville's major fiction consistently makes use of the mirror-lamp symbolism, but Mardi is the first of Melville's novels to receive much critical attention in this respect. Although the protagonist Taji is even more emphatically depicted as a mirror/lamp symbol than his quest object, readers are indebted to Stern for observing that Yillah's nature is mirror-like.³² As one might expect, the mirror symbolism in Moby-Dick receives far more attention than that in any of Melville's other works. Berthoff observes that the sea in Melville's great novel is depicted as reflecting and containing all, and Miller remarks of Moby-Dick that "the whale's shiny surface has provided a mirror in which readers have reflected their own deepest fears and desires."³³

And almost all of Melville's best critics speculate about Moby-Dick's emblem, the famous gold doubloon which, as Seelye notes, func-

tions not only like a mirror but also like a sun, with which it is explicitly identified. Seelye also describes the Confidence-Man as a symbol that functions as a mirror, and through the symbolic term Silence and one of its variants, muteness, he identifies a network of such symbolism: the mute Bartleby, "the silent whale," and the mute Confidence-Man.³⁴ Seelye also helps provide evidence of the consistency with which Melville's fiction makes use of mirror and lamp imagery by pointing out that his diptychs function as "inverted similitudes," which is to say, each one of the stories in a set of two is the antithesis of the other but also mirrors and casts light on its opposite and twin.³⁵

None of the critics understands the esoteric religious implications of his own views. But insofar as these critics reveal that Melville consistently made use of the gnostic principle of inversion and its accompanying symbology of mirrors and lamps, their observations underscore the necessity of taking the idea more seriously that Melville's spiritual idiom is an expression of nineteenth-century gnostic thought.

The gnostic theme, life is a game, and its analogue, God is a Joker, are commented on variously by almost all of Melville's best critics as they discuss The Confidence-Man, with its exaggerated imagery of disguises and theme of the masquerade. They perceive its narrowly moral implications but not its mystical ones. Stern notes that this theme finds expression in Moby-Dick; and Bowen sees it in one of Melville's late poems. According to Stern, "When God first appears in Moby-Dick, he is to Ishmael the universal joker who passes the smarting thump all round to all shoulders." Because Stern does not understand the esoteric significance of Melville's thematic use of the idea that life is a game and God a Joker, Stern erroneously concludes that

Melville developed into an atheist.³⁶

To grasp the esoteric religious implications of this idea, one needs to recall Jonas' observation that the Unknown God of the gnostic imagination "as much invites as he thwarts the quest for knowing him."³⁷ The symbolism of mirrors and polar opposites implies that the mysterious "Man" of gnostic spirituality is the All who acts as its own antagonist and protagonist. This "One Player in the Game of Life" is self-destructive as well as self-creative and self-redemptive. Thus, Melville's remarked on treatment of God as an adversarial Joker is more suggestive of esoteric mystical overtones than of atheistic or secular ones, for with this theme Melville underscores the essential divinity and inter-relatedness of existence even as he calls attention, as well, to life's transrational nature and to the necessity of yoking a dualist's moral vision ($A \neq B$) with a mystic's transmoral one ($A=B$).³⁸

Melville's continual use of the theme that life is a game and God is a Cosmic Joker assures one not only of the constancy of his world view but also of its paradoxical nature. Interpreting one of Melville's late poems, "After the Pleasure Party," Bowen observes that "the insufficiency of one's single sex appears as a kind of 'cosmic jest or Anarch-blunder' by which 'self-hood itself seems incomplete.'"³⁹ Since gnostic myth may describe the Self-Division of the Divine Androgyne into the two sexes as an act of self-delight that first leads to cosmic anarchy,⁴⁰ one realizes that Melville's use of the theme that life is a game and God a Joker represents a knowledgeable expression of the higher reaches of gnostic thought.

The discussion to this point has shown the ways in which critics have supported the idea that Melville's philosophic idiom reveals his

belief in the Unknown God and the degree to which they have given it credence. Further, their opinion has been given as to Melville's fiction and his consistent use of the basic mythos of gnosticism to structure and inform it. The discussion will continue with a sampling of the critics' opinions regarding the presence of the elements of pantheism, idealistic pantheism, organicism, and magic in his world view. These are the same elements that appear to be the most ancient in the world view of the gnostic imagination.

Part of the definition of the gnostic impulse is that the gnostic imagination includes the elements of idealistic pantheism and pantheism. Therefore, the effort in this discussion to demonstrate the appropriateness of approaching Melville's world view as a profound expression of nineteenth-century gnostic thought receives impetus from the comments several of Melville's most highly regarded scholars make concerning the presence of these elements in Melville's world view. According to Campbell, when looking for evidence of pantheism in literary works, one should look for depictions of nature which imply that the author (1) identifies God with Nature, (2) treats God as manifest in and as Nature and as a mysterious energy engaged in the process of self-consumption and self-renewal, (3) makes use of the serpent as a symbol of Nature having a divine, self-moving power, (4) and structures her or his fiction according to the theme of the quest or the hunt. In literature indebted to the gnostic impulse, one looks as well for the evidence that the author portrays the world as the manifest Thought or dream of God, for such evidence indicates the element of idealistic pantheism.⁴¹

The discussion by Miller of Melville's most famous symbol, the White Whale who is mottled, can be elaborated on most easily to demon-

strate that Melville's gnostic world view represents the kind of idealistic pantheism which subsumes pantheistic views. As Miller observes, Melville manipulates the Whale as a symbol to signify God, Nature, the devil, sexuality, the cosmos, and the infinite mystery of life.⁴² In his discussion of *Moby Dick*, Miller lists all these ideas as the symbolic meaning of the whale; moreover, he notes that Ishmael describes *Moby Dick* as a serpent.⁴³ To reiterate, the serpent is a symbol typically employed by the gnostic impulse to convey the idea that God is manifest in and as Nature and is a self-moving power, a mysterious force which consumes and renews itself.

Miller's analysis of the symbolism of the famous whale implies what Seelye and Thompson state in explicit terms. As Seelye suggests, Melville's treatment of the whale implies that Nature is a self-moving power, "at once a destroyer and a healer, a 'dragon' and a 'dove,'" and as Thompson observes, Melville intends for his readers to identify the whale with "'the ungraspable [spirit] phantom'" of life.⁴⁴ None of Melville scholars whose opinions are being considered here understands that *Moby Dick* is one of Melville's major symbols of the Unknown God of gnosticism manifested in and as Nature, specifically, that is, that *Moby Dick* symbolizes the manifest Thought of God. Their observations about *Moby Dick* help one arrive at that conclusion, however, and they indicate in other comments that Melville's world view mixes pantheistic and idealistic pantheistic elements. For example, Melville's critics comment not only on the ubiquity of the theme of the hunt or quest in his fiction,⁴⁵ but also severally suggest that all of his fiction describes reality as a dream or thought.

The Confidence-Man, says Miller, depicts existence not only as

"the world of dream" but also as the world of "a comic nightmare."⁴⁶

Stern remarks upon the ambiguity of the factual yet psychological setting in Mardi, and Berthoff opines that Melville depicts reality in terms of states of consciousness not only in Mardi but also in Moby-Dick and Pierre. Thompson wonders if Melville's treatment of the characters in Mardi and Moby-Dick implies that they are all aspects of a single mind, which is Seelye's theory about characterization in Mardi. All of these statements point to the element of an idealistic form of pantheism in Melville's philosophy.⁴⁷

Campbell relates the gnostic imagination to the Far Eastern religious philosophies on the basis of the element of idealistic pantheism, and makes the following argument regarding the esoteric religious implications of the idea that life is a substantial but immaterial construct. Implicit in the concept that the universe is a dream, he says, is the view that "all the figures in the dream . . . are actually functions of the energy of the dreamer , . . all . . . are but refractions of one substance."⁴⁸ The cosmic dreamer in Melville's fiction is symbolized by the storyteller. Seelye comes close to grasping Melville's portrayal of this concept in Mardi. When Seelye discusses the portion of the narrative during which the protagonist virtually disappears within the group of characters who make up the hunting party for Yillah, he says that "all of the participants in the sea-borne symposium are but constituents of a larger subjective consciousness."⁴⁹

Besides the mixture of pantheistic along with idealistic pantheistic beliefs, the other "old" elements in the gnostic world view that show up in Melville's world view include organicism, anthropomorphism, and magic. Critical commentary about Melville's philosophy of life

refers to its organic and anthropomorphic elements.⁵⁰ However, Chase's classic study of Melville is outstanding in regard to providing support of these elements as dominant features of Melville's approach to life and for the present, this study does well to depend on it.

Comparing Melville's philosophy with that of Arnold Toynbee's philosophy of organicism and finding them identical in terms of essential doctrines, Chase describes Melville's world view as conveying the idea that reality is a dialectical interplay of polar opposites. He borrows the term "'Withdrawal-and-Return'" from Toynbee to describe "the basic rhythms of the universe: the alternation of day and night, of death and life, the change of seasons, the cycle of vegetation." Further, he observes that Melville's fiction consistently describes this death and re-birth pattern, not only to refer to the "whole process of life, the process of human history and of every genuinely creative act," but also and primarily, to describe "a spiritual transit" involving "the passage of the ego from the objective world into the unconscious and back into the outer world."

Although Chase does not say so, his description of Melville's world view expresses the organicism and implies the anthropomorphism typical of gnosticism. The gnostic imagination, as Bigelow says, identifies the world with the psyche, describes the universe in terms of "paired opposites--male-female, light-dark--that generate through dialectical process their own equilibrium or harmony," and maintains the necessity of "descent into the unknown layers of the psyche" in order to obtain spiritual maturity.⁵¹

Chase not only observes the organicism in Melville's world view, but also he and Thompson both comment on the subject of magic. Chase

puzzles over two "occult" passages involving number symbolism in Melville's fiction. He likens Melville himself to Simon Magus, the legendary founder of gnosticism and the historical prototype of Faust. He states that "pagan magic . . . created Moby-Dick," and he asserts that Pierre is imbued with an aura of the "mana of magic."⁵² Thompson speculates about Melville's use of the word-number symbolism associated with the Cabala, and he remarks that Melville appears to be using the "Masonic pyramid" as a symbol in Moby-Dick.⁵³ Drawing on Charles Olsen's research, Thompson observes too, that probably a short time before Melville began to work on Moby-Dick, he wrote three notes on the back page of a volume of Shakespeare's tragedies. One of the notes reads,

"'Not the (Black Art) Goetic but Theurgic magic--seeks converse with Intelligence, Power, and Angel."⁵⁴

Such speculation on the part of Chase and Thompson, combined with all the other evidence that Melville's world view represents one of the purer literary expressions of nineteenth-century gnosticism, works to establish what the critics themselves do not credit sufficiently--the gnostic Melville took magic seriously. Besides Sach's study of Moby-Dick, Melville's hint that his concern was with "Theurgic magic" provides more evidence that he was involved in the "refined kind of magic" that Yates describes as being of interest to the Renaissance Magus. According to Senior, this kind of magic regards works of art as devices for mystical contemplation and psychic transformation. It is this kind of art that is a talisman or yantra, Senior adds. This study holds that all of Melville's major works are yantras in the aforementioned respects and in that they depict the All in terms of the principles of identity (A=B) and non-identity (A≠B) and in terms of stasis and transformation.⁵⁵

By far the more fruitful line of commentary from the Melville critics, in regard to the element of magic in Melville's world view, lies in their observations about Melville's use of the principle derived from sympathetic magic and preserved in the gnostic tradition, the principle that only like cures like. As this study mentioned, the gnostic impulse makes use of the principle that only like cures like to caution people about but to justify self-love, sensuality, world-rejection, and rebellion as the way to illumination and to promote the claim that one must become equal to God in order to know God.

Thompson and Stern come closest to grasping the idea that Melville is depicting the negative way and the way of the body in his fiction as part of expressing the larger theme of the way of "knowledge" (gnosis) and applying the principle that only like cures like. Thompson thinks Melville is making use of the Platonic concept of the "ladder" of love in Mardi, and Stern compares Melville's use of the quest object, which he calls the "lure," to that in Goethe's Faust and to the Holy Grail of medieval romance. In the final analysis, these observations do not go to the basic source in question, but both are appropriate comparisons.⁵⁶

Melville's critics more strongly support that Melville justifies rebellion than they advocate that sensuality or world rejection are thematic concerns of his works. Chase and Thompson note that Melville's fiction shows a sustained use of the idea that rebellion is necessary for reform. Thompson, discussing White-Jacket, observes that Melville justifies mutiny on religious grounds,⁵⁷ which is a view that one would expect of someone who believed, as Melville did, that the salvation of man (Man) involves, to quote Jonas on ancient gnosticism, "the salvation . . . of deity itself".⁵⁸

But of these two studies, Chase's work provides more insight into the level of sophistication and sensitivity of Melville's world view than Thompson's does, for Chase comprehends that while Melville's fiction has a definite antinomian element in it, its implications are not nihilistic or anti-social. According to Chase, Melville's use of the theme of rebellion throughout his fiction indicates that Melville believed that spiritual, socio-political, and psychological health or maturity depends on the success with which the potential culture-hero challenges the static, repressive, and negative aspects of existence. In other words, as Chase goes to some length to explain, Melville recognized and portrayed the idea in his fiction that the "dark" side of existence and personality, such as the impulse to rebel against the status quo, may perform a positive function--that of renewing the health of the social organism and that of contributing to the maturity of the individual.⁵⁹

The figures with whom these critics compare the Melville protagonist are such as would verify that there is the justification of rebellion in his works; they relate directly to the gnostic imagination because either they are the figures whom Jonas indicates as gnostic redeemers in the gnostic literature of the Graeco-Roman period, or they are nineteenth-century versions of these figures. Not consciously employing the syncretism that is a feature of the gnostic impulse, Melville's critics identify the Melville protagonist chiefly with Christ, Prometheus, Satan or Lucifer, Faust, and Narcissus.⁶⁰ Moreover, this same symbolism suggests the Christian gnostic bias of Melville's imagination.

Besides helping to support the claim that Melville's world view includes many of the elements having the greatest antiquity in the

gnostic imagination, Melville's critics imply that it includes elements in the gnostic world view that appear decidedly modern--the ideals of freedom, individualism, and wholeness.⁶¹

Although they disagree somewhat about the meaning that freedom had for Melville, Melville's critics do agree that the concept was of great concern to Melville. The views of Thompson and Miller are two cases in point. Many of Thompson's remarks suggest that Melville, like the gnostics of old, claimed for himself the freedom of his inner self and justified this claim on metaphysical grounds.⁶² Miller's discusses the passage in Mardi in which a youth riding on the shoulders of an old man speaks about freedom to the crowd assembled on Vivenzia provides. The passage reads thus:

Freedom is more social than political. And its real felicity is not to be shared. That is of man's own individual getting and holding. It is not, who rules the state, but who rules me. Better be secure under one king, than exposed to violence from twenty million monarchs though oneself be one of the number.

From this passage, Miller accurately surmises that Melville's own personal view of freedom was that "a man may liberate himself though he serve under an absolute monarch," which is to say, Melville's world view includes the gnostic doctrine of the essential freedom of the inner self.⁶³

There is further support for the idea that Melville understood freedom in virtually the same sense that the gnostics of old interpreted it. Critical commentary addresses the element of freedom in Melville's philosophy of life and also the symbolism he uses to portray freedom by way of its opposite. For example, agreeing with Thompson and Miller in regard to the importance of freedom to Melville, Berthoff says, "The freedom of view and personal unconstraint in Melville's work appear

deeply temperamental, or constitutional." He proceeds to note that one of Melville's Pittsfield neighbors, in a letter to a mutual friend, complained of the freedom with which Melville expressed his "'religious views'" at social gatherings.⁶⁴ Like Thompson, Berthoff remarks on the anti-authoritarian element in Melville's concept of freedom; however, unlike Thompson, Berthoff understands, as does Chase, that, to Melville, true freedom is related to tolerance and is not opposed to order.⁶⁵

It is also noted that freedom's opposite, slavery, is symbolically depicted in Melville's fiction by images of chains, prisons, and cages, which are symbols used in the gnostic literature of the classical age. What they all touch on in one way or another Seelye says most succinctly when he states that "prisons, real, or metaphorical, are an important motif throughout Melville's . . . work."⁶⁶ Discussing the symbolism of ancient gnostic literature, Jonas points out that the theme of slavery and its attendant imagery of chains and prisons refer directly to the state of fallen consciousness and being (the state symbolized by the Self-Divided Androgyne), even while they indirectly suggest the ideal state of a dynamic balance of opposites (the state symbolized by the Self-Integrated Androgyne).⁶⁷

Unintentionally, the critics identify other parallels between Melville and the gnostic imagination such as that of freedom in his style and the advocacy of individualism and wholeness. Miller's comment about the originality and inventiveness of Melville's artistry calls to mind similar comments about the originality and inventiveness of the gnostic imagination of late antiquity, which Pagels and Jonas remark on.⁶⁸ Moreover, as the following discussion of the ideals of individualism and wholeness in Melville's philosophy implies, Melville, like

some of the gnostics of Roman Empire in the second century A.D., understood the term freedom to refer to the ideal condition or state of the Spirit.

Although he ultimately downplays the metaphysical and psychological level on which Melville's fiction operates, Chase's entire discussion of Melville's world view is concerned with making the point that acting and thinking in a self-directing manner is a goal, having spiritual, as well as psychological and socio-political ramifications, expressed by Melville throughout his fiction.⁶⁹ And Chase's view is corroborated by Thompson when he states that the mystical theme of Melville's third novel, Mardi, is the necessity on the part of each individual to search for spiritual truth which is individual and personal in nature.⁷⁰ Therefore, when Bowen likens Melville's regard for individualism to the doctrine of the "inward voice" promoted by Rousseau and Godwin, and Pagels reveals that this doctrine was first formulated by the gnostic impulse of the Hellenistic period, one feels assured that Melville's concept of individualism is a nineteenth-century version of what Jonas calls the doctrine of "the sovereign 'spirit'" when he discusses the beliefs of the gnostics of the ancient world.⁷¹

Many of the points which these critics make about Melville's concern for freedom and individualism lead naturally into a discussion of the ways and the degree to which Melville's fiction indicates that his world view resembles the gnostic imagination in regard to a commitment to the realization of psychological and socio-political wholeness. The gnostic impulse historically gives the symbol of the Self-Integrated Androgyne both a psychological and a socio-political reading.⁷² Significantly enough, the best critical studies mostly agree that Melville

understood psychological and socio-political maturity in terms of a reconciliation or dynamic balance of the "head" and the "heart."

Characterizing the polar opposites in Melville's myth as "filial" and "partriarchial" but reading them also as "feminine" and "masculine," Chase maintains that throughout his fiction "Melville advocates a reconciliation of these polar values, a redemption of each by the other."⁷³ Miller says, "As always in Melville, the crucial question revolves about the balance of heart and mind."⁷⁴ According to Berthoff, Melville's "great subject" is "the fearful personal struggle for wholeness or maturity of spirit."⁷⁵ "From Typee on," Bowen observes, "all of Melville's books are marked by an aspiration . . . toward this single vision," and "man's task," as Melville depicts it, "is to weigh and to bring to a poise the realities both of head and heart." Further, Bowen says that to Melville, "salvation . . . will lie . . . in wholeness approached through a generous inclusiveness; it will consist . . . in a development and balance of the powers of heart and head."⁷⁶

All of these critics understand that Melville's theme of wholeness applies to the psychological and the socio-political levels of reality. Thus, Stern's is a representative voice when he states that all of Melville's fiction portrays "the need for the complete man . . . who can effect a border-crossing eclecticism according to what is pertinent to his time and civilization It is this crying human need which is the polemical stimulus for Melville's themes of universal brotherhood, cultural relativism, and social democracy."⁷⁷

These critical opinions imply that Melville's concept of individualism is humanitarian rather than ruthless in nature. After stating that Melville's major theme is becoming the mature individual, Berthoff

adds, "Melville dramatizes the judgment put upon society by the innocent suffering of those it makes its victims and outcasts , . . [and] he projects the versatility of the self, the love of comrades."⁷⁸

"Melville the classical democrat, the ethical relativist, the devout empiricist," Stern says, "demonstrated . . . the deep morality of social idealism." Through the lessons learned by characters such as Redburn and White Jacket, Miller observes, Melville reveals his advocacy of the "'warm soul,' a soul healthy and vigorous in its fundamental humanity."⁷⁹

The burden of these critical opinions is that to Melville, as to some of the gnostics of old, gnosis involved the "knowledge" of the final unknowability of God combined with the mystical view that humanity is a spiritual unit, a family in which all are of equal worth regardless of differences in status, aptitude, or ability. Thompson calls attention to one of the most explicit statements by Melville of his concept of wholeness in the following passage from Moby-Dick in which Ishmael asserts the metaphysical basis for his belief in humanitarian individualism. Admitting that "'men may seem detestable'" but that "'man, in the ideal, is noble and sparkling,'" the storyteller Ishmael speaks of the "august dignity'" of humankind and says:

But this august dignity I treat of, is not the dignity of kings and robes but that abounding dignity which has no robed investiture. Thou shalt see it shining in the arm that wields a pick or drives a spike; that democratic dignity which, on all hands, radiates without end from God Himself! The great God absolute! The centre and circumference of all democracy! His omnipresence, our divine equality.⁸⁰

The gnostic religiosity of Melville's psychological and socio-political concept of wholeness is apparent in the above-quoted passage from Moby-Dick with its image of God as a "'centre'" from which "'hands

. . . [radiate]" and its language of freedom and equality. The passage appears to combine imagery from two gnostic sources, the twelfth-century Hermetic Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers and the Cabala. The famous doctrine, first set forth in written form in the Middle Ages, to which the passage seems indebted is that "God is an intelligible sphere, whose center is everywhere and circumference is nowhere." Besides this doctrine, the imagery in the passage distinctly suggests that precept of the Cabala holding that God, the "Absolute Nothing," to quote Halevi, "manifested itself in ten distinct stages of Emanation" that "mystics have pictured . . . as the ten . . . Hands . . . of God."⁸¹

But the gnostic religiosity of Melville's concept of wholeness is perhaps even better illustrated by Bowen's review of the terms and images by which, according to him, Melville describes his "sense of . . . selfhood." With these terms and images Melville expresses the gnostic concept of the Self-Integrated Androgyne, the transmudane deity who is identical with the individual's "inner self" or "sovereign spirit." Culled by Bowen from a broad selection of Melville's works, some of the terms and images Melville uses to describe what Bowen refers to as "the still center" and the "inner essential self" are as follows: an "'indefinite regent,'" a "'captive king,'" and "'innate dignity'" which exists "'buried among the holiest privacy of the soul,'" and "our 'own secret golden treasures.'"⁸²

These terms and images appear to be expressly indebted to the tradition of alchemy. As Campbell's discussion of alchemy reveals, its arcana preserves and elaborates on the ancient gnostic idea relating to the fallen world as the Self-Divided Man; this idea, according to Jonas, is that the salvation of humankind involves "the salvation . . . of

deity itself," and it entails a symbology of buried treasure, secrecy, and gold. But as Jonas's discussion of ancient gnosticism reveals, the the imagery Melville employs is highly developed in the second century A.D.⁸³

Many other insights into Melville's world view and themes offered by Melville's critics find parallels in the scholarly discussions of the gnostic imagination. Demonstrating these correspondences would lend even more support to the theory that Melville's understanding of reality is informed by a Christian gnostic vision. It is not the intention at this point in the discussion, however, to provide an exhaustive comparison of gnosticism and Melville's life philosophy in terms of some of the more striking elements that go to make them up. Rather, the twofold purpose is to provide readers with an abstract definition of Melville's world view and proof that the burden of the findings of the most esteemed Melville scholars indicates that Melville was a religiously inclined gnostic.

When translated into more formal terms and viewed collectively, the opinions of these critics do suggest that Melville adhered to the major doctrines of the way of "knowledge" (gnosis). For example, in regard to his theological beliefs, they suggest that Melville believed in a gnostic concept of a negative theology. In their opinions, they say that Melville's fiction and poetry expresses the anthropological, psychological, moral, cosmological, and soteriological tenets that typify the more sophisticated expressions of gnosis. In specific instances the critics support the idea that Melville's literature suggests that humanity is identical, in essence, with the deity, that within everyone's soul exists a balanced, integrated self (Self), that salvation entails know-

ledge, and that life is the manifestation of the ineffable First Principle. Furthermore, the burden of their views is that the important mythic pattern informing all of Melville's major fiction is derived from the salvation mythos of gnostic literature of the early Christian era.

In particular, Chase comes close to articulating this mythic pattern when he asserts that all of Melville's fiction refers to the Fall of Man into division and discord and the subsequent effort on the part of the potential world-savior to descend into the depths of the psyche, reconcile opposites, and emerge from the experience ready to participate in the salvation of the fallen Man. However, Chase's confusion about gnosticism or his lack of awareness of it is evidenced not only by his denial that this mythic pattern is essentially esoteric but also by his failure to articulate the idea that the savior figure's ability to effect world renewal ultimately depends on mythic identification with the transmundane Unknown God of gnostic speculation by whom this figure has been elected to serve as its soteriological aspect and redeem the fallen world-Soul.

To what extent these critics knowingly argue for or against the identification of Melville's view and themes with the gnostic element in the romantic impulse is impossible to clearly determine. But when all is said and done, neither Chase nor the other scholars whose views are dealt with in this portion of the discussion claim that Melville's world view reflects a sincere expression of Christian gnosticism. Thus, this study parts company with these critics in making a case for this theory. Before directing readers' attention to the subject of the implications of gnostic mythos in Melville's major fiction, however, this author wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to Chase, Thompson (again),

Stern, Bowen, Berthoff, Miller, Brodtkorb, and Seelye. While the findings of the first group scholars, who clearly place Melville's spiritual idiom in the gnostic sphere, provide the major stimulus and direction for this study, the observations of this second group of critics actually provide better support for an abstract definition of Melville's world view as a form of gnosticism than do the opinions of the other group.

NOTES

¹ Robert E. Spiller, ed., et al., Literary History of the United States, 4th ed., rev. (1946; rpt. New York: Macmillan, 1974), p. 1497.

Milton R. Stern, The Fine Hammered Steel of Herman Melville (Urbana, Illinois: The Univ. of Illinois Press, 1957).

Merlin Bowen, The Long Encounter: Self and Experience in the Writings of Herman Melville (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960).

The citations for the other six studies are included in the end-notes for Chapter I.

² Chase classifies Melville as a humanist but adds the term naturalist as well because he recognizes that Melville's world view represents a philosophy of organicism. In addition to discussing the myth on which Melville's fiction is based and the symbolism which accompanies it, Chase is particularly concerned with demonstrating that although Melville was politically liberal, his fiction reveals that he was a perspicuous critic of liberalism. Chase contends that Melville was concerned with metaphysics only because Melville wanted to promote the kind of moral and intellectual reform which would bring about a great culture (pp. 55, 35-36, viii-ix).

In the opinion of the author of this discussion, Chase's analysis of Melville's understanding of reality and Melville's literature is the single best treatment of this subject among the works which are considered the most insightful studies of it.

Thompson terms Melville an "inverted transcendentalist" or "inverted Calvinist" and identifies his world view as neo-gnostical. Through an analysis of Melville's style and symbolism, Thompson seeks to demonstrate that by the time that Melville wrote Moby-Dick, he had become obsessed with attacking God, orthodox Christianity, and the traditional values of society (pp. 4-6, 34-39, 133).

Stern classifies Melville as a naturalist, emphasizing that Melville's interests were with "the historical community," and he maintains that to Melville, God is an idea created by human society (pp. 6-7).

Bowen refuses to categorize Melville's world view. He notes that it is "metaphysical" in its orientation, but his concern is to demonstrate that all of Melville's works reveal that Melville's interest lay in "the problem of self-discovery, self-realization." He believes that Melville tended to regard the universe as hostile or indifferent; however, his emphasis is on the "endurance and affirmation" in Melville's character and fiction (pp. 2-3, 8, 280).

Like Bowen, Berthoff refuses to categorize Melville's world view in specific terms. According to him, Melville's great theme is the same one voiced by Goethe, Emerson, Hawthorne, Coleridge, and Carlyle--"as the mind grows, so all existence unfolds its secret logic." He does not

speculate on the ancient gnostic sources of this theme but relates it to "the various new organic concepts of existence and behavior that still shape the modern intellect in every field of speculation" and to freedom, individualism, and liberalism. His emphasis is on Melville's "freedom of view" and the ways in which Melville's fiction exhibits "that gravely radiant virtue of spirit , . . civil and natural magnanimity" (pp. 5-17).

Miller remarks that Melville's world view combines two traditions-- Calvinism and transcendentalism, but he thinks that the Calvinistic strain is dominant. His study seeks to demonstrate that the problem of evil and the ambiguous nature of reality are the major themes in Melville's works and that "Melville asserted the necessity of man to compromise with his ideals, frankly and without private or public deception, in order to come to terms with the world's evil and his own" (pp. 20, 230, 5).

Brodtkorb's thesis is that Melville's world view is best approached as an expression of phenomenology by which he means that reality is an expression of one's states of mind. Moby-Dick, he says, describes "Ishmael's consciousness comprehending its own content and Melville's consciousness comprehending the total Ishmael" (p. 151, n. 3). As Macquarrie observes, the origins of phenomenology are in German idealism (p. 23). Macquarrie's discussion of phenomenology suggests the relationship between it and the gnostic idea that life is the multi-faceted dream or Thought of God. However, Brodtkorb thinks that Melville rejected the idea that life is manifestation of the Divine. He comes close to describing Melville as an atheistic existentialist. He believes that Melville considered the cosmos indifferent but that Melville attempted to imbue life with meaning. Anticipating Seelye in one opinion, Brodtkorb asserts that Melville's symbolisms of dualities are involuted to the degree that no positive meaning occurs (pp. 109-111, 119).

Seelye describes Melville as a nihilistically inclined romantic whose "use of stylistic indirection" reveals "no absolute center of value , . . no moral standpoint." He seeks to demonstrate that "All the parts mutually contradict one another" in Melville's symbology of "contraries" (pp. 3,5).

³ Brodtkorb, p. 137. Brodtkorb's study is a monograph on Moby-Dick, but he implies that his opinions about Melville's world view as it is expressed in that novel apply to Melville's other fiction as well.

⁴ Stern, pp. 183, 16. Chase, too, briefly mentions that "reality" in Melville's fiction is presented as "Nothing," which he also terms "the Void" (pp. 34, 98).

⁵ See Chapter II, pp. 55-56, for a review.

⁶ Chase, p. 289. Furthermore, as Jonas observes, the image of a solitary traveler embarking on a cosmic sojourn is central to the gnostic imagination (pp. 55-56).

Brodtkorb observes that the traveler is Melville's persistent metaphor for the individual's experience of existence (p. 35). And Thompson comments that the Confidence-Man, a symbol for humankind, is a traveler (p. 303).

⁷ Thompson makes use of the following quotation from a letter which Melville wrote to Hawthorne in order to build support for his view that Melville came to hate God. Actually the portion of the letter quoted indicates that Melville did believe in a concept of God in which the Divine is not equated with pure mechanical force or the intellect alone, and it indicates that Melville placed a special importance on capitalization.

But here is the portion of the undated letter from Melville to Hawthorne which Thompson quotes:

'I stand for the heart. To the dogs with the head! I had rather to be a fool with a heart, than Jupiter Olympus with his head. The reason the mass of men fear God and at bottom dislike Him, is because they rather distrust His heart, and fancy Him all brain like a watch. (You perceive I employ a capital initial in the pronoun referring to the Deity; don't you think there is a slight dash of flunkeyism in the usage?).'

Thompson's source for this quotation is Willard Thorp, ed., Herman Melville: Representative Selections (New York: American Book Company, 1938), p. 392. In Thompson, see p. 131.

As Stern points out, to Melville, the Fall is identified with worshipping God as the Other (p. 198, note 15). According to Saurat, the same theory regarding the Fall is expressed in the Cabala. (p. 91) However, Saurat means that God and man are and are not identical (A=B yet A≠B). Stern's observations about Melville's concept of the Fall are not reconcilable with his claim that to Melville, God is an idea created by human beings (pp. 6-7). To Melville, as to the gnostics, man and God are identical in essence (A=B) but different in degree (A≠B).

⁸ Seelye, pp. 12-13. Stern associates Isabel and her symbolic analogue Yillah, with Silence and death and maintains that the incest motif in Pierre has "socio-ontological overtones" (pp. 184-89, 164-165). Jonas' discussion of the myth central to the gnostic imagination in the ancient world makes clear that the Unknown God, the "Nothing" from which Being is derived, is identified as the source of life and death (p. 182). However, Jonas also observes that "death" and "sleep" are symbolic terms referring to the fallen state of Being, the condition of "ignorance" (pp. 57-58, 68-73). Thus, it is rewarding to note that Stern discusses the motif of sleep in Melville's fiction, commenting on it in such a way so that one realizes that, like the gnostics of the Hellenistic period, Melville uses "sleepless awareness," to quote Stern, as the state of mind necessary to pierce through "the appearances of existence" (pp. 97-98).

⁹ Bowen, pp. 29, 21. His quote from Mardi (I, 131) is taken from The Works of Herman Melville (16 Vols.; Standard Edition; London: Constable & Co., 1922-24).

¹⁰ Stern, pp. 146, 204.

¹¹ According to Chase, "Melville's central theme . . . [is] the relationship between the father and the son and their failure or success in achieving atonement, in redeeming each other" p. 148). Campbell explains that in the esoteric, mystical sense, atonement is understood as "at-one-ment" (I, 107-111). In other words, given an esoteric mys-

tical reading, the term designates the experience of mythic identification and the achievement of wholeness. Thus Chase's statement sounds mystical, but the emphasis of his interpretation is political and psychological.

¹² Pagels, pp. 146-148, 50; Saurat, pp. 23-26; Jonas, pp. 35, 237, 79, 65.

¹³ Chase pp. 208, 28-37. Chase appears to assume that Melville intuitively formulated his myth, but eventually he relates it to the mystery religion traditions of the ancient world and observes in a somewhat puzzled way that Melville's "mythical language is strangely similar to Toynbee's account of the growth of civilizations" (pp. 36, 28-29). Thus, apparently without realizing it, Chase does link Melville's world view to the gnosticism of the ancient world. As I point out in the preceding chapter, the mystery religions of late antiquity, such as are represented by Orpheus, Isis, and Mithra, should be included within the gnostic circle. For a review of the evidence supporting this assertion, see note 47 included in the endnotes of Chapter II and Chapter II, p. 51. The closest that Chase comes to referring to a concept of a God beyond God in Melville's world view in his admission that while "Melville must be called philosophically a naturalist, in the sense that he based his attitude toward life, morals, and art on a broadly conceived process of nature," Melville "still . . . always grasped beyond nature--or was it still within nature?--for a certain elusive beatific vision, a certain divine flowering, a shining boyish innocence" (p. 282).

Another striking similarity between gnostic mythos and Melville's myth as Chase describes it is that both envision life after the Fall in terms of that which is rigid, static, and mechanical, and both make use of the idea of a God who acts as an adversary and a tyrant and suppresses the attempt to reform existence. Speaking of Melville's potential culture-hero, a figure whom Chase calls Prometheus but identifies with Lucifer as well, Chase says, "As Melville pictures him, he is now the suffering hero, persecuted by a heavenly father who seeks to impose a stasis upon the universe, who seeks to establish the stagnant reactionism which the revolutionary elan of Prometheus had once smashed" (p. 29).

In his discussion of "Gnostic Imagery and Symbolic Language," Jonas remarks that the gnostics of the ancient world re-interpreted the myth of Prometheus and Zeus in such a way so that Zeus became a symbol of "cosmic destiny" and a "deterministic, rigid order." Prometheus became the symbol of that which breaks the deterministic world order. To quote Jonas, he became "the bearer of the new gospel"--the anti-authoritarian and anti-deterministic gospel of the freedom of the spirit. To the gnostics of the ancient world, says Jonas, "The blemish of nature lies not in any deficiency of order but in the all-too-pervading completeness of it." See Jonas, pp. 96-97, 253.

¹⁴ Chase, pp. 131, 278-79.

¹⁵ Berthoff, p. 9.

¹⁶ Brodtkorb, pp. 4-8. Bowen, p. 2. Bowen's statement of the dominant theme in Melville's fiction agrees with the positive motives for creation accorded to the Unknown God by the gnostics of the ancient

world. Their versions of the myth basic to gnosticism suggest that the Unknown God manifests itself in and as the world process in order to explore its own potential for being and in order to discover itself to to itself. For a review of this point, see Chapter II, pp. 60-61.

It is interesting to note that Bowen has an entire chapter on "The Unknown Self" in his discussion of Melville's world view (pp. 13-39). In a more conscious way than Chase, Bowen seems to be using gnosticism as a model by which to analyze Melville's world view, but, as was pointed out in note 2 in this chapter, he refuses to classify Melville's philosophical beliefs.

¹⁷ For a review of these characteristics of the gnostic vision of reality, see Chapter II, pp. 58-60; 63-64; 72.

¹⁸ Bowen, pp. 8, 43.

¹⁹ Stern, pp. 204, 90.

²⁰ Seelye, p. 9; Brodtkorb, pp. 46-47.

²¹ Stern, p. 108; Bowen, p. 47. See Pagels, p. 61, for a discussion of this point.

²² For a review of this concept in regard to the gnostic imagination per se, see Chapter II, pp. 57-58.

²³ Thompson, pp. 3, 423.

²⁴ Chase, p. 278.

²⁵ Miller, p. 5.

²⁶ From a gnostic writing call the Great Announcement quoted by Hippolytus in his Refutation of All Heresies, in Pagels, p. 60.

²⁷ Seelye, pp. 123, 113.

²⁸ Seelye, p. 9. For a discussion of "garment" as a symbol in gnosticism see Jonas, pp. 56, 118, 123. Seelye, p. 9. Chase emphasizes more than Seelye the affirmative tone of Melville's late works. According to him, Melville makes it clear in his volume of poetry, Battle-Pieces, and in Clarel that a "'return'" will occur. Chase interprets this "return" in nationalistic terms. According to him, Melville's fiction is concerned with encouraging America to realize its promise and become the "'dream' of the founders . . . a reasoned, free, heroic form of republicanism" (p. 232). Chase also calls attention to the passage in Pierre which reads, "'The most mighty of Nature's laws is this, that out of Death she brings Life'" (p. 238). But the religious nature of Melville's beliefs are pointed up by Chase's observation that Melville "could warn the nation against the 'Atheist roar'" in a poem written after the Civil War called "America" (p. 238).

²⁹ Chase, pp. 28-37, 208.

30 Thompson, pp. 3-12. Jonas, p. 95.

31 Seelye, pp. 43, 165.

32 In addition to identifying Yillah as a symbol which functions as a mirror, Stern associates her with relativity and a "no-thing" (p. 115). An analysis of Yillah's symbolic and mythical identity is contained in Chapter IV, p. 178 ff.

33 Berthoff, P. 30; Miller, p. 77.

34 Seelye, pp. 67, 120.

35 Seelye, p. 99.

36 Stern, pp. 203, 16.

37 Jonas, p. 288.

38 Thompson and Chase both hold that Melville treats God as an adversary. See Thompson, p. 222. Neither, however, understands the esoteric, mystical significance of this aspect of Melville's world view. But between the two, Chase is closer to grasping the gnostic significance of the theme of God as an adversary. For example, Chase appears to understand that Melville treats God as a mysterious energy which works for and against itself.

According to Chase, "God attempts to defeat the heroic defender of man by forcing him into the pattern of the beast or the machine. The hero attempts to escape his fate and to preserve the elan of human intelligence, creativeness, and adaptability. The human elan is the one weapon which can defeat the tyrant God; it is the one attribute God Himself needs if He is to keep his throne" (p. 51). Furthermore, Chase notes that Melville's world view includes a trans-moral, affirmative vision of "the beauty of God," which is "the inward reality" (p. 50). As this study intends to prove, this "inward reality" which Chase speaks of refers to the gnostic concept of transmundane spiritual self (Self). Chase's study is hampered by not knowing about the gnostic concept of a God beyond God.

39 Bowen, p. 28.

40 Jonas' discussion of Valentinian gnosticism reveals that it portrays the idea that the Unknown God manifests itself in an act of self-delight or self-love but that this act leads to an act of self-rebellion (pp. 182-83). Some versions of this myth, says Jonas, refer to the Unknown God as Love, maintain that Love cannot exist without an object, and thus explain the act of emanation on the part of the Unknown God in terms of the subject's reflecting on itself and "othering" itself to itself in order to enjoy sex and to exist as a Self-Integrated Spirit.

These versions are also likely to interpret the Fall as Wisdom's desire to trespass the bounds of Love, and they describe Wisdom as seeking to know the Unknown God (to know being understood in sexual as well as spiritual and intellectual terms) in an absolute, unequivocal manner. This and vanity mostly constitute "sin" from the gnostic point

of view, says Jonas. To want to "know" absolutely relates to the desire to be the only God, he adds. See Jonas, p. 183, n. 11.

⁴¹ Campbell, IV, 152-159. Campbell compares gnosticism with the esoteric religious philosophies of the Far East (III, 366).

⁴² Miller, p. 77.

⁴³ Miller, pp. 77, 94-96.

⁴⁴ Seelye, p. 152; Thompson, pp. 158-59.

⁴⁵ According to Chase, all of Melville's books portray the theme of the search of the father and son for one another and have as their subordinate theme the "quest of consciousness for reality" (pp. 278-79); Bowen maintains that all of Melville's fiction is concerned with the "quest for self-realization" (p. 2). Miller and Stern relate Melville's fiction to the quest structure of the medieval romance and its novelistic history (Miller, p. 2; Stern, p. 208).

⁴⁶ Miller, pp. 171-72. Chase notes that the ships in Moby-Dick are "like dream images" and that Moby Dick is "an overpowering dream image" (pp. 59, 49).

⁴⁷ Stern notes that the setting in Mardi in the opening chapters appears to be the "'factual' real world" but that at some indeterminate point its setting shifts to the "unreal world of Mardi," which he terms "the shadowy realms of consciousness" (pp. 73, 68). His point is well taken because in his discussion of the element of idealistic pantheism in the Eastern and Western expressions of esoteric mysticism, Campbell observes that the doctrine that the world is a dream dreamed by a Cosmic Self implies the paradox that "the world of empirical fact" is "the world of dream as well" (IV, 339).

Berthoff, p. 29; Thompson, pp. 67, 84-85, 201; Seelye, pp. 118-119, 120, 122.

⁴⁸ Campbell, IV, 338.

⁴⁹ Seelye, p. 32. Miller makes a similar point in regard to Mardi (p. 46).

⁵⁰ Like Chase, Berthoff associates Melville's world view with that of Toynbee. Berthoff, too, believes that Melville depicts the individual's life cycle according to the same pattern by which Toynbee interprets the life of civilizations (p. 41). Furthermore, he believes that Melville's major theme is the growth of the mind (pp. 9-10). Bowen's statement that Melville's fiction shows that Melville believed that humankind is capable of "an endless growth" (p. 43), and Stern's remark that Melville's view of history is that of an unfolding pattern also points to the organicism in Melville's world view (p. 225).

There is wide agreement among scholars of gnosticism that philosophies of history modeled on a dialectical or triadic movement are modern versions of the gnostic impulse. See Voegelin, pp. 67-80.

One German idealist philosopher whose gnostic-inspired views exer-

cised a lot of influence in the nineteenth century was Hegel. As Macquarrie observes, Hegel attempted "to show a dialectical unfolding of the phenomenon . . . and . . . of an underlying spirit " (pp. 21-23). It is his view of history and spirit rather than his absolutist or nationalistic tendencies which make it appropriate to classify Hegel's views within the gnostic circle.

⁵¹ Chase, pp. 35-37, 238.

⁵² Chase, pp. 122, 129, 297, 267, 114. Furthermore, Chase maintains that Melville's storytellers represent the trickster, shape-shifter figure common to many mythologies, and he compares this character and the tone in Melville's fiction to "the eternal heretic" (pp. 67, 206).

⁵³ Thompson, pp. 187-88, 181.

⁵⁴ Thompson, p. 183. Taken from Charles Olsen, Call Me Ishmael (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947), p. 529.

⁵⁵ See Yates for a discussion of "good" and "bad" magic in the Renaissance, which she relates to some of the leading humanists and to the greatest artists of the Renaissance (pp. 18-19, 111). Wind is less clear than Yates about the infusion of gnosticism into the neoplatonism of the Renaissance, but he relates magic to the visual and plastic arts in a more detailed manner than Yates does.

Senior explains how an art form such as imaginative literature can function as a yantra. As he defines it, a yantra is "an image or geometric design which acts as a lens for the concentration of psychic energy The yantra . . . must be constructed so that sets of opposites will be contained and yet remain opposite and stasis and movement are simultaneously portrayed." In other words, a yantra is a symbolic construct which implies that A and B are identical even while it asserts as well that A and B are different. Its paradoxical logic is the type of logic which Melville's fiction portray. See Senior, pp. 19-20, 201.

⁵⁶ Thompson, p. 60; Stern, pp. 54, 130.

⁵⁷ Thompson, p. 114.

⁵⁸ Jonas, p. 237.

⁵⁹ Chase, pp. 30-31, 51.

⁶⁰ See Jonas, pp. 111, 91-97. The prototypes of the literary figure of Faust, says Jonas, is the legendary founder of gnosticism, Simon Magus (p. 111). Chase syncretizes Greek and Christian names for Melville's potential culture heroes. He identifies them with Christ, Prometheus, Lucifer, Orpheus, Zeus, and Oedipus (pp. 31, 54). Thompson proceeds in much the same manner as Chase, identifying these figures with Christ, Satan, and Prometheus (pp. 35-36, 224, 128).

Bowen's and Stern's identifications of Melville's quester-heroes are similar to those of Chase and Thompson. See Bowen, pp. 132-36, and

Stern, pp. 13, 202. Miller stresses the use of Christian myth in Melville's fiction and contends that Melville held a double view of Christ, one positive and one negative (p. 230). Berthoff relates Melville's potential culture heroes the "dark" romantic hero through literary models (p. 9). Brodtkorb identifies Ishmael as a Narcissus figure and also likens him to Coleridge's ancient mariner (pp. 138, 3). Thompson relates Melville's myth to Faust (pp. 120, 200) as does Stern as well (pp. 54 130).

⁶¹ For a review of the elements which strike us as "modern" in the gnostic imagination per se, see Chapter II, pp. 66-72.

⁶² Thompson, pp. 6, 89, 119, 128, 133.

⁶³ Miller, p. 43.

⁶⁴ Berthoff quotes from a letter written by Mrs. Sarah Morewood to one of the Duyckincks. The letter is dated December 28, 1851. See Berthoff, p. 23.

⁶⁵ Berthoff, p. 40; Thompson, pp. 148, 222; Chase, p. 137.

⁶⁶ Seelye, pp. 90-91, 112.

⁶⁷ Jonas, pp. 62-63, 63; n. 16.

⁶⁸ Miller, p. 19; Pagels, pp. 166, 22; Jonas, p. 42. Berthoff, too, comments on the originality and inventiveness of Melville's fiction (p. 26).

⁶⁹ Chase, pp. 29-37.

⁷⁰ Thompson, pp. 63, 67.

⁷¹ Bowen, p. 55; Pagels, pp. 13, 22-25, 55-56; Jonas, p. 42.

⁷² See Chapter II, pp. 69-72.

⁷³ Chase, p. 38.

⁷⁴ Miller, pp. 154-55.

⁷⁵ Berthoff, p. 20.

⁷⁶ Bowen, pp. 48, 43, 23.

⁷⁷ Stern, pp. 31, 49.

⁷⁸ Berthoff, p. 22.

⁷⁹ Stern, p. 249; Miller, p. 56.

⁸⁰ As quoted by Thompson, pp. 174-75. Thompson makes use of this passage from Moby-Dick to claim that in Melville's world view, "God's

chief attribute is not democratic benevolence but tyrannic malevolence" (p. 174).

⁸¹ The Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers, in Campbell, IV, 30-31. Halevi, p. 5.

⁸² Bowen, pp. 38-39. The phrases "indefinite regent" and "captive king" are from Pierre (Book V, chap. i). The phrase "innate dignity," etc. is found in White-Jacket (chap. xxxiv), and the reference to "secret golden treasures" comes from Moby-Dick (chap. cxiv). But see Bowen's chapter "The Unknown Self" for a multitude of similar examples and the editions of Melville's works from which these references are drawn (pp. 13-44).

⁸³ As Campbell says, one "fundamental idea" of alchemical thought is that "divinity is entrapped, as it were, in the gross physical matter of the bodies of men and women as well as in the elements of nature (IV, 271). He quotes Jung's restatement of this idea: "For the alchemist the one primarily in need of redemption is not man, but the deity who is lost and sleeping in matter." See Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, pp. 299-300, in Campbell, IV, 271-72. Jonas, p. 237.

The "gold" of the spiritual masters of alchemy, says Campbell, is the "'gold of philosophy' . . . such as art bestows on the mind through its transubstantiation of the matter of this world," and, he continues, it is identified with the mysterious hermaphroditic lapis, rebis, or "philosopher's stone" (IV, 287, 272).

Campbell's interpretation of Joyce's Finnegan's Wake in terms of alchemical themes and images points up the motifs of buried treasure, gold, and secrecy which attend on this vehicle of the gnostic imagination. See Campbell, (IV, 264), for one especially relevant passage in Finnegan's Wake which is the equivalent of the discovery of ambergris in the intestines of the sick whale which occurs in Moby-Dick.

CHAPTER IV
THE PROTAGONIST AS THE POTENTIAL GNOSTIC REDEEMER AND
THE QUEST OBJECT AS THE FALLEN THOUGHT OF
THE UNKNOWN GOD IN TYPEE,
MARDI, AND MOBY-DICK

The critical studies reviewed thus far provide strong explicit and implicit support for the claim that Melville's beliefs about reality and the myths, themes, and symbols of his fiction are those of a man dedicated to the maintenance of the more sophisticated religious and philosophical expressions of the gnostic imagination. Yet despite this body of evidence questions about the religious nature and constancy of Melville's major fiction remain far too open. The root cause of this irresolution is that no critic considers fully enough the extent to which Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Bartleby the Scrivener," Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" bear witness to Melville's stable and sincere expression of a Christian gnostic world view.

In meeting the need for a study that analyzes Melville's major fiction in the light of its indebtedness to a Christian gnostic spiritual idiom, the remainder of this discussion focuses on one major new insight into these works, which has extensive ramifications. This new perception of Melville's most significant fiction concerns only its "experienced landscape" as contrasted with its "recollected landscape." These terms, originated by Edgar A. Dryden, in Melville's Thematics of

Form, have essentially the same meaning that Dryden gives them.¹ They serve to distinguish the account of a protagonist's conflict as involving a specific, immediate, historical sequence of events from the recollected presentation of these events which may be broader than the former or include another related sequence of events. Henceforth, when the word plot is used in this discussion, it refers to the protagonist's "experienced landscape."

Focusing only on the "experienced landscape" of Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd," what this study demonstrates can be explained in three parts. First, more closely than anyone appears to suspect, all of Melville's most important fiction represents a Christian gnostic interpretation of one of the two types of the numerous versions of gnostic salvation mythos that date from the Graeco-Roman period. In this study, the first type of salvation myth is referred to as that of the potential gnostic redeemer. The second type is termed the myth of the fully enlightened gnostic redeemer or Illuminator. At the level of the "experienced landscape," Melville's fiction finds its basic source in the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer.

The second part of this new insight follows closely on the heels of the first. It is that all of the protagonists of these works represent the figure of the potential gnostic savior, and the quest objects of these protagonists represent the gnostic concept of the fallen god-head--the impaired world-Soul or Thought of the Unknown God. Moreover, in three of these works, at the level of the "experienced landscape," the protagonist is portrayed as transforming into the fully enlightened gnostic savior whose consciousness is implied to be permanently trans-

formed.

The protagonists who are depicted as becoming "'a Christ,'" as some of the ancient Christian gnostic texts put it, include Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael.² Those who at the conclusion of the narrative's account of their "experienced landscape," are portrayed, to a greater or lesser degree, as gnostic saviors in need of enlightenment or a permanently transformed consciousness include Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy Budd. Among them, the one who is most emphatically portrayed as failing in his high mission is Delano. All of the others are treated more optimistically as "works in progress," so to speak. But because the potential gnostic redeemer represents a principle or Spirit of enlightenment (gnosis), even the ultimate outcome of Delano's spiritual history is not a foregone conclusion, and all of these characters, to some degree, are depicted as performing a soteriological function during their encounters with the fallen world.

The third part of the theory regarding the influence of gnostic salvation mythos on the "experienced landscape" of Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" concerns the question of the constancy of Melville's world view. That Melville throughout his adult life did ascribe to a world view that represents a sincere and sensitive interpretation of gnostic religiosity is strongly attested to by his major fiction. Despite their differences, these stories all share certain basic features that point to this conclusion. These features allow one to characterize Melville's most important fiction in the following terms.

Each of the works takes the form of an historical narrative that records the descent of a gnostic redeemer figure into the world and

gives an account of his assimilation into, progress through, and encounter with the world. This account is given in such a way that even if the redeemer figure is not entirely successful in his effort to enlighten a world with which he is essentially identical or be enlightened by it, the process by which Creation, the Fall, and salvation occur is depicted, and the gnostic concept of salvation is conveyed.

Besides strengthening the claim that Melville's world view and themes remain constant throughout his life,³ this new insight into his fiction lends weight to two other existing theories about Melville and his art. First suggested by Matthiesson, one of these claims is that Melville's world view is indebted to the gnostic literature of the ancient world.⁴ The remainder of the discussion demonstrates the surprising extent to which Melville was familiar with this body of literature, made use of it in his fiction at the level of the "experienced landscape," and drew upon its symbolism.

Some of the numerous parallels that exist between Melville's major fiction and the gnostic literature of the early Christian era are listed below. One learns from Jonas that a majority of the works that make it up take the form of an historical narrative. At the level of an "experienced landscape," these works interpret the myth of the potential gnostic savior so that gnostic themes and doctrines are conveyed. This body of literature, says Jonas, is highly symbolical, cryptic, polemical, mythical, and allegorical. According to Pagels, for the most part, it is made up of self-conscious, imaginative, and complex stories which are informed by a special vocabulary of images and terms.⁵ In the next several portions of the discussion, all of these points are shown to apply to Melville's mythos.

Besides strengthening existing critical views about the constancy and sources of Melville's works, the ensuing discussion verifies and refines the theory that Melville's spiritual idiom represents an expression of Christian gnosticism.⁶ More support for this theory could be derived from an analysis of the "recollected landscape" in Melville's fiction, but one is encouraged to arrive at this conclusion by means of an analysis of this body of work at the level of its "experienced landscape." This is so for the following reason. The protagonist of these works is characterized as a gnostic redeemer, but a special effort is made by Melville to identify him and/or the world that he is to redeem and be redeemed by with Christianity. The implication of this symbolism is that Melville's spiritual idiom does represent an expression of Christian gnosticism.

By way of laying a foundation for the discussion of the indebtedness of Melville's major works to the numerous versions of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer, readers need to have some information not only about this figure but also about the fully enlightened gnostic savior. It is not possible to separate the two entirely because in Melville's works, as well as in the gnostic literature of the Graeco-Roman period, a protagonist who essentially represents the potential gnostic Illuminator is characterized in a qualified way as a fully enlightened savior figure, shown to attain full enlightenment sporadically, and/or depicted in the narrative as transforming into a fully authoritative Illuminator. For these reasons, an introduction of sorts to this type of gnostic savior figure is first on the agenda.

Many mythical, allegorical, legendary, and historical entities represent the figure of the fully enlightened gnostic spiritual master

to adherents of the gnostic impulse. Any list of the most important of these entities must include Pythagoras, Zoroaster, Plato, Hermes Trismegistos and his counterpart, the Narcissus-like Primal Man or Cosmic Man of the Hermetic Corpus, Jesus, Simon Magus, the spiritual masters of the great religions of the Far East, the Cabalist, the alchemist, and, since the romantic era, the poet.

The range of figures and traditions identified with the figure of the enlightened teacher of gnosticism complicates the job of defining this symbolic entity. But one can generalize and say that to any gnostic the figure represents the highest realization of the divine entity man (Man) in the realm of Being. As such, this figure conveys the gnostic principles of reflection, inversion and reversal, truth, freedom, order, harmony, and enlightenment, which are held to overcome self-division and ignorance. And, of course, this figure represents the content of gnosis.

More specific terms and images are identified with the figure of the Illuminator. Some of these bear mentioning because Melville alludes to them in his fiction. In the Hermetic Corpus and in some of the literature of Christian gnosticism, the Illuminator is the androgynous Son of the Divine Mind and his female aspect, Thought. The Son (Logos) is called the Word of Life (among other terms), and it is he and his female aspect who emanate Man and Nature or Man and Church. As these terms imply, the Word of Life is not only the means by which the reunification of the fallen god-head is accomplished, but also he is the form in which Creation occurs.

Other important names for this figure include the Alien Man and its variants, the Alien Light, the Alien Life, and the "stranger." As a

symbol of the male aspect of the god-head, the Illuminator is identified especially with the terms Depth, Mind, Word, and Man. In his female aspect, he is identified more emphatically with the terms Silence, Thought, Truth, Wisdom, Intelligence, Life, Nature, Church, and Grace. However, he is a unique symbol of the highest god-head, the Unknown God. Like the highest god-head, he is identified with the image of a central point in a circle or the space between a graphic symbol of polar opposites.

Expressed both more abstractly and concretely, the implications of this definition lead one to identify the figure of the fully illuminated Alien Man with a gnostic philosophic and mythic interpretation of the mental paradigm $A=B$ yet $A \neq B$ --a symbol of the higher consciousness which sustains a moral vision within a trans-moral, mystical, affirmative one--and to characterize him in the following informal terms. Besides being a spiritual master and teacher whose techniques for enlightenment resemble a form of shock therapy and invite other parallels with psychology, in the literature of ancient gnosticism he is portrayed as a transcendent yet immanent, unknown yet known, Narcissus-like god-figure; a dreamer or visionary; a storyteller who on occasion explicitly portrays himself as the protagonist of his own story; a hunter of light; an eternal wanderer; a stranger; a warrior; a suffering savior; a revolutionary; a mirror and a lamp; a magician; a puzzle-maker; a poser of riddles; a trickster; a serpent; a bridegroom; a call; a messenger; and a letter.

This information about the fully enlightened gnostic savior is necessary to understand aspects of the symbolism related to the protagonists and the quest objects of Melville's major fiction. But because

the potential gnostic redeemer as a symbolic and mythical entity is the archetype of the protagonists of Melville's more significant works and because this figure has special features that are unique to his characterization and treatment in gnostic literature, this portion of the discussion focuses more on becoming knowledgeable about this type of gnostic savior than about the Illuminator.

The myth of the potential gnostic savior is otherwise known as the myth of the Alien Man, the gnostic myth of Narcissus or the Primal Man, the myth of the Saved Savior, and the myth of the Savior's Rescue of and Sacred Marriage with the fallen Thought of the Unknown God. The following account of it is a composite of numerous versions of these myths. In the main, however, this account depends on a Christian gnostic work called the "Hymn of the Pearl," those versions of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer which represent the Valentinian and Simonion schools of belief, and the Hermetic Corpus.⁷ Because this myth is a type of religious literature and a species of imaginative fiction, it is appropriate to employ literary terminology to explain it.

According to Jonas, the theme of the self (Self)-salvation of the deity is dominant in the myth of the potential gnostic savior.⁸ To express this theme, the usually anonymous author of the typical literary version of this myth portrays his protagonist as a symbol of man and the highest god-head in its soteriological aspect, and he characterizes the quest object of his protagonist as the fallen god-head. The plot records the spiritual history of the potential savior in terms of his transformation into the fully enlightened redeemer. It involves the necessity on the part of the protagonist, not precisely but in a large degree, to re-enact the drama of Creation and the Fall whereby he be-

comes a symbol of the Soul in need of salvation. Moreover, it is a working out of the idea that the redeemer and the one to be redeemed participate in the process of salvation. But it stresses that the potential savior's mission is to comprehend the truths of the fallen world-Soul, learn who he is, and then rescue the Soul from Ignorance.

Readers may benefit from a more detailed discussion of the role reversal which the figure of the potential gnostic savior undergoes in gnostic mythos. Besides recording the story of Creation and the Fall, the plot of the typical literary version of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer expresses a qualified dramatic irony. The dramatic irony involves a reversal of roles in regard to the primary symbol of the savior--the protagonist--and the main symbol of the one to be saved--the quest object. As Jonas' discussion of the myth of the potential gnostic savior reveals, in re-enacting the gnostic drama of the fall of the Soul, the one who comes to save becomes for a time a symbol of that which he descends to save--the fallen world-Soul--and the one in need of salvation (the fallen world-Soul) saves the savior.

The gnostic dictum that only like cures like applies in this regard. In other words, in order for the potential gnostic redeemer to rescue himself and the fallen god-head--the world-Soul--he must comprehend or re-live the experience of the fall but then move beyond or "out" of the condition of self (Self)-division and Ignorance which the Fall represents and attain self (Self)-integration and "knowledge" (gnosis).

This dramatic irony insures that one of the themes of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer is that of the saved savior. This term, says Jonas, also functions as one of this figure's special names.⁹ From Saurat one learns that the same idea is included in the tradition of the

Cabala where it is expressed in the belief that no one comes to the Father (the Unknown God) except through the Mother (the beautiful but fallen Thought of God=the world-Soul=the Shekinah).¹⁰

Discussions of gnosticism indicate that this dramatic irony is made possible by the gnostic belief that the highest god-head, imaged as a pearl, jewel, spark, mirror, or related symbols, exists within the (world-) soul (Soul). To quote Jonas, attaining or comprehending this "pearl" or these jewels of the highest Truth of gnosis about the identity of the "inner luminous self"--the metaphysical ego--with the unknown, Self-Integrated Androgyne is an important element in the spiritual history of the potential gnostic savior. Because the quest object of the protagonist--the fallen world-Soul--possesses in its depths this hidden treasure, it is capable of, and is usually portrayed to some degree as, saving the savior.¹¹

In regard to the theme of the saved savior, it should be pointed out that the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer does not represent a pure expression of dramatic irony. It is qualified by the fact that the potential gnostic savior, even while he is re-enacting the gnostic drama of the Fall and progressive deterioration of the Soul, is performing a soteriological function. For example, the protagonist is portrayed as contravening the status quo and upsetting the world into which he descends. Usually this is seen in episodes where he is striving to enact a "sacred marriage" with a specific symbol of the world-Soul in its aspect of the highest Truth. Moreover, it may be necessary for him to attempt this union several times (or twice) before a true union occurs. This feature of the mythos of the potential gnostic Word of Light reflects the gnostic dictum that what brings the one "down," such as the desire

to "know," also brings it "up" (= only like cures like), and it gives rise to the theme of the savior's rescue of and union with the fallen Thought of God.

The "sacred marriage" or its equivalent, "death," is essentially a metaphysical, mystical, and psychological symbol in the mythos of the gnostic savior. It is usually dramatized at the conclusion of the narrative's "experienced landscape" in order to signify that the potential gnostic redeemer's effort to attain the higher consciousness has a successful outcome. Thus, an idea controlling the flow of the narrative is that when this savior figure symbolically departs from the condition of Ignorance, he takes with him the jewel or treasure of a Truth that is ignored, devalued, defiled, or suppressed by Error. However, he has also comprehended a complete "knowledge" (gnosis) of the self (Self) in its ideal and profane conditions. This "knowledge," too, is now part of him.

Having been depicted as the creative power, the deteriorating Soul, the Soul in need of enlightenment, a saved savior, and a bridegroom, the potential gnostic redeemer indicates that he has come to "know" the Self (and himself) and possesses, among other things, the secret of his true identity, origin, and fate.¹² The conclusion of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer indicates that he is the fully enlightened gnostic savior who is ready to function as the Destroyer of Ignorance and Illuminator and to save or raise up and heal the divided god-head.

Summarizing the myth of the potential gnostic savior, one perceives that it refers to the loss and recovery of metaphysical unity whereby the "One," represented by the protagonist, falls into the "Two" or "the Many," which are represented by the protagonist and his quest object,

and then does not negate but transcends the condition of self-division or dualism and recovers on a higher level the condition of unity. Moreover, one perceives that in regard to its symbolism and action pattern it expresses the gnostic themes of the way "down" is the way "out" and reflection, inversion, and reversal. Besides the metaphor of the "sacred marriage," other features of its symbolism may include a use of the psychological, metaphysical, and mystical imagery of gnosticism, such as the "One" devolving or evolving by means of sets of twin and opposite energies, inverted mirrors, the Serpent, the "captivity" of the Soul, the hidden dynamo, and the "zigzag." Moreover, its action pattern and plot refer to the "left-hand path," the negative way to enlightenment, and the metaphor, as Jonas observes, of "gathering in."¹³

One of the most widely known specific examples of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer is found in Book I of the Hermetic Corpus. Melville refers especially to this version of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer in Moby-Dick and calls it "the key to it all" (M-D, p. 26). This study suggests that Melville's version of the gnostic myth of Narcissus is the "key" not only to Moby-Dick but also to all of Melville's major fiction in the sense that all of his most important novels and short stories at the level of the "experienced landscape" represent interpretations of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer and that despite its special features the gnostic version of the Narcissus myth is the metaphorical equivalent of the salvation mythos of all monadic expressions of the gnostic impulse. Therefore, a consideration of this mythic passage in Moby-Dick is a good place to begin an analysis of Melville's more significant fiction in regard to demonstrating its proximity to the old mythos of gnosticism, which in its more significant

insights changes little from the second to the nineteenth centuries.

The first treatise of the Hermetica portrays the fall of the potential gnostic savior into the world in terms of much of the imagery most familiar to people in the Greek myth of Narcissus. Therefore, this study refers to it as the gnostic version of the Narcissus myth.¹⁴

Mirroring the pre-cosmic fall of the Narcissus-like deity, the Narcissus-like son of the Unknown God in this myth is portrayed as engaging in an act of reflection and drowning in his own lower "Nature."

The Narcissus-like Primal Man's fall and fragmentation in his own lower nature (Nature) is motivated by a desire to "comprehend" the All.¹⁵ The "All" in gnosticism is unknowable in any final or absolute way; therefore, to know the All is impossible. This motive confirms that the Primal Man is re-enacting the drama of creation and the fall whereby the One first (in part) in seeking to manifest itself as the Self-Integrated Androgyne becomes the Self-Divided Androgyne. As readers recall, the Narcissus-like deity of gnostic belief is held by the ancient gnostics to manifest itself because of a desire to "know" the Self, which is the All--the totality. It is not until the Self discovers that it is unknowable in any final or absolute way and gets control of its guilty impulses that the balanced, harmonious condition of self (Self-) integration is actualized and the imbalanced, discordant condition of ignorance and self (Self)-division is overcome (the possibility of attaining salvation becomes a reality on a personal basis).

An important feature of the gnostic version of the Narcissus-myth is that in it the Primal Man (the potential redeemer and prototype of the species, man) is not portrayed in his own right as attaining salvation after his fall. Instead, he is depicted as a drowned or "dead" Man

in need of resurrection from the Depth in the impaired world-Soul. The Primal Man's mirror image, man, is portrayed as wakening to his fallen condition, and re-enacting again the entire drama of Creation and the Fall. This time however its effects are reversed. He succeeds in apprehending the highest Truths of gnosis, which the drowned Man in a cryptic, condensed way represents (indeed, Jonas implies that such a symbolic entity as the Primal Man could convey the entire context of gnosis to one who "knows"),¹⁶ thereby attaining the higher, balanced consciousness and accomplishing the salvation of Man in his own person.¹⁷

Melville provides his readers with one quite explicit version of the gnostic myth of Narcissus at the conclusion of "Loomings," the first chapter of Moby-Dick. Quoting the enlightened storyteller Ishmael, the myth reads thus:

Why is almost every robust healthy boy with a robust healthy soul in him, at some time or other crazy to go to sea? Why upon your first voyage as a passenger, did you yourself feel such a mystical vibration, when first told that you and your ship were now out of sight of land? Why did the old Persians hold the sea holy? Why did the Greeks give it a separate deity, and own brother of Jove? Surely all this is not without meaning. And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all. (M-D, pp. 25-26)

Readers may remember that Zweig sees nothing mystical in Ishmael's version of the myth, but he recognizes that its basic source is the gnostic literature of the ancient world.¹⁸ Besides recognizing its references to gnostic metaphysics and mysticism, however, one can be more specific and say that its most basic source is the gnostic version of the Narcissus myth. Consider the parallels. Ishmael's myth assumes a pre-cosmic fall but alludes to the gnostic drama of Creation and the

Fall via its symbolism of reflection (mirrors) and a god-figure drowning in its own lower "Nature." Identified as a double entity, an "ungraspable image," and "life," the quest object of the Narcissus figure in Ishmael's myth is portrayed as the gnostic concept of the fallen god-head. It is depicted as the androgynous or double "image" or Thought of the Unknown God, who is otherwise known as Life, and is the distorted reflection or estranged form of the unknown, Narcissus-like deity himself.

Other parallels exist between the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer as it is expressed in Book I of the Hermetic Corpus and Ishmael's myth of Narcissus. A second one concerns the motive ascribed to the Narcissus figure for the Fall in these two works. As is the case with the Narcissus-like Primal Man of the Hermetic Corpus, expressed absolutely, Ishmael's Narcissus figure falls because he desires to redeem the fallen god-head. To do this he must comprehend or "know" the Self which is Life, the universal mother and world-Soul, and the highest Truth of gnosis, which exists in the depths of Life, such as that the Unknown God in any of its forms or conditions is not to be known in any dogmatic way. Ishmael's Narcissus figure falls because of a desire to "grasp," as Ishmael says, the "deeper . . . meaning" of his own estranged, paradoxical "image," which is "ungraspable." That this motive alludes to the main tenets of gnostic religiosity is clarified below.

Like the gnostic version of the Narcissus myth, Ishmael's myth portrays the death of a god-like figure who is identified as the prototype of the species, man. The "we ourselves" of Ishmael's myth are portrayed as mirror images and fragments of the reflective, Narcissus-Man. With this symbolism, Melville indicates that the presumed oppo-

sites of man and God are radically identical in essence although not in degree, thereby implying as well that all presumed opposites are essentially one divine, ineffable unity. These ideas are gnostic theological and anthropological tenets. Moreover, Book I of the Hermetic Corpus and Ishmael's myth of Narcissus both specify that not only the potential gnostic redeemer is man (Man), and both provide information about the way to obtain the higher consciousness (A=B yet A≠B).

Ishmael's myth indicates that the fallen, "ignorant" individuals who comprise the species man (and are represented by "the healthy robust boy with the healthy robust soul in him") are to save the drowned Man and make him whole again in them. Through its symbolism of mirrors and reflection, polar opposites, inversion, and depth, Ishmael's myth follows Book I of the Hermetic Corpus in that it suggests that attaining self (Self)-integration has to do with reflection or meditation, comprehending the double nature of the self (Self), overcoming a narrow dualism and the guilty inclinations of the soul (Soul), learning that the self (Self), as manifest in man or nature, is ultimately unknowable, and attaining balance in a context of freedom.

Yet one more important parallel exists between the gnostic version of the Narcissus myth and Ishmael's myth of Narcissus. This is that both convey in a condensed, "secret" way the entire context of gnosis to one who already knows the main tenets of gnosticism. From Jonas one learns that a formulaic, secret, elliptical style is characteristic of the gnostic literature of the ancient world.¹⁹ Ishmael's assertion "This is the key to it all" is intended to hint to his readers that his myth of Narcissus could be expounded on at great length. However, at the same time that he deliberately leaves the question of the antecedent

to the pronoun "this" open, he indicates that the phrase "the ungraspable phantom of life" is a favored antecedent. With this technique, he emphasizes the gnostic doctrines of the psycho-spiritual nature of reality and a negative theology which are expressed in the phrase "the ungraspable phantom of life."

The polemical implications of Ishmael's cryptic and elliptical version of the myth of the Narcissus-like potential gnostic redeemer leads one to expect that the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer informs Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick at the level of "experienced landscape" in regard to the aforementioned respects of characterization, image patterns, and plot. Chiefly because the protagonists of these works are portrayed as attaining a permanently transformed consciousness, these three works are discussed separately from "Benito Cereno," "Bartleby," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd."

Tommo, the central character of Melville's first novel, Typee, is characterized at the level of the narrative's "experienced landscape" as a symbol of the potential gnostic redeemer. He is portrayed as an unknown, Narcissus-like reformer-savior figure who is willing and elected by the Unknown God to sacrifice himself for a "knowledge" of the impaired world-Soul that will allow him to attain wholeness and reform the fallen world. An episode that deals with Tommo's and Toby's downward journey into the dark valley inhabited by cannibals suggests his divine election as well as the transcendent, other-worldly aspect of his nature. When Tommo and Toby, in effect, arrive from another world in this valley, Tommo's intuition tells him that the natives who surround them are the dreaded Typees rather than the less feared Happars. Being a "point . . . of vital importance," it is an intuition that saves their

lives (T, pp. 50, 71). Shortly before this event, the protagonist is portrayed as suspecting that a "design" is operating to direct the course of his life (T, p. 54).

This episode indicates that an unknown, transrational power is secretly directing the path of the Christian-minded Tommo's activities. According to Pagels, the gnostics of the ancient world ascribed to the belief that ultimately the Unknown God "directs all in the universe."²⁰ When one considers this episode in relation to Tommo's subsequent characterization as a Christ-figure, in that he is portrayed as a light (-skinned), "other-worldly" man who may be sacrificed and ritually consumed in a benighted world, one perceives that because this episode suggests that he is chosen by an unknown, hidden power to play a special role in life, it helps serve to characterize him as the divinely elected potential gnostic savior. Melville also employs the device of not telling his readers his protagonist's "real" name to further relate "Tommo" to the archetypal son of the Unknown God. However, the protagonist's "double" name may be reference to the apostle Judas Thomas and another clue that he symbolizes the potential Illuminator.

According to Jonas one of the most outstanding versions of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer is found in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostle Thomas. This version is known today among gnostic scholars as the "Hymn of the Pearl," but "in the Acts themselves it is headed 'Song of the Apostle Judas Thomas in the land of the Indians.'" Jonas adds that it was "supposed to have been composed when he [Thomas] was imprisoned" in India.²¹

The protagonist Tommo thinks of the South Sea natives, whose prisoner he is, as "Indians," and he introduces them to singing (T, pp. 124,

196; 226-28). From Pagels the reader learns that the ancient gnostics held that when one attains gnosis he is said to have become one of "'the sons of interior knowledge,'" and he is empowered "to speak . . . his own name, "which is "not . . . [his] ordinary name, but [his] true identity."²² Tommo does not tell the Typees his ordinary name but gives them one of his own choosing, which is a variant of the name Thomas and like the name Judas Thomas is "double" (T, p. 72). Moreover, after Tommo escapes from the Typees, he writes Typee, which is an account of his experience as a captive among these "Indians." Such parallels between the apocryphal Acts of the Apostle Thomas and the protagonist and fictional author of Typee suggest that the ancient text may be a source for Typee and that Tommo's symbolic and mythical identity is that of the potential gnostic teacher of Wisdom.

While the episode describing Tommo's entry into the fallen world of the Typees, his subsequent characterization as a Christ-figure, and the symbolic implications of his name provide a lot of evidence that Melville intends for his readers to perceive that the protagonist of his first novel symbolizes the potential gnostic savior, another episode serves to make this same point even more clearly. This episode occurs at the beginning of the novel's account of the protagonist's "experienced landscape." While still on board the whaleship the Dolly, Tommo is described as envisioning his quest object, the world of Typee, Faya-way, and Marnoo, as an abstract idea, a female, dream-like world which he desires to "know," and a golden treasure. Moreover, in this same episode Tommo is identified with several esoteric terms and images which link him to the Illuminator.

As the following quotations indicate, Tommo is portrayed as re-en-

acting the gnostic drama of Creation, which also begins the story of the Fall, and thus is characterized as a Narcissus-like deity of gnostic speculation whose desire to "know" connotes guilty and pure impulses. "Oh! for a refreshing glimpse of one blade of grass--for a sniff at the fragrance of a handful of loamy earth," says the sea-weary Tommo. And then quite suddenly, "Strange visions . . . spirit up! Naked houris--cannibal banquets--groves of cocoanut . . . and human sacrifices." And so, feeling an "irresistible curiosity to see those islands" about which little is "known," this young Ishmael follows "in the watery path of Mendanna, cruising in quest of some region of gold," and finds the queen-like Marquesas islands "sprung up like a scene of enchantment, and a . . . bright dream" (T, pp. 3,5).

Shortly after this act of reflection, in which Tommo is portrayed as projecting his dream vision out of his consciousness, a rebellious Tommo who wants freedom and a god-like plenitude, rejects the fallen world of his ship and begins his journey into the "obscurity" of the emerald heart of the island of Nukuheva (T, p. 5). He takes with him a fellow shipmate, Toby, who is described as resembling Tommo closely. "Like [him]" Toby is "one of that class of rovers you sometimes meet at sea, who never reveal their origin, never allude to home, and go ramb-ling over the world as if pursued by some mysterious fate they cannot possibly elude" (T, p. 32).

The symbolism of reflection and mirrors, male and female polar opposites who are yet identical in essence, and the gold of hidden treasure and the themes of Narcissus, curiosity, rebellion, reformation, freedom, and exile in the episode that portrays Tommo envisioning his quest object and then beginning his pursuit of it (her), serve to define

this divinely-directed stranger Tommo as the Narcissus-like potential gnostic redeemer. In the portrayal of Tommo as a Narcissus figure whose desire to "know" a symbolically female dream-world first leads to his "death" in a demonic Nature, one sees that the opening chapters of Typee describe him in terms corresponding with those which Ishmael uses to characterize his mythic Narcissus figure. In both instances, the Narcissus figure's act of self-mirroring leads to his captivity in his own lower nature (Life).

Some of the other images and terms in this episode that link Tommo with the potential gnostic savior include the "stranger" of unknown "origin" and the word "home." Speaking of the gnostic savior in the abstract, Jonas says, "the savior from the beginning of time wanders in different forms through history, himself exiled in the world, and revealing himself ever anew. To redeem that part of himself (the Soul) once lost to the world, . . . he . . . must become a stranger in the land of darkness." The question of the "origin" or "home" of this figure, Jonas notes, refers to his identity with the transcendent, Unknown God--the masculo-feminine dyad--and to the eschatological doctrines of gnosticism.²³

In Mardi, Melville's third novel, readers are given to know that Taji's willing descent into the fallen world of Mardi is a result of divine election by the Unknown God. Taji, like Tommo, is portrayed as a rebellious Narcissus figure who, before his descent into the world of Mardi, Yillah, and Babalanja, envisions this world, in an act of reflection, as a female, dream-like entity and golden treasure that he desires to "know."

In the first chapter, "Foot in Stirrup," when the young American

sailor Taji learns that the captain of the Arcturion is going into northern waters to hunt the right whale rather than stay in southern waters around the equator and hunt the sperm whale, Taji decides to reject the whaleship. He considers the hunt for the right whale "degrading" and the hunt for the sperm whale poetic, valorous, and mystical (M, p. 6). In this "willful mood," Taji, sending his "spirit" before him, begins to have "visions" of a world which is "invested with all the charms of dream-land."²⁴ The "visions" are of an Oriental kingdom which lies in an evening sky "high piled with gold and crimson clouds." Seeing this Eastern realm, he can hear the "voices of maidens." His dream image arouses him so intensely that his "desire to quit the Arcturion" and to "know" this sensual, female-like entity becomes "little short of a frenzy" (M, pp. 7-8).

With this act, Taji, like the young American sailor Tommo, is portrayed as repeating the gnostic drama of creation and as beginning the process whereby he transforms into a symbol of the Soul in need of salvation. This is to say, with its symbolism, that he is characterized as the potential Illuminator. Besides depicting both Tommo and Taji as re-enacting the gnostic drama of creation, Melville employs the devices that he uses to portray Tommo as the potential gnostic redeemer to identify Taji as the same symbolic figure. One concerns the implications of Taji's name, which, like that of protagonist of Typee, is not his "real" name. With this technique, Melville continues to associate his protagonist with the unknown and to make the question of his identity an important one. However, Taji's name, like that of Tommo, does have symbolic meanings that point to his metaphysical identity with the archetypal figure of the fully enlightened spiritual master of gnosis.

According to Finklestein, the word taj in Arabic means crown.²⁵ The word crown is a public symbol of mastery, divine election, kingdom, and consciousness. From Halevi one learns that in the Cabala the first emanation of the divine "Nothing," the Unknown God, is termed "crown." It signifies the Divine Mind and is the only hypostasis of the Abyss that fully possesses the gnosis of the All.²⁶ Moreover, in the "Hymn of the Pearl," the potential gnostic redeemer is the divine son of the King and Queen of the Pleroma, the acosmic gnostic heaven which is identified with the Self-Integrated Androgyne.²⁷ Thus, Taji's name contributes to his characterization as the potential gnostic Illuminator and foreshadows his successful attainment of the balanced, higher consciousness.

Besides providing his first two protagonists with names that relate them to the unknown, Self-Integrated Androgyne who is the highest god-head in gnostic belief, Melville depicts both as rebelling against a fallen or deteriorating, "empty" world that is portrayed as a whaleship, and in each case, this event occurs before the protagonists' descent into the world which is their quest object. Another common feature of these two protagonists' characterization is that both are portrayed as transcendent, god-men who, in effect, come from another world into the world which is their quest object, and, like Tommo, Taji is threatened with death in this realm of Being. Moreover, Taji resembles Tommo in that he, too, is a rover and a wanderer. With these image patterns, Melville identifies Taji as the same symbolic and mythical entity as Tommo--the potential gnostic redeemer, who is both willed and willing to risk his life to become a fully enlightened savior and illuminate the fallen world.

While there are a great many similarities between Typee and Mardi

in regard to the way in which the protagonist is characterized as the divinely elected potential Illuminator, there are also differences between these two works in this respect. The primary one is that Mardi is even more direct than Typee about the protagonist's special status. For example, in the same portion of the novel in which Taji's projection of his female-like quest object out of his consciousness is recorded, readers learn that Taji's decision to reject the increasingly empty vessel of the Spirit, the Arcturion, at the deepest level of its symbolism reflects his desire to attain wholeness and to become the special god-man who can enlighten the Void, as the fallen world is termed in the literature of ancient gnosticism (M, p. 6).

This idea is conveyed in the narrative by the equation which it establishes between Taji's quest for the oil or light of the Sperm whale and his search for the world of Mardi and the golden, dream-woman Yillah. This equation is established by the protagonist's revelation that the quest for the sperm whale symbolizes the effort to become "the brain [that] enlightens the world"; and by his subsequent statement that his quest for another world involves his desire to unite with his "soul" mate (M, p. 3,4).

Such symbolism refers to the gnostic soteriological doctrine that attaining wholeness is a psychological and metaphysical metaphor for attaining enlightenment. This symbolism, therefore, rather directly characterizes the protagonist Taji as the special individual who is willing and willed by the Unknown God to risk his life to follow the way of "knowledge" (gnosis) and to become an Illuminator in relation to the fallen Thought of God. Moreover, the early portion of the narrative, which details the meaning of the protagonist's quest, reinforces the

idea of his divine election in two more ways. One consists of associating Taji with the divinely chosen Jonah. Serving to link Taji with Christian gnosticism as well, the device used is the identification of the world of Mardi and Yillah with the city of Ninevah (M, p. 8).

Another episode in the novel which occurs while Taji and his companion, the old Viking turned orthodox Christian, Jarl, are on the open seas in quest of Taji's dream-world further identifies Taji as the divinely elected reformer-savior figure. In this episode, Taji is related to the gnostic Jesus. Taji simply says that his search to comprehend his quest object is based on the desire to preserve "all the mysteries in the Pentateuch" but strip them of "'Vulgar Errors'" (M, p. 39). This remark alludes to the idea that the fully enlightened gnostic savior functions as a destroyer of "ignorance." Moreover, it reminds one of the gnostic image of Jesus as a "purifying" Word or eternal principle of enlightenment. Using one ancient Christian gnostic text, Pagels illustrates this feature of the gnostic concept of Jesus. Her citation reads: "'The Word of the Father goes forth into the all . . . purifying it, bringing it back into the Father, into the Mother, Jesus of the infiniteness of gentleness.'"²⁸ The image of the gnostic savior as a dynamic Word relates as well to the portrayal of Taji as a wanderer and rover.

In Moby-Dick, Melville's sixth novel, the idea that the protagonist Ishmael is divinely elected to descend into the world of the sea and the whale is conveyed at the level of the narrative's "recollected landscape" directly by the storyteller Ishmael. In "Loomings," the mature Ishmael tells his readers that when he went to sea he was suffering under "the delusion that it was choice resulting from [his] own unbiased free will

and discriminating judgment." Now, however, he realizes that his "going on this whaling voyage . . . formed part of the grand programme of Providence" (M-D, p.2). However, Moby-Dick, like Typee and Mardi, conveys this idea at the level of the "experienced landscape" by identifying the protagonist Ishmael as an unknown, Narcissus-like savior-reformer who descends into the world of his quest object because he desires to "know" it and the secret wisdom that it can teach.

In the Preface to Moby-Dick, which consists of two sets of twin and opposite passages, "Etymology (Supplied by a Late Consumptive Usher to a Grammar School.)," "Etymology," "Extracts (Supplied by a Sub-Sub-Librarian)," and "Extracts," the protagonist is implied to seek out the "pale Usher" and "the poor devil of a Sub-Sub" because he desires to "know" the esoteric meaning of the phrase the word whale. The phrase operates as a metaphor for gnostic symbolic terms such as the Word of Light or the Word of Life, and the phrase itself may designate either the perfected or impaired god-head. As readers recall, in Chapter 96 (XCVI), "The Try-Works," the whale is identified with "bible leaves," which is to say, words of light (M-D, p. 537). The formal structure of the Preface is a reference to the cosmological symbolism of gnosticism. It expresses the idea that the Unknown God emanates or generates itself by means of sets of twin and opposite energies. The implication of all this symbolism is that the protagonist Ishmael represents the divinely elected potential Word of Light--the gnostic savior who is to enlighten that with which he is essentially identical.

In the first chapter of Moby-Dick, gnostic cosmological symbolism is used again to suggest that the water-gazer Ishmael is the special individual who is willed and is willing to become the Narcissus-like

Illuminator of gnostic belief. In it, Ishmael, like his antecedents Tommo and Taji, is portrayed as having a vision of his quest object, which is described as a symbolic analogue of Tommo's and Taji's quest objects. However, Ishmael is indicated to take a more passive role in relation to his quest object than either Tommo or Taji. This passive role, as is explained momentarily, confirms that at the deepest level of the symbolism, Ishmael's quest object is a "pre-cosmic" projection of his god-like consciousness (in his symbolic and mythical identity he is a mirror image of the Unknown God).

The passage in which Ishmael is portrayed as playing an active-passive double role in relation to his quest object (it seeks him, and he envisions it) involves a discussion of Ishmael's reasons for going to sea to hunt the whale. Related as a past event by the storyteller Ishmael, the passage reads:

Chief among these motives was the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused all my curiosity. Then the wild and distant seas where he rolled his island bulk; the undeliverable, nameless perils of the whale; these, with all the attending marvels of a thousand Pantagonian sights and sounds, helped sway me to my wish. With other men, perhaps, such things would not have been inducements; but as for me, I am tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote. I love to sail forbidden seas, and land on barbarous coasts.

By reason of these things, then, the whaling voyage was welcome; the great flood-gates of the wonder world swung open, and in the wild conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two there floated into my inmost soul, endless processions of the whale, and, mid most of them all, one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air. (M-D, pp. 29-30)

This passage indicates that the quest object, which the younger Ishmael is being sought by and is envisioning prior to his encounter with it, is a mental construct, an androgynous but symbolically female entity, and a world that contains the gold of a "forbidden" knowledge.

It shows that the protagonist represents the Narcissus-like potential gnostic redeemer. That his quest object is an abstract idea or thought--an immaterial or mental entity--is evidenced by the specification that it is an "idea." That it is an androgynous but symbolically female entity is communicated by describing it as a dyad of masculine and feminine energies. It is the whale (m.) and the sea (f.) which "[rouses]" the protagonist's "curiosity." That it is the site of a valuable secret wisdom is expressed by one of the obvious themes of the passage: the desire to "know" the whale and the sea and the identification of the word "forbidden" with the quest object. Thus, one perceives that the quest object is identified with a forbidden knowledge.

In particular, the word forbidden lends a gnostic metaphysical and psychological meaning to Ishmael's quest. This word reminds one that popular interpretations of the biblical account of the Fall involve the idea of a rebellion in the name of man's desire to be God, to know good and evil, to experience sex, and to attain eternal life. However, as is typical of the gnostic imagination, Ishmael's desire for a forbidden knowledge inverts the values of the popular interpretations of the biblical account of the Fall.²⁹

In it, the protagonist Ishmael is implied to condone or be receptive to the gnostic idea that man in his true self is identical with God. Moreover, like a gnostic adept, he is suggested to justify rebellion and sensuality as part of a way to discover the true self (Self). And the passage hints that whether or not one obtains eternal life depends on the discovery of this self (Self). Gold being a symbol of the eternal, the reader perceives that this passage at the deepest and most hidden level of its symbolism identifies Ishmael's quest object

with gold or hidden treasure. Recognizing that Ishmael's quest object is described in precisely the same terms as the quest objects of Tommo and Taji when they are portrayed as imagining them, one surmises that he, like them, is a symbol of the potential gnostic redeemer.

The gnostic symbolic implications of the second part of this passage provide additional evidence that the protagonist Ishmael is destined to become the fully enlightened gnostic Word of Wisdom. Certainly it puts him in the classic role of the gnostic adept seeking "knowledge" (gnosis), the personal, immediate goal of which is the recovery or stabilization of the gnosis of one's true, metaphysical self. To understand the logic of this assertion, readers first need more information about the imagery connected with the female aspect of the deity in gnostic mythos.

The second part of the passage which records Ishmael projecting and receiving a vision of the whale is the portion that images the whale as "one grand hooded phantom" centered among infinite sets of twins. This image appears to be and is a reference to the whale as the Unknown God. The whale is portrayed as a mysterious One who transcends as well as generates infinite sets of twins. However, while the "one grand hooded phantom" is a symbol of the Unknown God, according to gnostic mythos, it is actually the universal mother and demiurgical world-Soul. The female aspect of the deity "contains" the highest god-head, the Truth, in its depths; and, it is a distorted mirror image of the androgynous deity. Therefore, on one level of the symbolism connected with it, the fallen world-Soul can represent the highest god-head.

Pagels's discussion of the female aspect of the deity in ancient gnostic literature provides more evidence that Ishmael's quest object

represents the gnostic concept of the fallen world-Soul. Moreover, her description of the cosmological symbolism of the Valentinian gnostics reveals the probable source of the protagonist's image of Moby Dick and the sea as the demiurgical universal mother (father)--the Thought, dream, or reflection of the Narcissus-like deity, Man.

In this literature, the female aspect of the god-head, Silence, to quote Pagel's paraphrase of one text, even while contained in the Depth-- the Father--"receives, as in a womb, the seed of the Ineffable Source," which is "the Depth, the Primal Father," and "from this she brings forth all the emanations of divine being, ranged in harmonious pairs of masculine and feminine energies."³⁰ As Ishmael's "one grand hooded phantom" is portrayed as bringing forth the sets of twins who revolve around it, his imagery implies that it represents the androgynous universal mother (father) and that the "seed" is hidden in it.³¹

The subsequent portion of Pagels' discussion of the terms and images which accrue to the female aspect of the god-head and the treatment accorded this symbolic entity by the gnostics in the early Christian era serves to verify that the meditative, visionary, i.e. Narcissus-like, Ishmael symbolizes the gnostic deity in its soteriological aspect. Her discussion appears to explain the esoteric meaning of Ishmael's experience of the whale and its infinite offspring swimming into his "inmost soul" (M-D, p. 30).

After explaining that the universal mother is not only identified as Thought, Nature, Life, Church, and Wisdom but also as "Grace," which in Greek is rendered as "the feminine term charis," Pagels cites one text in which a gnostic prophet and visionary, Marcus, "calls himself the 'womb' and 'recipient of Silence' (as she is of the Father)." In

this text, Marcus calls upon the universal mother in the following way: "May She who is before all things, the incomprehensible and indescribable Grace, fill you within, and increase in you her own knowledge."³²

Since the whale and its infinite progeny are portrayed as "[floating]" into Ishmael's inner self (Self), one cannot help but be struck by the remarkable parallels between this imagery and that of the gnostic text in which the universal world-Soul is invited into the gnostic adept's inner being (M-D, p. 30). Clearly, the implication is not only that the protagonist Ishmael is intended by Melville to be thought of as the potential gnostic savior but also that with this image he is foreshadowed to be successful in his efforts.

The consistency with which Melville portrays his protagonists as symbolic entities is yet another reason to recognize that Ishmael, like Tommo and Taji, is the Narcissus-like reformer and spiritual master of gnostic belief who is destined to re-enact in large measure the fall of the Soul before he can with full authority illuminate the dark world. In "Loomings," the exiled wanderer Ishmael is identified with the unknown by Melville's persistent habit of making his protagonist's identity a mystery. However, just as the names Tommo and Taji appear to function as their protagonists' "true" spiritual names, so does the name Ishmael in regard to the protagonist of Moby-Dick.

The name Ishmael connotes an exile and a wanderer who is associated with Egypt, an Egyptian mother, that which is devalued but will come into its own, and the dark, pagan East, all of which make it imminently suitable for a character who represents "the stranger" and "the solitary [one]" of gnostic mythos. In regard to the important question of Ishmael's "origin" and identity, readers should know that, according to

Yates, Egypt is traditionally considered the "home of all knowledge" and gnosis.³³ Nonetheless, Ishmael is of course a biblical name. Therefore, it contributes to symbolism in the novel which portrays Ishmael as a Christian gnostic.

Another point of correspondence between Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael is that all, more or less directly, are identified with the God-chosen Jonah. However, Ishmael is more emphatically identified with this inspired reformer than either of his brothers. And this association, too, serves to suggest the Christian gnostic bias of his vision.

The symbolism has been pointed out as serving to designate the protagonists Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael as figures representing the potential Illuminator. Another device used by Melville to accomplish the same purpose is the portrayal of this protagonist and his quest object as polar opposites while identifying both with the important gnostic symbolic term the Alien Light or its variants.

To emphasize the principle of non-identity and the concept of dualism (A≠B), Melville, in a qualified way, assigns his protagonists and their quest objects different characteristics and qualities. In Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick, the protagonist, a young American, on one level of the symbolism connected with him, is identified more emphatically than his quest object with the white civilized Christian West and thus with masculinity and the Western rational consciousness. The quest objects of these protagonists always are identified emphatically with the dark, pagan, barbaric, "cannibalistic" East, the highest Truth of gnosis, and the "female" mythic, magical, and mystical consciousness.

This symbolism of polar opposites implies a higher unity. To express the principle of identity and the concept of unity (A=B) as well

as reveal the specifically gnostic religious nature of his symbolism, Melville not only always makes sure that to some degree the characteristics and qualities assigned to one unit in his set of polar opposites are associated with the other, but also, and most important of all, he associates both with the gnostic symbolic term the Alien Life (= the Alien Light = The Alien Man).

From Jonas one gains an idea of the import of this term. Like all gnostic terms and images, says Jonas, the term the Alien Light can refer to the highest god-head, the gnostic savior, or the fallen world-Soul. In other words, it can refer to the deity in its ideal form at the same time that it refers to the Spirit in its impaired condition. But, he adds, as a "primary symbol of gnosticism," it is most frequently used to refer to the gnostic savior, who represents the "'Great Life'" in its soteriological aspect; but, even when it is identified with the fallen world-Soul, it conveys the secrets of gnosis.³⁴

The term the Alien Man or its alternatives allude to the gnostic soteriological doctrine that the transcendent, highest god-head is identical with the innermost, metaphysical ego. The gnostics believe that this spiritual soul survives death. Jonas notes that references to this term involve not only the concept of self-integration, but also metaphors of home, origin, identity, wandering, and fate. Those who "know" their "inmost self" are considered saved in this world. They know their role in life and are assured of salvation after death. He specifies that the term, the Alien Man, may function as an eschatological doctrine. As such, it refers to the acosmic heaven of gnostic belief. After numerous reincarnations the purified pneumatic or spiritual soul may exist for an aeon in a balanced condition of freedom,

harmony, joy, and peace.³⁵

To express these doctrines, Melville uses a combination of direct and indirect means and links the protagonist and the quest object(s) of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael with the term the Alien Light or its variants. For example, in Moby-Dick, the name Ishmael signifies the Alien Man. Moby Dick is identified with this term in the chapter "Schools and Schoolmasters." In it, the subject of the "secludedness and isolation" of "all aged Sperm Whales" is discussed, and the point is made that an old "solitary Leviathan" is spoken of as "a lone whale" (M-D, p. 505). As the whale functions as a metaphor for light, one perceives that the whale as a symbolic entity is intended to be identified with the esoteric term the Alien Light.

By virtue of the fact that all of Melville's protagonists are portrayed as symbols of polar opposites, the one being most emphatically identified with the white civilized Christian West and the other with the dark, pagan, barbaric East, they are always both indirectly identified with the term the Alien Life or one of its variants. In other words, when the protagonist is identified with one set of characteristics and qualities and the quest object with an opposing set, the protagonist's descent into the fallen world, which is his quest object, automatically insures that he is the Alien Man in relation to it, and it is the Alien Man or Alien Life in relation to him. All of the protagonists of Melville's major works and their quest objects are identified with and differentiated from one another by means of this symbolic term and the aforementioned content. This is illustrated in some detail in the next chapter in this discussion.

By characterizing the white Christian Westerners Tommo, Taji, and

Ishmael as divinely elected Narcissus figures, saviors, reformers, visionaries, exiles, rovers, aliens, and rebels who descend into a dark, barbaric world, Melville indicates that they represent a gnostic symbolic and mythical entity--the potential Alien Man. If one accepts the theory that these characters are intended to represent this figure, then one must acknowledge that the quest objects of these protagonists represent the gnostic concept of the fallen world-Soul, which, despite its imperfections, contains in its depths the highest Truth of gnosis about the inner luminous self (Self).

Evidence to this effect has been presented by demonstrating that before these protagonists descend into the worlds which their quest objects symbolize, they envision their quest objects as an abstract idea, a female-like dream realm, and a precious treasure. However, to verify the symbolic and mythical identity of Tommo's, Taji's, and Ishmael's quest object(s), it is helpful to point out in more detail that they are characterized as gnostic symbols of the state of self (Self)-division, Ignorance, and Error. Setting forth some of the symbolism connected with this concept will help readers understand this part of the discussion.

From Jonas' discussion of the gnostic concept of the fallen god-head, the following list of terms and images is drawn up. Terms which are metaphors for the fallen world-Soul include "Inn," "Void," "shadow," "dark light," "Ignorance," "Error," and the impaired Alien Light. A symbolism of dualism, hierarchy, prisons, oppression, wrath, appetite, beasts, greed, sleep, egotism, intoxication, orgies, imbalance, war, emptiness, and darkness, says Jonas, mark an entity in this literature as one which is identified with the fallen Spirit.³⁶

Because the quest objects of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael are characterized as the gnostic concept of the state of Ignorance (the world-Soul), they also are identified with the gnostic concept of the highest Truth, which is necessary to complete the process of self (Self)-integration, "knowledge," and enlightenment. As readers have learned or may surmise, a symbolism of gold, jewels, secrecy, buried treasure, royalty, perfume, mildness, sparks, mirrors, lamps, freedom, individualism, balance, and harmony designates this perfected condition of the Spirit.³⁷ A closer examination of the quest objects of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael indicates that because they are portrayed as the fallen world-Soul, they are also treated as the vehicles or receptacles of the jewel(s) of the highest Truth of gnosis.

The golden treasure world of Typee, Fayaway, and Marnoo is portrayed as a symbol of the Self-Divided Androgyne. It is a dark, pagan, Eastern realm where "sleep" is the main activity, Darkness holds the "light" captive, cannibalism is practiced, and war is a part of life (T, pp. 82, 238). Ironically enough, in the chapter "Gayla Costume," the world of Typee is identified with a pyramid of "empty" gourds or vessels which resemble "skulls" (T, p. 160). With this symbolism, Melville describes Tommo's quest object as the fallen god-head, the "shadow," "'dark light,'" or Void of gnostic belief, and he expresses the dualist's moral vision. However, there is a higher truth about reality which does not negate its ills but transcends them.

Despite the fallen nature of the world of Typee, it is depicted as a symbol of self (Self)-integration and balance. This world contains the self-integrated, masculo-feminine man, Marnoo, whose cheek is of "feminine softness" but who resembles a young "Apollo" (T, p. 136). It

contains the jewel-like, paradoxically blue-eyed, olive-skinned Fayaway, whose "unfathomable" eyes and name suggest the unknown (the far away) (T, p. 86). And despite this world's fallen nature, it is a joyous condition of the Spirit in which freedom and order, to a great degree, are harmoniously reconciled, and the polar opposites, men and women, live in peace with one another. After a few weeks among the Typees, Tommo begins to think of their home as the "'Happy Valley'" (T, p. 124). Before Tommo is saved from this threatening but beautiful realm of Being, he discovers some of the other "gold" that it contains.

While Tommo is a captive of the Typees, he is exposed to the old pantheistic view, which is incorporated in monadic Christian and pagan forms of ancient gnosticism, that life is a "cannibalistic" round of the self-consuming Word. "I will be consumed, and I will consume," says the gnostic Jesus in a passage which was deleted from the Acts of John at the Council of Nicaea.³⁸ One episode in Typee which portrays Tommo's participation in the natives' holy meal of multicolored and tiny "golden-hued" raw fish marks his "gathering in" or assimilation and acceptance of this gnostic doctrine. It implies the mystical identity of antagonistic opposites, such as Tommo and the natives represent, and it illustrates the claim that the fallen world of Typee contains the "gold" of the higher Wisdom of gnosis (T, p. 208). The Typee's sacramental meal of tiny fish takes place at midnight on the beach. During this feast, a strict rule of equality prevails (T, p. 207). When the protagonist first witnesses this event, he is shocked and repulsed by its cannibalistic nature. But he comes to perceive the ritual as a "moving illumination" and "to positively . . . relish" the fish (T, p. 208).

The specification that at this meal an almost perfect equality must

prevail and the implications of Tommo's participation in this event signify that in this episode, a "sacred marriage" or reconciliation of opposites is occurring whereby the hunted--Tommo--and the hunter--the Typees--affirm their fundamental unity and divinity. Moreover, the symbolism of gold, harmony, and wholeness point to the gnostic doctrine about the inner luminous self (Self) as representing the highest Truth of gnosis. Considering the above on Tommo's characterization as a transcendent, light-skinned man from another world who risks being sacrificed and ritually consumed by the Typees while he is their captive, one surmises that in this episode Melville is voicing a sincere belief in Christian gnostic tenets and portraying both Tommo and his quest object, the world of the Typees, as only different forms of the one divine Word of Light. Melville's sense of humor and his loyalty to his beliefs is illustrated by the fact that the hunted Moby Dick is likened to a "small gold-fish" by Starbuck (M-D, p. 228).

The narrative provides more evidence that the fallen world of Typee contains the jewel(s) of the highest Truths of "knowledge" (gnosis). It suggests that the protagonist learns about--or rather remembers--the doctrine of a negative theology while he is there.

Having a lot of opportunity to observe the Typee's religious symbols and practices while he is a pampered captive among them, Tommo surmises that the Typees worship God in two different images. Some prefer to worship "an ill-favored god with a large bottle nose and fat shapless arms crossed upon his breast; . . . [but] others worship an image, which, having no likeness either in heaven or on earth, could hardly be called an idol" (T, p. 171). As readers should recall, the Unknown God of gnosticism is the Other to everything known even while it

is manifest as the "known," and all the terms and images that are employed to describe it are to be understood as simply various approaches to the Truth. Consequently, readers should recognize in the Typees' religious beliefs a reference to the gnostic doctrine of a negative theology.

The world of Mardi is identified with the complex of symbols and special terms that refer to the gnostic concept of the fallen Soul. It is an oppressive power structure marked by rigidity, hierarchicalism, and dualism. Moreover, despite its veneer of sophistication and asceticism, it is barbaric and sensual. The world of Mardi is a condition of the Spirit which is virtually devoid of freedom, individualism, and equality or wholeness. This substantial but decidedly mental and spiritual void, however, is also a world that is identified with flowers, perfumes, jewels, treasure. It contains the golden, dream woman Yillah, who is the luminous, rose-colored pearl, and holds her captive in the Soul's innermost, secret depths. The symbol of a pearl, and particularly a lost pearl, is an extremely important one in the gnostic literature of the ancient world; therefore, the lost Yillah of the world of Mardi points to the gnostic metaphysical identity of Taji's quest object as the fallen world-Soul.

According to Jonas, "In the glossary of gnostic symbolism, 'pearl' is one of the standing metaphors for the 'soul' in the supernatural sense." Noting that some of the variant terms for the pearl include 'the luminous nature,' and "'luminous self,'" Jonas specifies that this "inner principle" is the "non-mundane center of the individual ego," which is identical with the "highest god-head."³⁹ Then he speaks about its special status "in the glossary of gnostic symbolism" in the follow-

ing way. He says that this metaphor is "more of a secret name than . . . a direct term of . . . enumeration" and adds:

It also stands in a category by itself by singling out one particular aspect, or metaphysical condition, of . . . [the] transcendent principle. Whereas almost all the other [gnostic symbolic images and terms] can apply equally to divinity unimpaired and to its sunken part, the 'pearl' denotes specifically the latter in the fate that has overtaken it. The 'pearl' is⁴⁰ essentially the 'lost' pearl, and has to be retrieved.

Babalanja, who is a form of the god-like Taji's creative energy and the protagonist Taji's primary "mask" during the hunt for Yillah, makes a comment while he accompanies Taji on the quest for the lost pearl Yillah, which supports the theory that Taji's quest object, the world of Mardi and Yillah, represents the gnostic concept of the fallen world-Soul, which contains the gold of the highest Truth of gnosis.

In Mardi, the episode that illuminates the meaning of the pearl as a symbol involves the historian Mohi's "anecdote" about a messenger named Ravoo. After he tells this story, Babalanja asks him to explain its meaning. Mohi says the anecdote has no deep meaning--that it is simply "fact." When Babalanja is teased about seeing or wanting to see a metaphysical significance in everything, he defends himself by saying, "I am intent upon the essence of things; the mystery that lieth beyond; . . . that which is beneath the seeming; the precious pearl within the shaggy oyster. I probe the circle's center; I seek to evolve the inscrutable." Another aspect of Taji's energy, the poet Yoomy says "I dreamed a dream" as a comment on the argument (M, pp. 351-52).

With this symbolism, Melville defines the world of Mardi as the fallen dream of the Unknown God and the container of the "lost pearl" of self-integration or Truth. Yillah and the world of Mardi are metaphorical equivalents, but she is also a unique individual and a special

incarnation of Truth.

In the novel Mardi, Melville employs a consistent pattern of images involving jewels, mirrors, harlots, "nothing," and serpents to define the world of Mardi as the fallen Thought of the Unknown God and relate Yillah, the rose-colored pearl, to the islands of Mardi and all of their inhabitants but especially to Annatoo and Queen Hautia. When Taji, Yillah, Jarl, and Samoa are approaching the dark, pagan islands of Mardi, which are surrounded by a serpent-like reef, they see "jeweled vapors . . . hovering over [its] violet shores . . . [which make it tremble] all over with dewey sparkles" (M, p. 160).

Yillah, like her twins but inferiors Annatoo and Hautia, is identified not only as a rose-colored pearl but also as a "syren" (M, p. 147). Furthermore, she is depicted throughout much of the narrative as a serpent-like creature as well as a silent, invisible spirit in that she withdraws and disappears, becoming "nothing." Annatoo is defined in the same, but grosser, terms as Yillah. When Taji first sees Annatoo, she is "one blaze of brass." Around her neck she wears "goodly bunches of "glass beads" (M, p. 75). Because Annatoo on occasions withdraws and disappears, apparently coiling up in the hold of the Parki "like a garter snake," Taji thinks of her as a "syren" and a "silent and invisible . . . spirit" (M, pp. 102, 110).

Another of Yillah's mirror images who is, nonetheless, less pure than Yillah, is the great cosmic rebel, Queen Hautia. Like Yillah she also is a syren, jewel, and spirit. At the conclusion of the narrative's experienced landscape, Taji comes to the island on which she resides, which is described as "a jeweled tiara." During his encounter with her, he discovers that she has one version of the rose-colored

pearl. And when he drinks a potion made of the divine substance, light, which she gives him, Hautia stands revealed as the Shekinah--the universal mother. The lustful Hautia turns into a "glorious queen" whom "all space reflects . . . as a mirror." But then, she too "disappears" to become for a time, like Annatoo and Yillah, in the words that Ishmael uses to describe his quest object, the "ungraspable phantom of life" (M, pp. 644, 647; M-D, p. 26).

From gnostic scholars, one learns the esoteric, religious implications of this consistent pattern of images that interrelate jewels, mirrors, harlots, "nothing," and serpents. Saurat's discussion of the Cabala indicates that the cosmological theme of withdrawal is "the most characteristic of the cabalistic theories."⁴¹ Explaining why the term "the Void" is used in the tradition of the Cabala to refer to the universe or the world, Halevi says that, in its cosmology, the "Absolute Nothing" creating is portrayed as eternally withdrawing part of itself from itself in order "to allow . . . the mirror of existence . . . to be manifested." Nonetheless, the cosmos is held to be an emanation of the deity and, by mystics, is identified as a queen or jewel.⁴² When one considers these views and recalls as well that the cosmos as "the general Serpent" is a persistent metaphor in the gnostic literature of the ancient world, the reason that Melville creates an image pattern of serpents, mirrors, harlots, jewels, and "nothing" to describe Taji's quest object begins to become clear.

Because two other scholars indicate, in various Christian gnostic texts which date from the Graeco-Roman period, that the "lost pearl" is equated with the harlots and loose women, the "Prodigal Son," the "lost sheep," and the "lost coin" of Christian scripture and parable, one

understands more clearly why the quest object is identified as a "syren." Furthermore, this complex of symbols leads one to more evidence in the narrative that Melville intends for his readers to identify the world of Mardi and Yillah as the "lost pearl" of the Unknown God. Grant in Gnosticism and Early Christianity and John Dart in The Laughing Savior both discuss the aforementioned metaphorical equivalents of the "lost pearl." According to Dart, this symbolism has to do with the gnostic concept of "'kingdom,'" which Pagels defines as "a state of transformed consciousness."⁴³

Melville indicates in Mardi that the "lost pearl" Yillah-Mardi is a variant gnostic symbol of the lost women of the Bible, the Prodigal Son, the "lost sheep," and the "lost coin." He uses the device of a mysterious treasure chest, which is a symbol of the gnostic mythos of Creation and the Fall, to convey this complex of imagery and to hint to his readers about the metaphysical identity of Taji's quest object. While on board the Parki, Taji discovers a "queer little hair trunk" which is among Annatoo's (the fallen world-Soul's) captured possessions. Opening it, Taji discovers, "a famous lot of beads, and brass rings; while, pasted on the inside of the cover was a colored print, representing the harlots, the shameless hussies, having a fine time with the Prodigal Son" (M, pp. 59-60). The box and its contents refer to the fall of the gnostic deity into the divided, imbalanced condition of Ignorance as a result of a narrow rationalism and the guilty inclinations of the Soul, such as vanity and sensual desire.

As one might expect, particularly when one realizes that the original quest object of Tommo and Taji is a sperm whale, Ishmael's quest object, the world of Moby Dick, the sea, and all it contains, such as

Queequeg and Ahab, represents the gnostic concept of the impaired Alien Life--the fallen god-head or demiurgical world-Soul. The primary symbol of Ishmael's quest object, Moby Dick, is a whale who is identified as the "general Serpent." Like the Ophite symbol of "the Leviathan" or "general Serpent," Moby Dick represents the self-consuming, self-renewing round of energy and the "Intelligence" which is, to quote Jonas about the Ophite symbol, "the psyche ('world-Soul')." ⁴⁴ Moreover, he is identified with cosmic oppression, a malign intelligence, wrath, a demonic will, the body, the passions, appetite, time, space, and fate. Defined in this manner, he serves to represent all of the aspects of existence that determine, limit, and/or pervert the essentially free, indeterminate, and harmoniously balanced spirit (Spirit), man (Man), and keep the Light captive in Darkness.

Melville continues to use many of the same images and terms to portray Moby Dick as a symbol of the fallen Thought of the Unknown God as he uses to characterize the world of Typee and the world of Mardi as this gnostic symbolic and mythical entity. However, he also employs some special gnostic terms for the fallen god-head in Moby-Dick. Moby Dick, like the world of Typee and the world of Mardi, is termed a whore and identified as the Void. In the chapter "The Whiteness of the Whale," the narrative indicates that the protagonist Ishmael not only considers the fallen world-Soul a "harlot" but also a cannibalistic "dumb . . . blankness" or "[void]" (M-D, pp. 263-64).

This same portion of the novel reveals that Ishmael thinks of Moby Dick as the universal psycho-spiritual substance, Light or "whiteness," but that he particularly identifies it with wrath and fire. Moreover, it reveals that Moby Dick as a metaphysical symbol is to be identified

with an "abortion" and a whirlpool or vortex (M-D, pp. 258, 261, 264). The Light that is a wrathful fire, says Jonas about the imagery employed in the gnostic literature of the ancient world, is a metaphor for the Spirit in its imbalanced, ignorant condition. And one learns from his analysis of the gnostic religion at the time of its origin that the impaired aspect of the Unknown God is referred to in the literature of the Valentinian school of belief an "abortion." The "whirlpool," he notes, is a pervasive image in pagan, Christian, and proto-Jewish expressions of the gnostic imagination.⁴⁵

Melville provides his readers with more hints about the mythical and symbolical identity of Ishmael's quest object. Imaged as a dyad of dark and light by means of the identification of the sea as the "dark Hindoo half of Nature" and Moby Dick's portrayal as a "blankness" of universal white, Ishmael's beastly quest object is not only characterized as the Valentinian and Cabalistic concept of the Void, but also as the "'dark light'" which, in the Hermetic Corpus, signifies the inferior aspect of the deity (M-D, pp. 264, 629).

To reinforce the idea that the world of the whale and sea is a symbol of the divided, imbalanced, androgynous Self, a symbolism of warring male and female polar opposites, which carry the content of king (m.) and queen (f.) and head (m.) and heart or "tail" (f.), is ascribed to it, and the female aspect of the fallen deity is portrayed as being suppressed by the male aspect. As readers recall, Ahab, who, like Babalanja in relation to Taji, is one of the forms of Ishmael's god-like consciousness, in a qualified way identifies with the sea at one point in the narrative, and indicates that she (he) wants her (his) "royal rights" (M-D, pp. 514, 641).

These metaphors constitute a reference to the gnostic myths that use the figure of the Narcissus-like Sophia or Wisdom to dramatize the Fall of the god-head. In them, the Wisdom or Thought of God is depicted as conceiving, in singleness (without her consort), an inferior Thought of God. Taking on a semi-separate, self-willed existence, the inferior Thought transforms into the fallen world. In the process, its self-assertive, masculine aspect, which is identified with a narrow rationalism and a drive to control and dominate, suppresses Wisdom in her aspect of Truth and her character as the heart side of the Self. This power of the Fallen Soul creates in his own right and orders the universe, but imposes too many strict, arbitrary laws on it.⁴⁶

Ahab and Queequeg are a microcosm of the androgynous, but symbolically female, fallen world, which, on the esoteric level of its symbolism is the Alien Man. The content that accrues traditionally to the male aspect of the god-head is ascribed to Ahab: Depth, Mind, Word, Man, King, Father, Power. That he is a distorted image of the Divine Mind is to be known by means of his characterization as a self-divided man (Man). As readers recall, Ahab is one-legged. Moreover, Ahab has a scar which runs from his crown to his "sole." Dividing him in half and making him a "single One," it is a "birthmark" (M-D, p. 169). Ahab is like the gnostic deity, but he is a One who is deficient or "ignorant" rather than "full" and possessing gnosis. Moreover, the dark, pagan, god-man Ahab is identified with fire, wrath, and tyranny. Unlike the odd and even Divine Monad, Ahab is an "odd" one or number.

In relation to Ahab, Queequeg represents the female or heart aspect of the fallen godhead. The word queen is alluded to in his name. One variant of his name, Quo-hog, identifies this symbol of the impaired

Alien Life with pigs, boars, and bulls, the animals that are sacred to the Great Goddess (M-D, p. 130). Thus, Queequeg is connected with the Great Goddess and the old pagan, mystery religion tradition, which informs the gnostic impulse. These associations, in turn, relate him to Jezebel, King Ahab's wicked wife who rejected Jehovah worship and returned to the old mystery religion tradition of worship with its temple prostitutes and obscene rites. Queequeg's black, phallic-looking idol, Yojo, his rebellious, queenly nature, and his life on the seas identify him with the queenly, rebellious sea as well as with Ahab's queen, who, according to Christian tradition, was the devil incarnate. This dark, pagan, unknown exile is not far removed from the practice of cannibalism. Thus, he is identified with Ignorance, Error, and self-division. Together, Ahab and Queequeg are analogous to the whale (m.) and the sea (f.). They are part of Ishmael's quest object, which he will comprehend in "knowing" the ineffable All.

Depicted as the demiurgical, inferior form of the deity, Ishmael's quest object also is identified with a symbolism of gold, mirrors, jewels, buried treasure, balance, harmony, and freedom--the imagery associated with the luminous inner self and the highest god-head in gnosticism. This might come as some surprise were it not for the fact that Tommo's and Taji's quest objects are defined in this manner, and the episode in "Loomings," in which Ishmael is portrayed as desiring to "know" his quest object links it with the gold of a hidden treasure. The most famous symbol of the quest object in Moby-Dick that relates the world of the whale and the sea to jewels or hidden treasure is, of course, the gold doubloon.

The luminous gold doubloon is linked to Ishmael's quest object

generally, but, particularly, to Moby Dick and the sea. It is portrayed as a gnostic symbol of the "deepest" or most inward and transcendent part of the self (Self) that is contained in the fallen world and is superior to but identical with it.

Being nailed to a tree (the main mast of the Pequod which is a cross), associated with depth and silence, and portrayed as a mirror, a lamp, a principle of transformation, and a world, the gold doubloon is described as a symbol of fallen world-Soul and the highest Truth of gnosis. When the pre-existent Word of Life, incarnate in the historical Jesus, is "nailed to a tree," to quote from one Valentinian text, he "became the fruit of a knowledge [gnosis]" of the luminous self (Self) or "life" rather than "death" which the first descent of the Word signified. Citing this literature, Pagels explains that according to it "whoever achieves gnosis becomes 'no longer a Christian, but a Christ'" and their own highest authority.⁴⁷ The fact that the coin is nailed to a cross-shaped mast by the Narcissus-like Ahab, who desires to become the highest authority, are points of correspondence between the gold coin, Ahab, and the gnostic myth of the fall of Thought of God. After the Pequod is destroyed, the gold doubloon, still nailed to the main-mast, comes to rest in the silent depths the sea (M-D, p. 549). Thus, it is identified with the gnostic symbolic term for the highest god-head, the Depth and Silence.

In Chapter 99 (XCIX) of the narrative, "The Doubloon," Ahab describes the gold doubloon as a transformational principle, a world, a mirror, and a lamp. Moreover, he unwittingly identifies it with the unknown or deepest, most profound part of the self (Self). Taking a proud stance before the gold piece, the captain of the Pequod says,

"This round coin is but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self" (M-D, p. 551). In contrast to the crucified and persecuting Ahab who sees only his mundane ego reflected, hence, illuminated in the "glass" of the coin, a spiritual master of gnosis, such as the fully enlightened gnostic Jesus, would see his mundane and non-mundane, luminous self (Self) in it and thus see the ineffable All.

Like the gnostic Jesus, himself a mirror image of the highest Truth of gnosis, the gold doubloon reflects and illuminates the level of spiritual maturity attained by the various form in which it is manifested, uniting them all in itself, teaching the ineffable unity and divinity of reality, and revealing the truth about man (Man). In the apocryphal Acts of John, the historical Jesus is described as preparing his disciples to discover "the divine within," as Pagels puts it. He says to them, "A torch am I to you who perceive me, . . . a mirror am I to you who discern me."⁴⁸ In this and other Christian gnostic texts of the ancient world, the gnostic Jesus, says Pagels, is portrayed as "a luminous presence" which "transforms . . . into multiple forms" and a mirror of spiritual maturity who appears "'great'" to the "'great'" and "'small'" to the "'small.'"⁴⁹ But to the one who "knows," he especially appears as a harmonious dyad of masculine and feminine energies in a context of freedom and suggests the higher consciousness.

The symbolism of the coin expresses the gnostic beliefs about self (Self)-integration. Minted in Ecuador, the coin connotes balance, equilibrium, and, like the equator, the middle "way" between extremes. The three mountains on it refer to the gnostic trinity, Mind, Thought, and Word, and to the higher, consciousness which balances a moral and

trans-moral vision. And even the designation of the luminous coin as a "doubloon" repeats the important gnostic theological tenet that the Unknown One contains yet transcends dualism. Being a symbol of a dynamic balance, depth, silence, a crucifixion, a mirror (and thus the Narcissus theme), a lamp, a principle of transformation, and the world, one surmises that Moby Dick's talisman, like Moby Dick (and the sea, Ahab, and Queequeg), represents the fallen (world)-Soul that yet contains and is to be identified with the highest Truth of gnosis.

Other portions of the narrative emphasize that Ishmael's quest object is to be identified with the self-crucified Word of gnostic belief, which is to say, the "downgoing" energy of the deity and the jewel-like Truth(s) of gnosis by which one attains salvation. As readers recall, when Ishmael enters the hallway of Peter Coffin's Spouter-Inn, he is intrigued by a mysterious painting that portrays a whale in the act of being impaled on the three masts of a ship (M-D, pp. 36-37). The reference is to the fall of the Thought or image of the Unknown God into the apparently unrelated concepts of Man, God, and Nature and to the victory of the guilty inclinations of the Soul over its nobler ones. Being hung in the inn owned by Peter Coffin gives readers hints to this effect. According to Jonas, "inn" is a metaphor for the fallen world-Soul in gnostic literature and so is "death."⁵⁰

That the fallen god-head is to be identified with the gold Truth of gnosis as well as with a narrow rationalism and the limitations of Being is expressed in other portions of the novel that define this entity. For example, Moby Dick's jewel-like luminescence is emphasized in a passage in which the glistening "island," the White Whale who is yet mottled, is described as "gliding at high noon through a dark blue sea,

leaving a milky-way wake of creamy foam, all spangled with golden gleamings" (M-D, p. 245). The imagery in this description of the whale clearly relates him to the jewel-like island on which Typee is situated, the shimmering island world(s) of Mardi, and the luminous, "mottled" pearl, Yillah.

Besides Moby Dick and the sea, Queequeg and Ahab are symbols of the fallen (world) Soul--the impaired Alien Man or Alien Life--who yet contains the highest Truth of gnosis. The masculo-feminine and relatively self-possessed Queequeg is identified with Truth, nothing, and the unknown. He is said to be from the truest place on the map--nowhere (M-D p. 88). Thus, he is portrayed not only as a barbaric cannibal and the heart or female aspect of the deity but also as a symbol of the gnostic metaphysical and psycholological concept of self (Self)-integration and the doctrine of a negative theology.

This paradoxical or "double" man (Man), who is yet One, reinforces Ishmael's ideas about reincarnation and the self-transformation, and he exposes Ishmael to the gnostic dictum that the way "down" is the way "out." He also teaches Ishmael to follow the left-hand path and the negative way to enlightenment. He does so when he places his black, phallic-looking idol, Yojo, on his head, meditates, and fasts before he rejects the empty vessel of the Spirit, the world-Coffin, in order to search for the gnosis by which to save himself and it, and when he and Ishmael use sex as a way to "knowledge."

Besides Queequeg, Ahab symbolizes the divided Soul who yet contains the highest truth of gnosis. Ahab knows the mundane truth about the negative aspects of life. Moreover, the paradoxical, "ungodly, god-like man" Ahab, in his rebellion against the demiugical Intelligence of

nature (Nature), discovers that a God beyond God exists, who is identical with but the Other to everything known (M-D, p. 119). As Vargish realizes,⁵¹ Ahab perceives but does not comprehend a gnostic doctrine of a negative theology when, confronting the great Intelligence which is the world-Soul, he says, "There is some unsuffusing thing beyond thee, thou clear spirit, to whom all thy eternity is but time, all thy creativeness mechanical" (M-D, p. 643).

And just as Ishmael perceives this doctrine through Ahab, the distorted image of (his own) self (Self), so Ahab perceives it in and through the fallen god-head with whom he is essentially identical; To his "fiery father" (mother), he cries, " Through thee, thy flaming self, my scorched eyes do dimly see it [the Unknown God] (M-D, p. 643).

NOTES

¹ Edgar A. Dryden, Melville's Thematics of Form (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1963), p. 34.

² As quoted by Pagels (p. 161).

³ I believe that Chase is the first critic to propose this view. See Chap. I, p. 3.

⁴ See Chap. I, p. 26 and Chap. I, n. 75.

⁵ Jonas, pp. 81, 91-92, 101-02; Pagels, pp. 22-25.

⁶ Matthiesson is the first critic to make this claim. See Chap. I, p. 26.

⁷ The "Hymn of the Pearl" is a poetic narrative which is an interpretation of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer. It is found in the apocryphal Acts of Thomas. See Jonas for one discussion of it (pp. 112-25). Zweig's interpretation differs somewhat from that of Jonas. See Zweig, pp. 16-18.

⁸ Jonas, pp. 60-61, 75-80.

⁹ Jonas, p. 79.

¹⁰ Saurat, p. 125.

¹¹ Jonas, p. 123.

¹² Pagels includes the following citation and comment in her book, implying that the gnostics of the ancient world were not oriented to escaping life in the world as much as they were in attaining self (Self-) integration in the here and now. "According to the gnostic teacher Theodotus, writing in Asia Minor (c.140-160), the gnostic is one who has come to understand

who we were, and what we have become; where we were . . .

whither we are hastening; from what we are being

released, what birth is, and what is rebirth.

Yet to know oneself, at the deepest level, is simultaneously to know God; this is the secret of gnosis" (Introduction, p. xix).

¹³ Jonas, pp. 58, 62.

¹⁴ Zweig calls it the myth of the Primal Man but refers to the Primal Man as "Narcissus" throughout his discussion of the Poimandres, the first treatise in the Hermetic Corpus (p. 112).

- 15 See Jonas, p. 150, n. 7.
- 16 Jonas, p. 81.
- 17 The return of the purified spiritual soul to God, says Zweig, is mainly "an affair of individual psychology" (p. 15).
- 18 Zweig, pp. 212-16.
- 19 Jonas, pp. 81, 312.
- 20 Pagels, p. 50.
- 21 Jonas, p. 112.
- 22 Pagels, p. 154.
- 23 Jonas, p. 79.
- 24 In the Hermetic Corpus, "will" is another term for the female Thought of God. See Jonas, p. 149.
- 25 Finklestein, p. 193.
- 26 Halevi, p. 6.
- 27 See Jonas, p. 113 ff.
- 28 Pagels, p. 115.
- 29 See Jonas for a discussion of the gnostic habit of inverting the values of the myths which they revised and reinterpreted (pp. 91-92).
- 30 Pagels, p. 59.
- 31 The Simionian creation myth is similar to the Valentinian account. Paraphrasing a Simonian account of Creation, Jonas says that after the One transforms into its own subject and object, it "still . . . contains the Thought in itself." The Thought "beholds the Father and hides him as the creative power within herself, and to that extent the original Power is drawn into the Thought, making an androgynous combination." (pp. 105-06).
- 32 Pagels, p. 60.
- 33 See Pagels for a discussion of the term "the stranger" and "the solitary [one]" (p. 144); Yates, p. 5.
- 34 Jonas, pp. 125, 51.
- 35 Jonas, p. 44.
- 36 Jonas, pp. 55; 68-69; 185-86; 253; 300.

- 37 See Jonas, pp. 88, 123, and p. 10 of this chapter.
- 38 The apocryphal Acts of John, in Campbell, III, 372.
- 39 Jonas, pp. 123-24.
- 40 Jonas, pp. 123, 125.
- 41 Saurat, p. 85.
- 42 Halevi, p. 5.
- 43 Grant, pp. 85-86. John Dart, The Laughing Savior (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 15, 92; Pagels, p. 155.
- 44 Jonas, p. 117.
- 45 Jonas, pp. 71, 197-98.
- 46 The Valentinian and Simonian schools of gnosticism employ this story in their creation mythos. Jonas, Grant, and Dart have good discussions of it.
- 47 Pagels, pp. 114, 161.
- 48 Pagels, p. 169; the apocryphal Acts of John, in Campbell, III, 372.
- 49 Pagels, pp. 19, 61.
- 50 Jonas, pp. 55, 57.
- 51 Vargish, pp. 274-75.

CHAPTER V

THE IMAGE PATTERNS OF EMANATION AND INVERTED MIRRORS: GNOSTIC SYMBOLISM AND POLEMICS IN TYPEE, MARDI, AND MOBY-DICK

Evidence has been established that the protagonists of Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick represent the figure of the potential gnostic redeemer and that the quest objects of these protagonists symbolize the gnostic concept of the fallen world-Soul. What remains to be demonstrated is that, at the level of the "experienced landscape," these works represent Melville's interpretation of the myth of the potential gnostic Illuminator, thereby serving as vehicles for his gnostic vision of reality.

The primary concern now is an explanation of the gnostic symbolical and polemical implications of the most important image patterns in these narratives in relation to the stages of development that the protagonists pass through while descending into the worlds of their quest objects. How the image patterns relate to the plot, foreshadow the success of each protagonist's effort to become the fully enlightened Alien Man, and/or express gnostic doctrines is shown in the discussion. Furthermore, how these repeated symbolisms identify Melville with the gnostic imagination in the ancient world or suggest his familiarity with the history of the gnostic impulse is indicated when it is necessary and appropriate. This portion of the discussion and the one following it

emphasize the first half of these protagonists' shared spiritual biography. The climax and resolution of these narratives are dealt with later.

A simplified review of the features of these stories which clarify their indebtedness to the gnostic myth of the potential redeemer prepares readers for a discussion of the implications of the image patterns. The parallels that exist between the gnostic myth of the potential redeemer and the "experienced landscape" of Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick assure one that it is the basic source of these works. One parallel already identified is that in the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer and the novels Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick, the story of how the protagonist redeems and is redeemed by the fallen world-Soul begins with an episode in which the Narcissus-like reformer-savior is portrayed as re-enacting the gnostic drama of Creation. In these episodes, Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael reject an empty or deteriorating world and envision their quest object as if it were an abstract idea, a female dream-world, and a golden treasure. With this act these protagonists are portrayed as the special individual who chooses and is chosen to save the "drowned" Narcissus-Man. Their rejection of a deficient world and enthusiasm for their quest are hints about the success of their mission.

In Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick, the episodes referring to the gnostic myths of creation impose certain expectations on these narratives. They strongly imply that each protagonist will act out the role traditional to the symbolic and mythical entity that he represents. Thus one expects that Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael will be linked to the metaphysical symbolism of gnosticism and be depicted, not precisely but to some degree, as repeating the fall of the world-Soul. Like the

Thought of God in its fall, they become the victim of their own lower "Nature" and dualism and suffer as the "lost pearl" or "drowned" Man. Ultimately, however, these protagonists transform into the saved savior who authoritatively combats the "ignorance" in which the world-Soul is entrapped and rescues Truth from Oblivion and Error. In this particular part of the study, the metaphysical image pattern of emanation by means of twins and opposites and the pervasive use of a symbolism of inverted mirrors receives attention.

In each of the three novels, the protagonist, after envisioning his quest object, emanates from an empty or deficient world with one who is his twin and opposite. Together, these two who are one set out in pursuit of the protagonist's primary symbol of the quest object. This emanation by a set of twin and opposite energies is a symbol that derives from gnostic creation mythos. The basic source of this cosmological metaphor in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick appears to be the Valentinian school of gnosticism.¹ In these novels Melville uses this symbol for three purposes: (1) to indicate that his protagonist, in a qualified way, is repeating the pre-cosmic fall of the Soul; (2) to foreshadow his protagonist's acquisition of the gold of the highest Truth of gnosis; and (3) to structure the works.

Emanation by sets of twin and opposite energies augurs well for the success of these protagonists' efforts to comprehend the negative and positive aspects of the self (Self). Instead of identifying them with the guilty Soul who creates in singleness without her consort and produces the Self-Divided cosmos, it relates them to the Soul who creates with her consort and generates the Self-Integrated Man--the acosmic heaven or higher consciousness of gnosticism, which is a dynamic balance

of opposites in a context of freedom. In their emanation, these protagonists, with their mates are relatively stable and self-integrated characters, and their attainment of gnosis is foreshadowed.

The gnostic symbol of the generation of the Monad by identical and opposite entities gives rise to a major image pattern in these works. The protagonist and any form of his quest object, which ultimately includes his "experienced landscape," are treated as inverted mirror images of one another ($A \neq B$).² (The only exception to this rule is the character, like Marnoo or Bulkington, who represents the fully enlightened or almost fully enlightened spiritual master of gnosis). Depicting them as twins ($A = B$), the protagonist and his quest object are always identified by the linking of both with the gnostic symbolic term the Alien Light or its variants and ascribing the same content to each. Set forth more fully below, the differences between them are a matter of emphasis. These differences involve a set of features which remain the same in each novel.

One member of the divine dyad, the potential gnostic redeemer, is always identified in Melville's fiction with the rational, "masculine" mode of perception, the white Protestant Christian West, the liberalism, utopianism, and revolutionism of the West, and a sacrifice for gnosis. In contrast to him, his consort, on one level of the symbolism connected with her, is always identified not only with the jewel of gnosis but also with the dark, pagan, despotic East, the mythic, "female" mode of consciousness, magic, exoteric Christianity, and an "inferior" form of sacrifice. Moreover, sometimes the quest object is strongly identified with Catholicism as well as paganism. Not every protagonist or quest object is explicitly identified with every detail of the special set of

features which is ascribed to him or her. But the general pattern holds true.

When Tommo deserts the whaleship, the Dolly, he leaves with Toby, a character who is portrayed as his twin and polar opposite. On one level of the symbolism operating in their characterizations both are identified as the transcendent figure of the Alien Life. The fundamental identity of the two as symbols of the saving Alien Light is alluded to when Tommo and Toby both are described as unknown wanderers and rovers who are exiles from their homes. Toby, however, plays the female role in relation to Tommo. He is dark or moody and is less aggressive than Tommo. It is Tommo who approaches Toby with the idea in mind of deserting the Dolly and Tommo who saves their lives when they first meet the Typees.

When Toby disappears from the world of Typee, he continues to serve as the female soul in relation to Tommo. From this point on, he is a transcendental reminder to Tommo that the world may effect Tommo's death and that the known world is deficient. Moreover, as a symbol of the transcendent "Call," he signifies gnosis. Jonas discusses the idea of the transcendent double in relation to ancient gnosticism, making the point that the transcendent self (Self) is a symbol of gnosis and observing that gnostic literature frequently refers to the transcendent soul mate and his twin and opposite as "Call" and "Response."³ (Ishmael's "sleeping partner," Bulkington, is a variation of this theme, the difference between Toby and Bulkington being that the latter is more directly portrayed as a fully enlightened Alien Man).

The Typees serve as the major symbols of Tommo's twin and polar opposite. Like Tommo, they are symbols of the Alien Life. Tommo's

discovery of evidence that the Typees' ancestors immigrated to Nukuheva and that the Typees and their enemies (the French, Americans, and British) have a common origin is used by Melville to indicate that the "Eastern" Typees and their Western enemies are essentially identical (A=B). Moreover, Melville employs this device to depict the Typees as the transcendent Alien Light in relation to the fallen world-Soul, the island of Nukuheva, to which, it is implied, they immigrated centuries earlier (T, pp. 13, 16-19, 135, 154-55, 180-84, 189). Because the Western Tommo represents the "other-worldly" Alien Life in relation to the "Eastern" Typees, the two opposites--potential savior and fallen Soul--are mirror images (A=B).

Another respect in which Tommo and the Typees are depicted as identical twins is that each is identified with the gnostic metaphysical and political ideals of freedom, individualism, equality, and wholeness. To no small degree, the Typee culture manifests these ideals. On occasion, Tommo parallels the Typees' religion with Freemasonry. In the West during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Freemasonry promoted the ideals of fraternity, liberty, and equality, served as a vehicle for gnosticism, and was implicated in revolutionism. Consequently, the rebellious potential gnostic redeemer Tommo again may be seen as a twin image of the Typees (T, pp. 176-77, 179, 200, 203-04). Moreover, Tommo's comparisons of the Typee culture with Freemasonry suggest that he may be a Mason. (References to Freemasonry are found throughout Melville's major fiction).

Using the aforementioned terms, themes, and images, Melville portrays the protagonist Tommo and Tommo's quest object, the fallen world of Typee, as identical twins (A=B). Repeating and elaborating on the

pattern established in regard to Toby and Tommo, he also constructs them to represent exact opposites (A≠B). Whereas Tommo is identified with the white Christian West, the "masculine" dualistic or analytic mode of perception, and a sacrifice for "knowledge," the Typees on another level of the symbolism connected with them represent the dark, pagan, barbaric East, the "feminine" mythical, mystical, magical consciousness, the "lost pearl" of gnosis, and a sacrifice for revenge and power. This concept of sacrifice is equated particularly with that of atonement. Thus, while the potential gnostic redeemer Tommo is identified with esoteric Christianity, the Typees by inference are associated with exoteric Christianity. The point is made that these twins differ from one another (A≠B).

By portraying the cannibal Typees as the fallen god-head who entertains the idea of sacrificing and ritually consuming his son, the somewhat Christ-like Tommo, Melville equates the Typees' primitive concept of sacrifice with the Christian concept of atonement. In an indirect, elliptical way he express the view that the gnostic interpretation of the Crucifixion is superior to the orthodox one. Moreover, he equates the sacrament of the Eucharist with the belief, derived from sympathetic magic, that if one ritually consumes the highest power of existence, one can obtain victory over one's enemies (e.g. man, death, and sin).

In the case of the Typees and Tommo, the basic idea is that besides promulgating an "eye for an eye" type of justice, Darkness wants to exploit and to suppress the Light and use it (Tommo) to stay in power. According to the gnostic imagination, "ignorance" is not a neutral condition. With the symbolism connected to Tommo and his quest object(s), Melville portrays them as inverted mirror images of one another and

criticizes orthodox Christian dogma. What becomes clear in the course of analyzing Melville's major fiction is that he persistently criticizes the doctrine of atonement.

Mirroring the action and image pattern of Tommo and Toby, the exile Taji emanates from the deteriorating world of the Arcturion with Jarl, who is portrayed as his twin (A=B) and opposite (A≠B). Like Tommo and Toby, Jarl and Taji are shown to be identical by means of portraying both as the transmundane Alien Light and ascribing the same content to each. Both are identified with the white civilized Christian West, the sun, the creative consciousness, and revolutionism. Like the archetypal figure of the gnostic savior, both are rovers and strangers who descend into the pagan world(s) of the Parki, the "double" canoe of Aleema, and Mardi, all of which are images of the fallen world (-Soul).

Through the connections of the Norse culture with gnosticism, Taji and Jarl are identified with a poetic, valorous, mystical quest for gnosis. Taji, the potential gnostic redeemer, cites the Vikings as a source for his awareness of the way of "knowledge." Beginning to desire to leave the Arcturion and look elsewhere for "light," Taji sighs, "Ah! How the old [Viking] Sagas run through me" (M, p. 12). From the first century A.D. to the Middle Ages, after which it mixed with Christianity, the Norse culture sustained what Campbell describes as a this-worldly, poetic, and heroic form of gnostic mysticism. In the mythos of this form of gnosticism, the potential Illuminator Odin crucifies himself upside down on a tree in order to "win the wisdom of the runes," says Campbell, who points out also that this "wisdom" could be used for mystical or magical purposes.⁴

Besides portraying Taji and Jarl as mirror images of one another

(A=B), Melville constructs them on another level of the symbolism identified with each to represent polar opposites (A≠B). The old, ascetic, silent Jarl is the female aspect of the divine dyad. Killing animals easily, Jarl retains his association with the gold of gnosis, but becomes linked to the dark, pagan, brutal qualities of the North and the old Viking culture. Other features of his characterization are that he possesses a frightening but nurturing maternal nature and is an orthodox Christian. Moreover, he is depicted as content with the status quo, and he is identified with concepts of sacrifice which Melville considers as inferior to the concept of a sacrifice for gnosis.

In contrast to Jarl, the virile, passionate, young lover Taji, who talks all of the time in the first part of the narrative and wears a sombrero on board the Arcturion (M, p. 6), continues to be identified with a concept of sacrifice for "knowledge" rather than the other "inferior" ones. Moreover, as the narrative progresses, Taji comes to represent the white civilized Protestant West in its aspect of the rational, "masculine" consciousness and liberalism, humanism, utopianism, and revolutionism. With this content assigned to them, Jarl and Taji are described not only as twins but also as opposites and thus as inverted mirror images of one another.

Yillah is a symbolic analogue of Jarl. The image pattern of inverted mirrors and the gnostic cosmological symbolism of emanation by means of sets of twin and opposite energies is repeated in connection with her introduction into the story. Just as the twins and opposites Jarl and Taji depart from the potentially self-integrated but deficient world of the Arcturion, leaving it even more empty of "light" than it was before their act of emanation, so Taji and Yillah reject the world

of Aleema's two canoes that are one, leaving it devoid of "light" when they emanate as a set of twin and opposite entities from it. With this emanation, however, Taji, representing the One who is Two, is self-mirrored and magnified in Samoa (m.) and Jarl (f.), who accompany him and Yillah. Here Melville refers to the gnostic cosmological theme of the self-magnification or multiplication of the deity as the the Soul transforms into the fallen world. Moreover, he expresses the idea that the soul "dies" when it forgets or is ignorant of the concept of gnosis but is reborn (the Arcturion begets the Chamois, which begets the Parki, which begets Aleema's canoe, and so on.).

The identity of the Viking Jarl and the Polynesian Yillah as equivalent symbols of the "energy," dream, or Thought of the Unknown God can be seen in the symbolic implications of their names. This symbolism confirms their depictions as Taji's twins and opposites and illustrates the pervasiveness and constancy of Melville's use of a symbolism of mirrors. The name Jarl suggests a jar. From Jonas one learns the gnostic symbolic implications of jars and vessels. Jonas observes that the Mandaean word mana literally means a container, such as a vessel or a jar. According to him, it refers to the gnostic concept of the spiritual essence of existence.⁵ Senior's discussion reveals that the term mana is a Polynesian word which refers to the divine "energy" of life.⁶

With this information one perceives that Jarl and Yillah are variant symbols of the idea that life is the psycho-spiritual substance, dream, or thought of the deity. Maya, the Sanskrit word for the divine energy of existence (the world dream), and mana are equivalent terms. And the Sanskrit word lila, one learns from Campbell, represents the "play" of the divine energy, maya or mana. Reading right and left from the center

of the name Yillah, one perceives the word lila. Campbell points out that part of the "cosmic mystery" of maya is that she conceals the highest Truth concerning the immanent and transcendent nature of the Divine, but also she may reveal this mystery.⁷ As Yillah's identification with the rose-colored pearl and her disappearance indicate, Campbell's observations apply to her.

Like Taji and Jarl, Taji and Yillah are described as twin and opposite entities, and both are identified as symbols of the Alien Light. The white Christian Westerner Taji is the potential redeemer, the gnostic "stranger" and alien who descends into a dark, pagan, Oriental world in quest of the impaired Alien Man or Alien Light. A specific incarnation of the Thought of God, Yillah is this Alien Light or Alien Man.⁸ Both her mythical and factual history describe her as this gnostic symbol. Mardi is Yillah's home, yet, like Taji, she is identified as an alien, a stranger, and a "light" in relation to it. Together she and Taji descend into another symbol of the Alien Life, the world of Mardi proper: circles within circles structure Melville's major works.

When Taji first sees the blue-eyed, "snow-white" Yillah with her golden hair and rose-colored pearl, she is set like a jewel among the dark-skinned Aleema and his sons. To him she seems like "a stranger from another race" (M, pp. 136-37). To Taji, Aleema and his sons are also strangers from another race, and the same holds true for Taji from Aleema's point of view. Taken absolutely, Taji and Yillah-Aleema represent the potentially Self-Integrated Man who in the "Hymn of the Pearl" is portrayed as the Prince, King, and Queen of Heaven (= the Pleroma). According to Pagels, the title of one "extraordinary" gnostic text of the ancient world is Allogenes, "which means 'the stranger' (literally,

'one from another race'), referring to the spiritually mature person."⁹

Taji and Yillah are a mirror image of Taji and Jarl in all essential respects, and the world of Mardi and Taji duplicate this pattern. Although Yillah and Taji, like Jarl and Taji, represent the Truth of the luminous self, as is the case with the first symbol of the divine dyad, they also represent the impaired Alien Light. Both are relatively ignorant of the gnosis of their true inner self (Self)--the "Kingdom"--that is within them like a pearl in the depths of the ocean as well as without. The sense, however, in which each is a symbol of the impaired Alien Light differs. As a result, although the "two" are "one" (A=B), they also differ (A≠B). In their differences, they represent inverted mirror images of one another and express essentially the same content that differentiates Taji from all of the other specific symbols of his quest object--the Circe-like Queen Hautia; the tyrannical King Media; the mystical Christian gnostic Babalanja; and the yoga-like "Pope" of Mardi, Hivohitee.

Once again, to portray the protagonist's quest object as his polar opposites (A≠B), Melville associates the quest object not only with the highest Truth of gnosis but also the dark, pagan, despotic East, the "female" mythical, magical, and mystical mode of consciousness, orthodox Christianity, an acceptance of the status quo, and a belief in a concept of sacrifice "inferior" to that of gnosis. Another parallel between the depiction of the quest object in Typee and Mardi is that in both works it is identified with an inferior form of gnosticism. However, in Mardi Melville goes to some trouble to distinguish the protagonist from his quest object by means of identifying the fallen world-Soul not only with paganism but also with Catholicism.

Melville employs a variety of means by which to relate the fallen Thought of God, as represented by the world of Mardi and Yillah, to Catholicism and to the figure of the Great Goddess. The terms "high Pontiff" and "priest" are used to designate the religious leaders of Mardi. Moreover, in its pagan and Catholic Mediterranean aspect, the world of Mardi sustains religious beliefs that treat women as goddesses or associates them strongly with God. Yillah is considered a goddess, oracle, and priestess in Mardi. When he first sees her, Taji associates her with the "Eleusinian mysteries" (M, p. 131). He later calls her a saint. Moreover, Melville portrays the world of the Parki and Annatoo as the mother of the world of Mardi and Yillah and associates it with Catholicism. On board the Parki, Taji thinks of Annatoo as "[performing] penance like a nun in her cell" when Annatoo occasionally disappears (M, p. 102). The name Annatoo is an allusion to Saint Anne and to the gnostic habit of identifying the number two with the world and the "Many," which is derived from the One, the Monad. Identifying Annatoo with Saint Anne causes the world of Mardi to represent Saint Mary.

Explaining why Melville relates his symbols of the fallen Thought of the Unknown God to the concept of mana, the Far Eastern idea of maya, the figure of the Great Goddess, and to Saint Mary casts light on the metaphysical implications of the image pattern of mirrors in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick. Moreover, this explanation serves to relate Melville more strongly to the gnostics of the ancient world. To solve this puzzle, one first needs to know that the Simonians and other gnostics of the ancient world syncretically identified figures such as Ishtar, Isis, Kore, Astarte, Demeter, Helen, Athena, and the Wisdom of the Old Testament (a figure identified by some with Israel) and held

that they all represented the fallen Thought of the Unknown God.

From Grant, one learns this information, and one discovers that some gnostics probably were aided in their efforts toward syncretic identification by Plutarch's work De Iside. In it, Plutarch reports that the Egyptians refer to Isis as "Sophia" (Wisdom) and that Manetho, an Egyptian priest, wrote a work in which he syncretically identifies Isis or Sophia with all of the female deities of the Mediterranean world who represent the universal mother.¹⁰

With this information in mind, it is interesting to note that at the level of the "recollected landscape" in Mardi, Taji, the fictional author of Mardi, claims that it was he "who suppressed the lost work of Manetho as containing secrets not to be known by posterity" (M, p. 297). Thus, the storyteller Taji links himself to the Unknown God of gnostic belief who, to quote Jonas, "as much invites as thwarts the quest for knowing him."¹¹ But more to the point, one understands that Melville's habit of syncretically identifying all of his symbols of the fallen world-Soul, such as Jarl, Yillah, Annatoo, Hautia, and Media, with one another not only associates him more closely with the gnostics of the ancient world but also is a means to express the important gnostic theological doctrine about the ineffable unity and divinity of all reality. Furthermore, this device pertains to the soteriological activity of "gathering in" the dispersed fragments of the fallen, divided god-head.

In Mardi as in Typee, another respect in which the quest object is differentiated from the protagonist (A≠B) concerns the theme of a "superior" as opposed to an "inferior" concept of sacrifice. In Mardi, however, Melville is more direct than in Typee concerning his belief in

the superiority of a gnostic concept of sacrifice. In this novel he equates a sacrifice for propitiation with one for power and atonement. Toward this end first he shows that the fallen world-Soul Yillah condones a sacrifice for propitiation. This idea is portrayed in the episode in which Taji rescues her from Aleema's "double" canoe. Taji becomes "bent on rescuing" Yillah after learning that "in pursuance of a barbarous custom, by Aleema, the priest, she was being borne an offering . . . to the gods." "No gentle signal of distress" is made, however, by the "maiden" who resides in the "mysterious tent" that is set between two canoes (M, p. 131).

After indicating that the fallen Soul acquiesces to one "inferior" kind of sacrifice, Melville identifies this view with the orthodox Christian doctrine of atonement. He depicts the myth-infatuated Yillah as being strongly attracted to a tattoo of "the wonderful mariner--our Saviour on the cross, in blue; with the crown of thorns, and three drops of blood in vermillion, falling one by one from each hand and foot" that Jarl, with great "pride," bears on his arm. With as little sense of causing pain as she has of experiencing it, the willing victim Yillah is portrayed as wanting to scrape the tattoo off of Jarl's arm as if it were "a landscape in fresco" (M, p. 147). The episodes in the narrative which record Taji's visit to that pagan Vatican, the Mardian isle of Maramma, indicate that the world of Mardi is the magnified image of the fallen world-Soul Yillah in respect to believing in "inferior" types of sacrifices.

To the potential Christian gnostic redeemer and Western humanist-rationalist-revolutionist Taji, a sacrifice for atonement represents a "barbarous" interpretation of the truth (M, p. 131). It is one of the

"'Vulgar Errors'" to which he is opposed (M, p. 39). In this, Taji resembles some of the Christian gnostics of the ancient world. According to Pagels, their literature reveals that they object to an orthodox interpretation of the Crucifixion on the grounds that it makes God "a cannibal" and encourages people, as one text says, to become martyrs in the belief that salvation depends on "'destroying themselves.'"¹²

Another respect in which Taji resembles some of the pagan and Christian gnostics of the ancient world sets him apart from the symbol(s) of his polar opposite (A≠B). He links exoteric Christianity with an "Eastern" power structure that suppresses the realization of freedom, individualism, and wholeness.¹³ After rescuing Yillah and gaining an idea of her history, Taji concludes that her surrogate father, the priest Aleema, kept her captive "for ulterior purposes connected with his sacerdotal supremacy" (M, p. 139). With this view, Melville implies that orthodox Christianity underwrites a master-slave mentality.

As is explained more thoroughly later in the discussion, Melville associates the quest for gnosis with power. In risking their lives for gnosis, Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael confront the danger of mythic inflation wherein one comes to believe he can be the only God. This idea is part of the gnostic myth of the fall of Narcissus-like Soul. Nonetheless, Melville consistently justifies the effort to obtain gnosis and identifies his protagonists' quest object(s) with the error of "inferior" beliefs. With this motif he distinguishes between the twin images (A≠B).

Like the fallen Souls Jarl and Yillah, the impaired world of Mardi is more emphatically identified than the potential gnostic redeemer with the dark, pagan, barbaric East; femaleness; exoteric religion; myth and

magic; "inferior" concepts of sacrifice; and, the "lost pearl" of gnosis. All of the content that is stressed in relation to Taji, however, is also identified with Mardi. For example, this world is linked repeatedly in anecdotes, parables, myths, legends, and factual events to the gnostic symbolic term the Alien Life, thereby establishing it as being an upside down or inverted mirror image of the Alien Life Taji himself. Thus one perceives that the image pattern of inverted mirrors is a cosmic symbol. It describes reality as composed of a realm of Non-Being and Being. Read metaphysically and psychologically, the inverted mirror symbol alludes to the higher consciousness ($A=B$ yet $A \neq B$) as compared with the lower one ($A \neq B$ yet $A=B$).

A myth that alludes to the world of Mardi as the inverted image of a Narcissus-like water-gazer and reformer is related as Taji and his hunting party travel from Valapee to Juam. Passing by a huge, barren rock, Mohi tells a story involving the idea that some "envious" giants once saw this rock when it was a beautiful garden. In the act of trying to steal it, they turned it upside down. The white coral reefs around the rock, adds Mohi, are the bones of one giant whose foot was caught when the land was inverted. After passing the rock, the party sees a "lonely, . . . solitary" man above them on the top of the rock "seated in a lofty cleft." He is gazing down at the water below in which he has a fishing line (M, pp. 211-12).

This episode and "tradition," as Media refers to the story about the rock, imply that the world of Mardi is the twin or alienated and inverted mirror image of a Narcissus-like deity, whose guilty impulses brought about its fall and the coming to be of a "drowned" Man. Thus it serves to define the world of Mardi as Taji's mirror image. The medita-

tive water-gazer, the fisherman, in the "tradition" symbolizes the potential gnostic redeemer who, by means of an act of reflection, is striving to invert again and heal the divided god-head. Because the gnostic movement is called "the Secret Tradition," one is aided in recognizing the gnostic nature of the themes and symbols of this myth.

The gnostic metaphysical symbolism of the generation of the Monad by means of twins and opposites and the imagery of inverted mirrors is as important in Moby-Dick as it is in Typee and Mardi. Some of the ways that the gnostic cosmological symbolism is used in Moby-Dick, such as the formal structure of the Preface and Ishmael's vision of the whale as the universal mother-father who emanates twins, have been mentioned. What remains to show is that this symbol is used in Moby-Dick in the same way that it is used in Typee and Mardi.

Paralleling Tommo and Taji and their emanation from an empty or deteriorating world, Ishmael rejects the deficient Coffin of the Spirit, Peter Coffin's Spouter-Inn, and leaves with his twin and opposite, Queequeg. The relatively self-possessed, masculo-feminine Queequeg is treated as Ishmael's twin (A=B). On one level of the symbolism that is identified with him, he is portrayed as a potential gnostic redeemer. Queequeg, as has been pointed out but not explored in much detail, is a symbol of the Alien Man. Both he and Ishmael are exiles, rovers, and wanderers. Queequeg's deepest desire, like that of Ishmael, is to become the fully enlightened gnostic redeemer who can redeem the fallen world-Soul.

In one episode in the narrative, Queequeg reveals this desire to Ishmael. While they are in bed together in a room in the Spouter-Inn, which is "illuminated by the flame of [a] new-lit lamp," Queequeg tells

Ishmael that "at bottom . . . [his rejection of his home] was actuated by a profound desire to learn among the Christians the arts whereby to make his people still happier than they were; and more than that, still better than they were." What he is really seeking to do in his journey into the dark Christian lands that are foreign to him is "to gain the power of enlightening his untutored countrymen" (M-D, pp. 88, 87, 89).

With reference to the potential gnostic redeemer's quest, another parallel between Queequeg and Ishmael is that in the fallen world, both are working toward the salvation of their own souls. As they lie talking in their bed in the Spouter-Inn, Queequeg reveals this to Ishmael. When Ishmael asks him why he does not go back to his home and become "the King," Queequeg says that he must purify himself before he can return. "By and by," he says, I will "return--as soon as [I feel myself] baptized again" (M-D, p. 90). Thus, Queequeg believes that to be reborn and become immortal (i.e. a king) involves a "death" in the reflective element water. These remarks imply that Queequeg is working toward the salvation of his soul while he is in the fallen world.

Ishmael, too, is concerned with attaining salvation, and, like Queequeg, he indicates that attaining salvation involves a "death" in the sea. Ishmael implies this not only when he associates his quest object in his thoughts with "forbidden" knowledge but also when he visits the Whaleman's Chapel. There he reflects on the "marble tablets, with black borders, masoned into the wall on either side of the pulpit" which commemorate those who have died at sea. At first the thought of these non-existent people makes him anxious, but then the thought that their "fate may be [his]" makes him "merry" (M-D, pp. 63, 66). He decides that a death at sea is a "fine chance for [a] promotion . . .

which will make [him] an immortal" (M-D, pp. 66).

Thinking in a semi-aware way of the return to the Unknown God, Ishmael indicates that he has some familiarity with the gnostic concept of salvation and is concerned with attaining self (Self)-integration. To better understand the metaphysical, psychological, and moral implications of this passage, one should recall the gnostic dictum that only like cures like: if the fall of the Narcissus-like deity results in his "death" and entrapment in the lower nature (Nature) and in dualism, then a repetition of the act of "drowning" (reflecting= meditating and "dying") reverses the effects of the fall.

Another parallel between Ishmael and Queequeg in regard to their characterization as a potential gnostic redeemer is that both appear to have a concept of reincarnation. Ishmael implies that this doctrine is included in his beliefs when he thinks of a death at sea as a "chance for [a] promotion" (M-D, p. 66). When one is promoted, one progresses from one level to another. Because the highest level, in Ishmael's view, consists of becoming "immortal," one surmises that he entertains theories about reincarnation and/or self-transformation in his vision of reality (M-D, p. 66). This doctrine constitutes yet another parallel between Queequeg and Ishmael that works to portray them as identical twins, for Queequeg's goal of becoming "king" speaks to the same view (M-D, p. 9). Here it is interesting to note that when Taji is hailed as an incarnation of the deity after he arrives in Mardi, he wishes that he could remember more about his "previous existence" (M, p. 166).

Implicit in the gnostic interpretation of reincarnation is the belief in a permanent, metaphysical ego. That Ishmael has a concept of the inner self (Self) before he goes to sea is suggested when he is

portrayed as thinking that a death at sea would transform him into an "immortal." After he meditates on the marble tablets, Ishmael makes the following assertion:

Methinks we have hugely mistaken this matter of Life and Death. Methinks that what they call my shadow here on earth [the spirit] is my true substance. Methinks that in looking at things spiritual, we are too much like oysters observing the sun through the water, and thinking that thick water the thinnest of air. Methinks my body is but the lees of my better being. In fact, take my body who will, take it I say, it is not me. And therefore three cheers for Nantucket; and come a stove boat and a stove body when they will, for stave my soul [the true self], Jove himself [the world-Soul] cannot. (M-D, p. 66)

Describing both Ishmael and Queequeg as symbols of the Alien Man and as the figure of the potential gnostic redeemer, Melville portrays them as mirror images (A=B). This pattern is repeated in regard to all of the symbols of Ishmael's quest object. For example, the Alien Life the sea contains the secrets of the highest Truths of gnosis in her depths, as do Moby Dick, the crew of Pequod, and Ahab. When Pip is left an exile and alien in the sea, he sees the Father in her Depth. This indicates that the sea is another symbol of the potentially Self-Integrated Man on one level of the meaning of the symbolism identified with it.

Besides the sea, the members of the crew of the Pequod symbolize the Alien Man of gnostic belief--the potential gnostic redeemer. They are aliens, eternal wanderers, and exiles from the land, for as whalemens their home is the sea. Whalemens are men from "another world." Unlike all other men, they "draw their living from the bottomless deep itself" (M-D, p. 98). They are "gold-hunters" (M-D, p. 522). Hunting the whale, they search for the power that enlightens humanity and can make it happier and better. Contained in their barbaric vessel, the men of

the Pequod are an image of the "pearl" in the shaggy oyster about which Babalanja speaks. Like the other symbols of Ishmael's quest object, Ahab, too, serves as a symbol of the potential gnostic redeemer. Just as the fiery Ahab exists in the depths of his vessel, so the most potent form of the Spirit is imaged to exist like a spark in the depths of the fallen world-Soul.

Besides the sea, the crew of the Pequod, and Ahab, the "unaccompanied, secluded White Whale" is identified as a symbol of the Alien Man and potential savior (M-D, pp. 239-40). Like all of the other symbols of Ishmael's quest object, he is an alien, an exile, a "solitary" one, and a stranger to the world in which he exists but with which he is essentially identical (M-D, p. 271). Although he exists in the sea, like man, Moby Dick is a mammal. Therefore, he and the sea represent the Alien Life in relation to one another. And just as Ahab, the owner of the gold doubloon, is identified with the depths of his world, so the same holds true of the whale. He is identified as one who possesses within his (her) depths a buried treasure--the "gold" of ambergris (M-D, p. 522).

Even the world of the land is portrayed in detailed terms as a symbol of the potential gnostic redeemer. For example, not only the protagonist's re-enactment of the gnostic drama of Creation but also the legend of Nantucket, which alludes to this aspect of gnostic mythos, identifies the world of the land with the gnostic term the Alien Life. The legend of Nantucket describes the first settlers of the island, "Red-Men," as mirror images of the Narcissus-like god figure of Ishmael's myth. As Ishmael's Narcissus-Man is elliptically suggested to do, the Indians are portrayed as descending into the world in order to find a

"lost pearl." In their case, it is a baby whom an eagle stole from them (M-D, pp. 97, 31).

Other details in the novel depict the world of the land as the potential Illuminator. The world of the land is identified as the Alien Life which contains the "light" or "spark" of gnosis when Ishmael's room in Coffin's inn is described as containing a candle in the middle of a "crazy old sea chest that does double duty as a wash-stand and centre table" (M-D, p. 46). This image alludes to the inner luminous self within the fallen world-Soul, and it prepares readers for Ishmael's salvation by means of a coffin at the conclusion of the novel.

While Melville portrays both his protagonist and the quest object of the protagonist as the Alien Man, he also characterizes them all as the impaired Alien Man. Queequeg is portrayed as the impaired Alien Man. The fact that Queequeg is not "the King" but the "queen" (queen-queg; queg = peg = nail) indicates that he is not a fully enlightened gnostic redeemer who knows the sense in which he is and is not "equal" to the Unknown God. And Queequeg is associated with the dualism and guilty impulses of the Soul in gnostic belief, such as vanity, rebelliousness, and sensuality.

Besides eating only rare steak from the breakfast table of the Spouter-Inn and selling shrunken heads, Queequeg defines his kingdom as the site of "the pure and undefiled throne of thirty pagan kings" and claims that "Christians . . . had unfitted him" for it, thereby evincing a dualistic, hypocritical attitude (M-D, pp. 45, 59, 90). From these remarks, one gathers that Queequeg is not one of the "sons of interior knowledge" yet. Moreover, these remarks indicate that Queequeg has not discovered the "gold" that exists in Christian tradition according to

gnostic lights. Queequeg's motives for leaving his home provide good evidence that on one level he symbolizes the gnostic redeemer. However, they indicate, too, the nature of his faults. Queequeg has an "ambitious soul," and he is curious. In deciding to leave his father's kingdom and to "sow his wild oats" while he looks for the power to "enlighten his people," Queequeg rebels against "the King," his father (M-D, pp. 88, 64, 90). Not only the dualistic mode of thinking but also curiosity, self-love, vanity, egotism, pride, sensual desire, appetite, and rebelliousness are some of the "impulses" that involve the Soul in the Fall.

Ishmael, too, is portrayed as the impaired Alien Man. Whereas one indication that Queequeg is not a fully enlightened gnostic savior is that he is not a king, one sign that Ishmael is not an Illuminator is that he is not an "immortal." Moreover, Ishmael is identified with dualism and the same guilty inclinations that are associated with Queequeg. Ishmael's dualism is indicated by (1) his claim that Jove has nothing to do with his "soul" which is his "better being"; (2) his remark to Queequeg while they confide in each other in bed at the inn that going to sea as a whaleman is his "own design," and (3) his disdain for and fear of the demiurgical world, the body, the senses, and sexuality (M-D, pp. 66, 90).

According to the gnostic imagination, the demiurgical world-Soul, such as is represented by Moby Dick, Coffin and his inn, and Queequeg, not only subverts the effort to attain self (Self)-integration, but also it participates in the process of its own salvation. The powers of the cosmos cannot annihilate the inner luminous self (Self), but, identified with Fate and Time, they can affect when the gnostic adept attains enlightenment. And indeed, the adept will not obtain full enlightenment

until he realizes that the world, the body, sex, and the senses are the primary means to gnosis and that without the fallen world, the perfected condition of the Spirit is not possible.

Ishmael must perceive the "gold" in the fallen Christian and pagan world of the lower nature (Nature) and understand that the lower world and the unknown, transcendent Spirit are essentially identical, thereby not negating the moral vision and its dualism, but transcending it with a transmoral, affirmative vision. He must attain the higher consciousness, the paradigm of which is expressed by the symbol $A=B$ yet $A \neq B$.

Details included in "The Carpet-Bag" and "The Spouter-Inn" indicate Ishmael's dependence on Fate for the success of his effort to obtain self (Self)-integration, and they reveal his overly negative, disdainful attitude toward the body. Moreover, the events related in these chapters suggest that the world-Soul participates in its own salvation.

For example, Ishmael's "instinct" and his lack of money lead him to Coffin's Spouter Inn. There, Coffin, whom Ishmael takes to be "an emigrant" from Nantucket, tells Ishmael that he can have a room but that he'll have to sleep with "a harpooner"--"a dark-complexed chap . . . who eats nothing but steaks, and likes 'em rare" (M-D, pp. 32-33, 38-39). Ishmael is horrified at the idea of sleeping with anyone, even his own "brother." "No man prefers to sleep two in a bed," he says, objecting to Coffin's "design for [his] bedfellow" (M-D, pp. 41, 44). The storyteller's remarks that the sperm whale is "guided by some infallible instinct--say, rather, secret intelligence from the Deity" casts light on this passage (M-D, p. 268). They imply that the pneumatic "spark" in the fallen Soul works toward the Soul's salvation.

Besides a positive sense, there is a negative sense in which the

fallen (world-) psyche participates in its own salvation, which can be illustrated by the implications of Ishmael's want of money. Ishmael's lack of money signifies a lack of "gold," which is to say, his deficiency in respect to being self (Self)-integrated. Like his step-mother's faults, the world-Coffin's failure to provide Ishmael with "gold" is the very means by which Ishmael is led to reject the deficient, "ignorant" world and seek the "light" by which to renew it and himself. What keeps the Spirit in poverty also serves to impel the Spirit to overcome it. Speaking of the gnostic myths of the potential redeemer that date from the ancient world, Jonas observes that one feature of this mythos is the expression of the idea that the world's weapons for keeping the Spirit in Ignorance serve to awaken the potential redeemer to his lack of "knowledge" of the self (Self).¹⁴

Besides being dominated by the dualistic mode of perception ($A \neq B$), Queequeg and Ishmael are twins ($A=B$) in another respect. Portions of the novel that record Ishmael's preparations for his descent into the depths of the (world-) Soul depict him, like Queequeg, as the impaired Alien Man--the entity that he is to save.

Ishmael's vanity, sensual desire, and rebelliousness are emphasized in his reaction to Peter Coffin and his inn, to which Ishmael feels superior. Moreover, he is associated with some of these qualities in "Loomings," where the reflective, Narcissus-like rover and reformer receives and projects his vision of the whale and reveals his motives for wanting to go whaling. In the episode in which Ishmael receives and projects his vision of the whale and the sea as an abstract idea, an androgynous but female dream, and a hidden treasure, his "curiosity," "wild conceits," and "love . . . [for the] forbidden" are named as

factors that "sway" him to embark on his quest and rebel against the fallen, deficient world (M-D, pp. 44, 29-30).

Ishmael's lack of self (Self)-knowledge is expressed in these passages. According to the implications of the passage in "Loomings," sensual desire is one of the Ishmael's motives for going to sea. Yet once in Coffin's inn, Ishmael feels disgust at the idea of sleeping with another man. He has forgotten one of his motives for seeking to "know" and one of the methods (sex) by which to "know" the self (Self) in all of its aspects. Here Ishmael is being portrayed as the Soul that upon entering the fallen world (-Soul) suffers a loss of "knowledge" about the self (Self).

Not only Queequeg and Ishmael but also the others who serve as symbols of the protagonist's quest object represent the impaired Alien Man or Alien Life. The dualism that marks the habit of thinking among the members of the crew of the Pequod--their deficiency--is signified by the fact that if they were self (Self)-integrated, they would not be seeking to "know" the gold doubloon, which is the deep meaning of their effort to overcome or "comprehend" Moby Dick.

While Ahab's dualism and deficiency have been discussed in some detail, it does not hurt to add that just as Queequeg knows that he is not the "King," and Ishmael knows that he is not an "immortal," as the quest for Moby Dick is undertaken in earnest, Ishmael's mirror image Ahab indicates that he is neither a king nor an immortal but is a split or deficient man. Watching the sunset in his cabin after the crew has agreed to hunt for Moby Dick, Ahab indicates that he wears the "Iron Crown of Lombardy . . . [which is] bright . . . [but] not gold . . . [and] 'tis split" (M-D, pp. 225-26). Furthermore, Ahab's first mates

are split off from him. His young wife has seen so little of him she hardly knows him, and more than any other member of the crew, Starbuck psychologically separates himself from Ahab and the hunt for the White Whale. As is explained later in connection with discussing the image pattern of the fall of the "One" into the "Two" or the "Many," a similar symbolism is attached to Ishmael.

Besides the imagery that portrays the head (m.) and tail (f.) or "king" and "queen" of the whale as a cosmic symbol of a warring, self-divided whole, the dualism of the sea and the whale is suggested by the "ignorant" Ahab's description of her as an "infidel" queen who has founded her own "separate throne" apart from that of her consort (M-D, p. 629). Moreover, Ishmael's discovery that the whale's vision is dualistic refers to the same theme. The fact that the location of the whale's eyes makes them "two distinct windows," says Ishmael, "sadly [impairs] its view" (M-D, p. 428).

The variant symbols of Ishmael's quest object and Ishmael himself continue to be identified with the gnostic slate of guilty impulses. Hubris and egotism are portrayed emphatically in the chapter "The Quarter-Deck," which shows Ahab winning the support of the crew for his hunt. That the men's quest involves the egotistical effort to "become" God is suggested when the crucified and persecuting Ahab nails the gold doubloon to the main-mast, and the crowd cheers. After Starbuck protests that the hunt is "blasphemous," Ahab, with the crew's support, responds that he has no "master," that no one is "over" him, and that he would "strike the sun if it insulted him" (M-D, p. 221). Repeated throughout the narrative are the guilty associations of the gnostic-informed Narcissus' theme and the dangers of the effort to become "equal" to God.

However, the gnostic doctrine that in one's true self (Self), one is identical in essence with the highest god-head is the belief that emphatically is advanced.

The world of the land is fundamentally the same as the world of sea and *Moby Dick*, and both are mirror images of Ishmael in respect to serving as a symbol of the impaired Alien Man. Like all of the other entities, the world of the land in *Moby-Dick* is portrayed as a deficient Life which is marked by dualism, egotism, vanity, and sensual desire. Nantucket is described as the impaired Light in the episode in which Queequeg and Ishmael arrive on the island. Finding the Try-Pots Inn, they see Mrs. Hussey, the owner of the inn and a cousin of Peter Coffin, having an argument with a man. Ishmael is struck "by the sight of a freckled woman with yellow hair and a yellow gown, standing in the porch of the inn, under a dull red lamp, that looks much like an injured eye, and carrying on a brisk scolding with a man in a purple woollen shirt" (*M-D*, p. 100).

Perceiving a general pattern of inverted mirror images and emanation in Melville's works, one knows that if *Typee*, *Mardi*, and *Moby-Dick* were subjected to a more systematic and detailed comparison than they receive in this discussion, one would find that they are all basically the same.

A few examples serve to make this point clear. In regard to identifying the protagonist and his quest object with the gnostic concept of the guilty inclinations of the Spirit in *Typee* and *Mardi* as well as *Moby-Dick*, one needs to consider that like Ishmael, the protagonists Tommo and Taji are identified with sensual desire, rebellion, ambition, egotism, the desire to "become" God, and curiosity. An association with

these "guilty" drives in these two novels is implicit in the central character's act of projecting his will or desire, as a female-like thought or image, out of the depths of his consciousness. However, one knows for certain that in Typee and Mardi the protagonist's quest from the outset involves an effort to "become" God because Tommo and Taji are treated as god-men during their sojourn in the fallen world. Pagels, citing one Christian gnostic text, explains that according to the gnostic imagination "whoever perceives divine reality 'becomes what he sees.'"¹⁵ In other words, Tommo and Taji are thinking, as Ishmael is, of becoming an "immortal" before they descend into the fallen world.

In regard to the treatment of Ishmael and his quest object as symbols of polar opposites and Melville's habit of identifying the quest object more vigorously than the protagonist with the dark, pagan East, barbarism, magic, exoteric Christianity, and "inferior" kinds of sacrifice, only several points need to be made in order to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick employ the same image pattern of inverted mirrors and duplicate one another in the most painstaking manner. Mrs. Hussey is Peter Coffin's cousin. Peter Coffin is from Nantucket, the home of the Indian and whalers, such as the Christian Starbuck and the gnostic magician-technocrat Ahab. This "geneology" links the whale, the Indian, the Devil, the world, Queequeg, Ahab, Starbuck, and the Pequod to one another and associates the quest object with the dark, pagan, "female" East, despotism, exoteric Christianity, "inferior" forms of sacrifice (power=atonement=vengeance), and debased expressions of gnosticism.

NOTES

¹ See Pagels, p. 59, for a description of this symbolism in the Valentinian school of ancient gnosticism.

² In Chapter III, Seeyle is mentioned as one who has noticed an image pattern of inverted mirrors in Melville's fiction. This study explores this image pattern more thoroughly than he does, and it interprets it in the light of Melville's gnostic aims and methods. Therefore, repetition is not a problem. See Chapter III, p. 112. Sachs remarks on this image pattern in Moby-Dick. See Chapter I, p. 39, n. 61.

³ Jonas, pp. 80-86.

⁴ Campbell, III, 488-89.

⁵ Jonas, p. 98.

⁶ Senior, p. 2.

⁷ Campbell, II, 13, 28.

⁸ See Chapter 3, "Simon Magus and Helen, His Thought," in Dart for some insights into Melville's familiarity with the Simonian school of ancient gnosticism (pp. 71-96). The specific sources for Yillah appear to be the "Hymn of the Pearl" and the Simonian mythos about the gnostic redeemer and his consort. Like the figure of Helen in relation to Simon Magus, Yillah, Taji's Thought, is treated as a special incarnation of the archetype.

⁹ Pagels, pp. 165-66.

¹⁰ Plutarch De Iside 62, in Grant, pp. 83-85.

¹¹ Jonas, p. 288.

¹² Pagels, p. 111.

¹³ See Chapter II, "'One God, One Bishop': The Politics of Monotheism" for a discussion of this point in Pagels, pp. 33-56.

¹⁴ Jonas, pp. 73-74.

¹⁵ Pagels, p. 161.

CHAPTER VI

MORE GNOSTIC IMAGE PATTERNS IN THE FIRST PART OF THE SPIRITUAL
BIOGRAPHIES OF TOMMO, TAJI, AND ISHMAEL: THE SERPENT, THE
"CAPTIVITY" OF THE SOUL IN DARKNESS, THE FALL OF
"ONE" INTO THE "MANY," THE HIDDEN DYNAMO,
THE "ZIGZAG," AND THE
"SACRED MARRIAGE"

Besides employing the image patterns of the generation of the Monad by twins and opposites and inverted mirrors, Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick are informed and structured by other symbols which are derived from gnostic Creation and salvation mythos. The ones of interest now are the Serpent, the "sinking," "burial," or "captivity" of the Soul in Darkness, the fall of the "One" into the "Many," the hidden dynamo, the "zigzag," and the "sacred marriage."¹ One of these image patterns is more important than the others, and some pertain more strongly to the theme of the salvation of man (Man) than the rest.

The image pattern which subsumes all of the others is the fall of the "One" into the "Many" and the subsequent effort to attain unity. This metaphor, Jonas observes, which in the higher reaches of gnostic thought is given both a "universal (metaphysical)" and an "individual (mystical)" reading, describes "the whole movement of reality in categories of the loss and recovery of . . . Unity."² Accompanying the idea that the way "down" is the way "out," the metaphor in the mythos of the

potential gnostic redeemer refers to the fall of the potentially self-integrated savior figure (the "One") into the state of the self-divided man (the "Two" or the "Many") and his recovery of self (Self)-integration. The fall of the "One" into the "Two" or "the Many" is alluded to in the previous discussion of the symbolisms of the generation of the Monad by twins and opposites.

In the next part of this study, Tommo's, Taji's, and Ishmael's recovery of unity is discussed. At present, however, the part of this dynamic image pattern which describes the loss of unity and those which pertain to the soteriological activity of the potential gnostic savior are the chief matters of interest. Although it is subordinated to the theme of the self-salvation of the deity, the theme of the loss of wholeness exerts a strong influence on the action pattern of the first half of the spiritual histories of these protagonists. The symbolism of the Serpent and the "captivity" of the Soul in Darkness bear much of the burden of describing these protagonists' transformation into the divided self (Self). However, as a specific event, the fall of the "One" into the "Many" is mentioned briefly in this part of the study. It is referred to explicitly in connection with the discussion of the hidden dynamo symbolism, but it is implicitly described as well in the episodes in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick which truly mark the Soul's "burial" in Darkness.

The "zigzag," the hidden dynamo, and the "sacred marriage" image patterns are discussed together because they are more expressive of the theme of the self-salvation of the deity than that of the deterioration and fragmentation of the god-head. As becomes clear in the course of the study, the Serpent imagery, too, contributes to this theme. The

Serpent and the "zigzag" metaphors are complex, dynamic image patterns which are essentially metaphorical equivalents. However, the Serpent is a more multivalenced and equivocal symbol than the "zigzag." The "zigzag" symbolism describes a dialectical action pattern which clearly is mirrored in the "sacred marriage" metaphor. The discussion of these two image patterns reveals that the themes of the saved savior and the gnostic redeemer's union with and rescue of the fallen Thought of God operate in the first half of the spiritual biographies of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael.

The Gnostic Serpent

The Serpent is a highly developed metaphor in gnostic mythos. Basically, it refers either to the fallen Soul or to the gnostic redeemer. When it describes the fallen Soul, it takes two forms. It either functions (1) as a static metaphor for the circumscribing cosmos or (2) as a dynamic metaphor for the "downgoing" and "upcoming" energy of existence. In connection with the former, it is frequently termed or imaged as a labyrinth or the outermost "ring" of the cosmos. As has been mentioned, the term the "general Serpent" is used to designate this reading of the serpent metaphor in the gnostic mythos of antiquity.

When the Serpent refers to the gnostic savior, it is termed the Serpent of Wisdom or the Paraclete. The Wise Serpent describes the partly or fully enlightened redeemer as the Illuminator. The Paraclete refers only to the fully enlightened spiritual master, and allusions to it are reserved for the most important occasions. Both the Serpent of Wisdom and the Paraclete as symbols transcend an attachment to any single figure of the gnostic savior. Taken absolutely, they refer to

the eternal principle of Illumination (gnosis) which annihilates Ignorance. The symbol of the Paraclete especially serves this function.

Discussing the famous medieval manuscript the Book of Kells in relation to the likelihood of its indebtedness to gnosticism, Campbell says that the Paraclete is usually symbolized as a dragon or a serpent with a forked tongue of fire issuing from its mouth. A bolt of lightning is a variant image.³ In the course of discussing Melville's use of the symbol of the gnostic Serpent, the point is made that all of its mundane and transmundane meanings and images are alluded to. The only way in which Melville deviates from the traditional uses of the Serpent symbolism of gnosticism is that he uses lightning or equivalent terms and images to describe illumination as a gradual process. For example, an allusion to the process of being shocked into gnosis is found in Moby-Dick in connection with the episode in which Ishmael first sees Queequeg. When Queequeg enters the room at the Spouter-Inn and Ishmael gets a look at his "unearthly complexion," the "ideas" about the alien man engendered in Ishmael are described as "passing through [him] like lightning" (M-D, p. 48).

In Typee, the constitutive metaphor of a serpent's downward movement along a vertical axis is most emphatically employed in the portion of the narrative which details Tommo's and Toby's trip up the mountain of Nukuheva Island and then their downward descent into the valley of the Typees. With references to Tommo and Toby being "obliged to crawl on [their] hands and feet, sliding along the oozy surfaces of the rocks, or slipping into deep pools" and "worming" their way down a mountainside, one knows that as they make their way toward the Life that is "death" to the spiritual soul, they represent the "general Serpent" or psychical

Soul in its "downgoing" movement (T, pp. 58-59, 39).

At the same time that Tommo is being depicted as the "general Serpent," he is referred to as the Serpent of Wisdom. The means by which Melville conveys this reference is that of emphasizing the protagonist's suffering. For example, Tommo's and Toby's agonizing climb up the highest, central peak on the island through tall canes makes the protagonist intensely thirsty. Finally coming upon water, Tommo begins to drink "the clear element," but "a single drop of the cold fluid . . . [freezes] every drop of blood in [his] body; [and] the fever that had been burning in his veins [gives] place on the instant to death-like chills, which [shake him] one after another like so many shocks of electricity" (T, p. 53).

Speaking of the idea in gnostic mythos that before the protagonist can get "out," he must re-experience the fall of the increasingly terrified and injured Soul into Darkness and division, Jonas observes that this feature of the spiritual history of the gnostic savior indicates "a sacrificial element in the savior's descent He is willing for the Pearl's sake to take upon himself an exile's fate and to duplicate in his person the history of that which he came to redeem: the Soul." Moreover, the extremes in emotional states, which Jonas says characterize the suffering Soul, are features of Tommo's depiction as the savior who experiences the Soul's fall.⁴

Some of evidence which suggests that Taji and Jarl are imaged as "the general Serpent" of gnostic thought as they make their way to the world of marred deity (Mardi) is found in the previously mentioned image patterns in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick that identify the quest object with vessels, abstract ideas, women, beasts, gold, whales, mountains,

and islands.

The Chamois or mountain goat, the vessel in which Taji and Jarl travel to reach the island(s) of Mardi, is a whale-boat. As readers recall, a variant symbol of the whale is a serpent. When the Chamois is "abstracted" by Taji from the Arcturion, he thinks of it as a girl (Jarl-Yillah) with "golden locks" (M, p. 19). Headed in a southwesterly direction across the Pacific, this vessel is described as traveling up and down waves which are likened to "watery [cliffs] in the Alps" (M, p. 37). With such symbolism, Taji and Jarl in their whale-boat, which is an "abstracted" idea and a female vessel, are portrayed as a symbol of "general Serpent" of gnostic belief--the "upcoming" and "downgoing" energy of life.

Other vessels and paths on which Taji travels are identified with serpents. The Parki is identified with a serpent by means of Annatoo, its captain, who occasionally is "wont to coil herself away, like a garter-snake under a stone" (M, p. 102). The royal barge of King Media in which Taji travels while in Mardi has for a prow a "shark's mouth," and the body of this canoe is described as a "dark, snaky length . . . , like a sea-serpent's train" (M, p. 199). Moreover, when Taji and the hunting party for Yillah are exploring the isle of Valapee, they are described as "coiling through the thickets, like the track of a serpent," as they "[wind] along the path" to a garden in which they hope to find Yillah (M, p. 205).

When the Soul arrives in the world, Jonas observes that in gnostic mythos it is often depicted as losing its way and wandering in a labyrinth.⁵ Obviously Melville has the Serpent-labyrinth reference in mind in the detail in Mardi which records Taji's hunt for Yillah on Valapee.

In regard to noting the constancy with which Melville employs gnostic image patterns in his fiction, it is worthwhile to point out that Tommo thinks of the "foot-paths twisting and turning among the thickets" in Typee valley as "a labyrinth" (T, p. 194). As readers can see, like Tommo, Taji is linked to the gnostic symbol of the "general Serpent" as he makes his way "down" to get "out."

Like his prototype, at the same time that Taji is described as moving like a serpent along a serpentine path in the world-labyrinth, he is indirectly portrayed as the gnostic Serpent of Wisdom.

Numerous symbolic details throughout the narrative relate Taji to the Serpent of Wisdom. For example, like his mirror image Tommo, Taji undergoes suffering. Further, one notable incident in the portion of the novel which describes his and Jarl's journey to the Parki refers to this aspect of the protagonist's characterization and records him performing his soteriological function even while his is only relatively enlightened.

During their travels up and down the mountains of the sea, Taji and Jarl unite to kill a "surlly lord," a shark which eyes their boat "as a wild boar a kid." With the act, Taji in unison with his female aspect symbolically destroys the more brutal aspects of existence (T, pp. 53-55). Taken absolutely, this episode is but one of many which serve to foreshadow Taji's success in his effort to become the Illuminator. The union of the mundane and transmundane Spirit symbolized in this episode expresses Melville's beliefs about the mutuality of redemption between the immanent and transcendent aspects of the god-head.

Before taking up the subject of the gnostic serpent symbolism in Moby-Dick, it is interesting to note that Campbell syncretically identi-

fies the figure of the god-man Odin with the imagery on a sixteenth-century German gold coin which juxtaposes the serpent Nehushtan with Christ on the Cross. Giving it a gnostic reading, Campbell explains that "Christ is a reference to the serpent, or . . . the two are alternative manifestations of a power transcending both."⁶ In view of the gnostic serpent imagery in Melville's major fiction and Taji's and Jarl's identification with Christianity and the old Vikings, the theory that Taji, the potential "Christ," and Jarl, the fallen Soul, operate as references to Nehushtan and the gnostic Jesus does not seem unwarranted.

Exploring this theory sheds more light on Melville's gnostic methodology and polemics. Just as the serpent Nehushtan is associated with the principle that only like cures like and healing, so Jarl is a "double" god-figure who "with charity [binds] up the . . . gashes" in Taji's clothes but washes his shirts in "a decapitated cask" (M, p. 15). In the gnostic vocabulary of symbolic terms, a "garment," such as a shirt, is a metaphor for the body and the world of Being. Thus, as the god-figure who "washes" Taji's shirts in headless containers, Jarl is described as the labyrinthine "general Serpent" in which the Soul undergoes numerous reincarnations or changes of "garments" in order to get clean. With this symbolism, Jarl is described as the symbolic analogue of the sea chest in Ishmael's room at the Spouter-Inn which does the "double duty" of serving as a "wash-stand and centre table" (M-D, p. 46).

Other parallels between Nehushtan and Jarl exist which cast light on Melville's attitude toward orthodox Christianity. For example, just as the serpent Nehushtan is regarded as a type of Christ, so Jarl is also. Melville's identification of Jarl with orthodox Christianity and his treatment of this figure reveal more about his references to and

attitude toward the Crucifixion.

In the narrative, Jarl loses his life for two reasons. One is that he sacrifices it for Taji. Jarl knows that he is risking his life when he embarks on the quest for the unknown with Taji. On this quest, he is eventually killed by Aleema's sons, the darkest forces of the psyche who desire revenge. With this symbolism, Melville expresses the view that Christ's Crucifixion in part was effected by Error and Ignorance. However, Jarl's (Christ's) death is also portrayed as a result of his own lack of "knowledge." Jarl quits the hunt for Yillah because he desires to rest and to indulge in his inordinate love of wine (M, pp. 106, 292, 311). Shortly after this he is killed. Thus the "ignorance" that kills Melville's symbol of an orthodox Christ-figure is identified with the estranged form of the deity and presented as external to him and with the Christ-figure himself and presented also as internal.

Through his treatment of Jarl, Melville continues to allude to his preference for a Christian gnostic interpretation of the Crucifixion. In his view as in that of the Valentinians, the Crucifixion itself is a multivalenced symbol which yields a "lower," orthodox interpretation and a "higher," secret "wisdom." The "lower" one, this novel suggests, serves to entrap the Light in Darkness, but Melville acknowledges in Mardi that the orthodox view of atonement has its own claim to heroism, and he implies more forcefully than in Typee that the Spirit who effects the Crucifixion to reveal gnosis is essentially identical with the lower world-God who effects it to suppress the Light.

The portion of the Moby-Dick which introduces Queequeg and describes Ishmael's and Queequeg's act of emanation portrays Ishmael-Queequeg in terms of the serpent imagery of gnostic cosmological mythos. To delin-

eate Ishmael and Queequeg as the "general Serpent" who is following the serpentine path laid out in the pre-cosmic fall, Melville identifies Queequeg as the primary symbol of the "general Serpent," and he portrays Ishmael as "putting on" Queequeg's "serpent" nature. Moreover, he characterizes the road that they take from New Bedford "down" to Nantucket and the "road" of the sea as a serpent.

In a highly comic image, Queequeg is described directly as a serpent. After he and Ishmael spend their first night together, Ishmael watches Queequeg dress in the morning. To put on his boots, Queequeg crawls under the bed. After some violent exertions, he emerges with a new skin. The boots that he wears are made out of "damp, wrinkled cowhide" (M-D, pp. 55-56).

Besides these direct means, Melville also employs more indirect ones to portray Queequeg as the "general Serpent." He describes Queequeg's skin, like the serpent-paths in Typee and Mardi, as an elaborately patterned labyrinth and through the magic of language transforms Queequeg's legs into symbols of the axis mundi on which the gnostic "double" Serpent ascends and descends. Moreover, serpent-like phallic imagery is linked to this character.

Laying in bed with the fallen Word of Life, Ishmael observes Queequeg's hieroglyphically marked, purple, yellow, brown, green, and black skin. To him it resembles the "interminable Cretan labyrinth . . . which . . . [is] the world" (M-D, p. 52). Like Taji in his pursuit of the "lost pearl" Yillah, Ishmael's hunt for the Light takes him on a serpentine path and mandates that he "know" the "general Serpent." Ishmael's attempt to "read" the Word Queequeg and to "see" him are part of his effort to "know" the self (Self). Using an image which describes

Queequeg as the "general Serpent" in its "upcoming" movement, Ishmael notes that Queequeg's "very legs [are] marked, as if a parcel of dark green frogs were running up the trunks of young palms" (M-D, pp. 48-49). And Queequeg is also identified as a phallus. Reminding one as well of the pyramid of skull-like empty gourds or vessels which symbolizes the demiurgical world-Soul, the world of Typee, Queequeg's "bald purplish head" is described by Ishmael as "[looking] for all the world like a mildewed skull" (M-D, p. 48).

That Queequeg's head or crown is identified as a phallus recalls the gnostic habit of identifying the intellect with desire and prepares one for the metaphors in the narrative which in a more emphatic way link Queequeg with that snake-like thing, a penis. This man Queequeg, whom Ishmael takes to be the "devil" when he first sees him, worships a "curious little deformed image with a hunch on its back." Black, smooth, and shiny, this "glistening . . . idol" is "not at all limber" (M-D, pp. 48-49).

With this imagery, Queequeg is identified with an erect phallus and thus the serpent-like fount, like that other fallen world, the Spouter-Inn, of the divine energy. Such imagery explains why the Narcissus figure in the storyteller Ishmael's gnostic myth of Narcissus is described as reflecting on himself in a "fountain" and why it is appropriate to identify this cycle of energy with that Serpent with a spout, *Moby Dick* (M-D, p. 26).

Referring to his re-enactment of the drama of the fall of the Soul, Ishmael is repeatedly described as putting on the nature of the "general Serpent" in its "erect" or "upcoming," vigorous aspect in the portion of the narrative that records the earliest stages of his spiritual autobi-

ography. One case in point is the episode in which Ishmael first tries on Queequeg's coat and rejects it but then later is described as wearing a coat which is the metaphorical equivalent of Queequeg's garment.

Preparing to discuss these symbolic details in the narrative, it is not irrelevant to point out that in the gnostic vocabulary of special terms, as one learns from Jonas, "garment" is as an analogue of "inn." Hence, one is confirmed in thinking that Ishmael's act of entering Peter Coffin's inn is an allusion to the idea of taking on the worldly nature of the fallen Soul. Terms and images that relate to putting on lower "Nature" says Jonas, refer to the idea that the potential redeemer must become an "inmate" in the prison of the world and a "son of the house," as numerous old gnostic texts express it, in order to rescue the Soul from Ignorance.⁷ As Ishmael prepares to go to New Bedford, he thinks of himself as one who is "friendly" toward all of his fellow "inmates" in the world (M-D, p. 30). Tommo, too, characterizes his fellow prisoners, the Typees, as "inmates" of the world (T, p. 193).

The episode in which Ishmael is portrayed as first rejecting the "gold" which inheres in the vulgar "Nature" of the "general Serpent" is set in the room at the Spouter-Inn. Shortly after being ushered into the empty room by the impaired mystagogue, Mr. Coffin, Ishmael sees Queequeg's coat laying on a "chest" as if it were the sluffed skin of a snake. To Ishmael it resembles "a large door mat, ornamented at the edges with little tinkling tages something like the stained porcupine quills round an Indian moccasin," and it has "a hole or slit in the middle" (M-D, p. 46).

The "door mat" or threshold symbol refers to Life and the coarse, lower "Nature" as containing the Truth about the whole, i.e. good and

evil, masculo-feminine self (Self). The "hole or slit" in its center is a reference to male and female genitals. When Ishmael, in effect, puts this "coat" on, he will begin to follow the "left-hand" path to enlightenment in earnest. The body, the sex drive, the senses, the passions, and the appetite will help guide him "home" to the "knowledge" of his true, higher self (Self). Like Ishmael, the ardent young rovers Tommo and Taji, too, follow this path. However, Ishmael is a bit more squeemish than either of his prototypes. After Ishmael sees the "poncho," he tries it on and looks in a mirror. The sight horrifies him. He "tears [himself] out in such a hurry that [he gives himself] a kink in the neck" (M-D, p. 46).

The rejection of Queequeg's "Nature" occurs before he meets Queequeg. After spending the first night with him, Ishmael leaves off wearing his monkey jacket and begins to wear his "shaggy jacket of the cloth called bearskin" (M-D, p. 63). Ishmael's act of putting on his bearskin cloth coat symbolizes his taking on of the sensual, earthy, and rich nature of the "general Serpent." Paralleling Moby-Dick in regard to this detail, both Tommo and Taji don the clothing of the fallen world into which they descend, thereby symbolically taking a step toward becoming "a son of the house."

As Ishmael's entry into Queequeg's "skin" suggests, while at the Spouter-Inn, Ishmael becomes Queequeg's "wife" (M-D, p. 85). On one level of symbolism of this occurrence, their union refers to the Narcissus-Man's fall into his own lower "Nature." Devolving from "pure" to sensual, the route which the Soul took in its pre-cosmic fall, Ishmael takes on the nature of the "general Serpent" in this act, for in becoming its "wife," he becomes one flesh with it.

The action pattern described by Ishmael's and Queequeg's "emanation" from Coffin's inn generally records a downward movement. Leaving the relatively high ground of New Bedford, they board a schooner and ["glide] down the Acushnet river" out to the island of Nantucket, a "mere hillock" of sand above sea level (M-D, pp. 95-96). From here, as if they were passing through locks as well as descending, they go down to the Pequod, which, in turn, goes down. Thus, the general movement being described illustrates the gnostic dictum that the way "out" is the way "down."

Another detail which Moby-Dick shares with Typee and Mardi in regard to describing its protagonist's re-enactment of the drama of the progressive devolution of the Soul is that of describing an overall downward movement but, like a motif operating in a larger theme, including the metaphor of the journey up and down a mountain. Ishmael and Queequeg step down a level from New Bedford to the Achusnet River but climb up again when they arrive on Nantucket Island. When they step onto the Pequod, they are again moving down. On one level of its meaning, the metaphor of the journey up and down a mountain relates to Ishmael's effort to comprehend the fallen world-Soul or world mountain--"that Himalehan, salt-sea Mastodon," the Leviathan (M-D, p. 97).

Yet another detail which Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick share in regard to their use of serpent symbolism is that they all repeatedly characterize the "road" which their protagonists take as they move deeper in the world-psyche as a serpent. In Moby-Dick, for example, Ishmael thinks that he is "[spurning] that turnpike . . . that common highway" when he and the labyrinth-like road Queequeg leave New Bedford, but when they arrive in Nantucket, they are still on the "Serpent's path," for Nantucket, the sea, and the Pequod are still the Leviathan.

"The place where the first dead American whale was stranded," and the place from which "those aboriginal whalers, the Red-Man, first [sallied] out in canoes to give chase to the Leviathan," Nantucket, itself a symbol of the generative One, is the "incoming" and "outgoing" energy or the two-lane highway of the universal mother, the whale (M-D, p. 31). The same holds true for that "road" for "highwaymen," the sea, and the vehicle or "way" of the Spirit, the Pequod (M-D, p. 98).

Besides portraying the protagonist as a symbol of "the general Serpent" wending its way into Darkness, another point of correspondence between Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick is that each depicts the protagonist as a symbol of the Serpent of Wisdom. The equivalent of Tommo's journey over the mountain with his consort into the fallen world and Taji's journey with Jarl-Yillah over the mountain-waves of the sea into the world of Mardi, the episode which portrays Ishmael as a rebel, a suffering savior, and the Serpent of gnosis records Ishmael's and Queequeg's up-and-down journey from the Spouter-Inn onto the schooner which takes them to Nantucket.

As Ishmael and Queequeg make their way to Nantucket, Ishmael's sensitivity to the failure of man (Man) to transform the world into a place where freedom, love, brotherhood, equality, and wholeness hold sway is heightened by the fact that the new-found brotherhood and love between him and Queequeg is looked down upon and thought shocking by people when they perceive it. The object of gossip and scorn by the boarders at the Spouter-Inn and the people whom they meet on the streets of New Bedford, they continue to be subjected to "jeering glances" and "[mimickery]" once on the schooner which carries them to Nantucket (M-D, pp. 93-94). Ishmael knows that people stare and gossip not because

Queequeg is a cannibal, which habit they support on the sly by purchasing his shrunken heads, but because they do not approve of men loving one another, and they are particularly shocked because Queequeg is a dark pagan and Ishmael is white and probably a Christian.

Ishmael's exposure of his relationship with Queequeg in public is an act of rebellion. With it he asserts their fundamental unity and equality and the goodness of all forms of love. Ironically, as a result of overcoming their enmity and isolation, Ishmael and Queequeg suffer more pain than they were experiencing before they met. However, their appearance in the fallen world calls forth some latent sense in people that the true self (Self) is a balance of opposites in a context of love and freedom. The sense of the true self (Self) upsets people because it is the "other" to what is known.

Making this point about the experience of awakening to gnosis in regard to the gnostics of the early Christian era, Pagels cites the following passage from the gnostic text the Gospel of Thomas: "Jesus said, 'Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds, he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished, and he will rule over all things.'" As Pagels notes, "Self-discovery involves inner turmoil."⁸

By appearing together as a symbol of the Self-Integrated Man, Ishmael and Queequeg have the effect of shocking people out of their complacency. Paying his and Queequeg's bill at the Spouter-Inn, Ishmael notes that "the grinning landlord as well as the boarders . . . [seem] amazingly tickled at the sudden friendship which [has] sprung up between me and Queequeg" (M-D, p. 91). Thus, even while less than fully enlightened, Ishmael awakens people to the highest Truth of gnosis, thereby

functioning as the gnostic savior in his aspect of Destroyer of Ignorance and the Serpent of Wisdom.

Throughout the narrative's account of Ishmael's spiritual history, on one level of the symbolism, he is imaged not only as the "general Serpent" but also as the wise Serpent who contravenes the status quo. One of the means by which this is effected is the same used by Melville in Mardi: moving back in time and against the status quo, the vessel on which the protagonist travels is described as a serpent (in Typee, the equivalent symbol is Tommo's own body).

In Chapter 16, "The Ship" (XVI), the Pequod is revealed to be the mirror image of the great Serpent, the fiery Leviathan: The "fiery" Pequod is a "cannibal of a craft, tricking herself forth in the chased bones of her enemies. All round, her unpanelled, open bulwarks [are] garnished like one continuous jaw, with the long sharp teeth of the sperm whale" (M-D, p. 105). At the deep level of the symbolism, while on this vessel, Ishmael is imaged as the wise Serpent, for the ship moves counter-clockwise in its travels. As Jonas observes, "The gnostic message conceives of itself as the counter-move to the design of the world, [and] as the call intended to break its spell," awakening the fallen Soul from "sleep."⁹

Before considering the allusions to the gnostic image pattern of the "sinking" of the Soul into Error in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick, some additional information from Jonas about the serpent symbolism in the Hermetic Corpus and a theme called "'the lawsuit concerning the world'"¹⁰ requires comment in order to elucidate an obscure passage in Moby-Dick in terms of its meaning and probable source and to indicate another aspect of the correspondences which exist between the gnostic

myth of the potential Illuminator and Melville's interpretation of this myth. Further, the explicit reference in Moby-Dick to the Paraclete remains to be pointed out.

Because this symbol pervades the gnostic literature of the first few centuries A.D. and has a long afterlife, one cannot be entirely sure of the most important basic source of Melville's references to the gnostic Serpent. However, the elliptical reference in Moby-Dick to the gnostic version of the Narcissus myth ensures that it is one of Melville's sources for this metaphor. Book I of the Hermetic Corpus contains a description of the pre-cosmic Fall in which the the rebellious, Narcissus-like Soul is imaged as Light deteriorating into "a Darkness borne downward . . . , appalling and hateful, tortuously coiled, resembling a serpent." Transforming after the fall into "some humid nature," next the Soul as the "dark light" is described as "indescribably agitated and giving off smoke as from a fire and uttering a kind of sound unspeakable, mournful." But "the Word of God [leaps] out of the downward-borne elements "upward to the heaven of the cosmos, which has preceded the Word in separating from the darker, heavier elements in the fallen Thought. The Word joins the "pure" fire or Light that governs the cosmos, with which it is essentially identical, thus ending the first act in the drama of Creation and salvation.¹¹

The "anaconda" Ahab refers to this part of the story of Creation which is related in Book I of the Hermetic Corpus. Speaking to the circumscribing, i.e. serpent-like "clear spirit" during the storm on board the Pequod, he says, "Light though Thou be, Thou leapest out of darkness; but I am darkness leaping out of light, leaping out of thee!" (M-D, pp. 642, 239). The light that he addresses is not only the "head"

aspect of the Soul, which separates out to a degree from the "heart" aspect of the dark, rebellious Thought in the course of the fall but also the Soul in its aspect of the highest Truth. Here Ahab is speaking as the rebellious, hence dark, suppressed "spark" in the fallen Soul which is trying to overcome its own Ignorance. However, Ahab himself essentially is a symbol of the "head" aspect of the fallen Thought. Like the Word which first ascends from the fallen "heart" aspect of the divine dyad, he himself does not return to the Pleroma but remains with the "general Serpent" (Moby Dick). In regard to his metaphysical and mythical identity as the fallen Soul, he is the guilty Wisdom whose fall enlightens her estranged consort "Christos," the first fully authoritative Word of Wisdom. In Moby-Dick, this figure, of course, is Ishmael.

After Ahab addresses the lightning which hits the ship's masts and refers to the gnostic doctrine of a negative theology, the truth of his insight into the self (Self) is signaled by an explicit reference to the Paraclete. At the conclusion of Ahab's extraordinary speech, the sea knocks the bottom out of Ahab's whale-boat. This, in turn, causes "the loose leather sheath to drop off" his harpoon; and from the keen steel barb there . . . [shoots] a levelled flame of pale, forked fire." In witness to the highest Truth of gnosis, which the "blind" Ahab with his "dim" vision cannot "see," "the silent harpoon [burns] there like a serpent's tongue" (M-D, pp. 644, 642) The identification of the fallen god-head with lightning makes the point that it and the acosmic, highest god-head are essentially identical.

Melville is aware that besides the Hermetic Corpus, other varieties of ancient gnostic thought, such as the Ophites, employ the serpent as a symbol. The "Serpent" Queequeg's identification with "forbidden" sexual

practices and his technique of meditating with his black, phallic-looking idol, Yojo, poised on his head especially relate him (and Ishmael) to the libertine schools of gnosticism in the ancient world, such as the Ophites, which followed the "left-hand path" to gnosis.

The name Ophite, says Jonas, is derived from the Greek word for snake (ophis),¹² and the Ophites are called "serpent-worshippers." Contrasting the "serpent-worshippers" with Ahab, the storyteller Ishmael specifies that unlike "the ancient Ophites of the east . . . Ahab did not fall down and worship . . . [the Leviathan]" (M-D, p. 247). It is Ishmael's specification that the "ancient Ophites . . . did . . . fall down" in their act of reverencing their "statue devil" which directly refers to the idea that the way "out" is the way "down." The variant of this idea--what brings the Spirit "down" also brings it "up"--is the meaning of Queequeg's act of placing the serpent-like, phallic symbol of the Spirit on the top of his head when he meditates.

The gnostic symbol of the serpent relates to the theme of the Soul's pre-cosmic rebellion and to the gnostic savior's repetition of this act, and thus to the potential redeemer's "lawsuit concerning the world." Along with the allusions to the serpent symbolism in Moby-Dick, one finds many references to this gnostic theme. Jonas speaks of this theme in the gnostic literature of the ancient world when he is explaining that many of the works in it portray the response of the newly awakened individual to gnosis as joyous and "grateful." However, he adds that some of the literature records a "problematical" response. In it, "The soul calls the Great Life to account for the existence of the world as such."¹³

Jonas explains this reaction further. The new gnostic adept may

become angry with the transmundane Unknown God when he gains an idea about the condition of self (Self)-integration and, learning of gnostic beliefs about Creation, begins to perceive that God is not all good but is implicated in the fall of the Soul and the brutal aspects of existence. Jonas adds: "Powerfully stirred up," the Soul who in some texts is called Adam, "asks the great 'Why?'" which "becomes a main concern of the gnosis just initiated."¹⁴

One of several examples of references to this theme in Moby-Dick occurs in Chapter 3, "The Spouter-Inn" (III). Angered with Peter Coffin for his "unaccountable farrago" about Queequeg "[selling] his head," which pun is an example of the gnostic imagination's use of sexual symbolism to convey metaphysical and mystical themes, Ishmael "[flies] into a passion" with Coffin. Ishmael threatens him with a lawsuit, saying if Coffin makes him sleep with "a madman," Coffin will "render [himself] liable to a criminal prosecution" (M-D, pp. 43-44).

Other examples of allusions to the gnostic theme of "the lawsuit concerning the world" are found in the narrative. Chapter 36, "The Quarter-Deck" (XXXVI), contains one. Having gained the support of the crew to hunt Moby Dick, Ahab interprets their act as their agreement with him to take the question of the responsibility for the fallen world to God for judgment. "Ha! Starbuck!," he says, pleased that his first mate's objections to the quest for Moby Dick did not affect the men, "but the deed is done! Yon ratifying sun now waits to sit upon it" (M-D, p. 225).

Yet a third reference is found in Moby-Dick to the "lawsuit concerning the world." The storyteller Ishmael's characterization of the crew of the Pequod as a "deputation from . . . all the ends of the

earth, accompanying Old Ahab in the Pequod to lay the world's grievances before that bar . . . [of divine Justice]" speaks to this theme (M-D, p. 166). More details about why the protagonist Ishmael, who is even more rebellious than Tommo or Taji, instigates "the lawsuit concerning the world" are provided in the discussion of the image patterns of the Soul's "captivity" in Darkness.

The "Captivity" of the Soul in Darkness

Besides employing the symbolism of the gnostic Serpent, Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick reflect their indebtedness to the gnostic mythos of the potential redeemer in that they all include episodes and events which in an emphatic way express the theme of the Soul's "captivity" in its lower "Nature." These events and episodes in effect record the protagonist's journey down the cosmic "ladder." They mark the stages of his transformation into a symbol of the "drowned" Man or the "lost pearl," the fallen, fragmented Spirit which is the object of his soteriological mission. And they depict the figure of the potential savior as becoming increasingly subject to the limitations of time, space, fate, and the body.

An event which describes Tommo's and Toby's journey down into the valley of the Typees foreshadows and mirrors the episode which most emphatically portrays the Narcissus-like Tommo's union with and true captivity in the lower "Nature." Tommo's perception that he is bitten by a serpent while he is on the slide into Darkness constitutes this symbolic detail (T, p. 48). His perception is not literally true but symbolically accurate, for he loses the use of his leg(s) on and off during the entire three months that he is imprisoned among the Typees.

The "serpent bite" subjects him to Fate and to limitation to a greater degree than if he were mobile while he is there. Moreover, it subjects him to the lures of an apparently carefree, sensual existence. When Tommo becomes content in the world of Typee, his leg ceases to bother him. But when he grows anxious and feels his captivity weighing on him, the leg malady returns "with symptoms as violent as ever" (T, pp. 123, 231-32).

From Jonas' discussion of ancient gnostic literature, one learns that being "'bitten by a mad dog or a serpent,'" as one text puts it, is a metaphor for the soul's passage through (union with) the "general Serpent" of the cosmos whereupon it becomes subject to the limitations of Being and suffers an extensive loss of understanding about its true origin and self-integrated, free nature.¹⁵ The pattern of the leg bothering Tommo on the occasions when he is most aware of his lack of freedom relates to the gnostic idea that the world's weapons for keeping the Soul entrapped in deficiency may have the reverse effect of awakening the Soul to a concept of self (Self)-integration.

The event in Typee which truly records the Soul's "captivity" in Darkness is the one which depicts Tommo at the surface level of the symbolism being taken a prisoner by the Typees. After Tommo (Toby) arrives in the fallen world of Typee, he is overwhelmed by the natives and symbolically "buried" like a treasure in their midst. When Tommo and Toby are "swallowed up" by the Typees, the natives examine the Americans' skin "much in the same way that a silk mercer would handle a remarkably fine piece of satin" (T, p. 74). With this symbolism Tommo is described as the captive "lost pearl" or buried treasure that he is to retrieve. In the "Hymn of the Pearl," the potential gnostic savior,

in re-playing the drama of the fall of the Soul, is portrayed for a time as the captive pearl or divine treasure that he comes to retrieve.¹⁶

After his "burial" in the dark world of the Typees, which is his own estranged Self, metaphors of division, dispersal, dependency, and imbalance are employed in the narrative to depict Tommo as the self-divided, deficient "One" who is in need of salvation. One of the symbolic means by which Melville constructs this portrait involves repeated references to Tommo's mysteriously injured leg. It prevents Tommo from walking about upright and without aid during much of the time that he is among the Typees. Moreover, not long after Tommo "sinks" into the "Void," Toby, his soul mate, disappears. With this detail, Melville depicts Tommo as his own worst self (Self), a distorted image of the highest deity, Man. He portrays him, in the language of gnosticism, as a "stump," a single "one" who, like Ahab, is deficient rather than self-integrated or "full."

The Narcissus-like reformer-savior's "loss" of his legs, his soul mate, and his freedom after his arrival in the world of Typee serve to indicate in a vivid manner that Tommo symbolizes at this point in the narrative the savior in need of salvation: from the active, relatively whole, free-spirited, dynamic person that he is when he begins his effort to comprehend the All, he becomes a passive, relatively fragmented, i.e. "divided" prisoner. From one who envisions a higher "Nature" and desires to "know" the ineffable All, he transforms into one entrapped in his own lower "Nature" and Ignorance. Clearly, the dramatic irony and inversion and reversal which are features of the myth of the potential gnostic savior operate in Typee.

Taji's entry into the fallen world of Annatoo, Samoa, and the Parki

is one of the more important episodes in the narrative which foreshadows and portrays his progressive "sinking" into with his own fallen "Nature." The Parki, a microcosm of and the mother of the world of Mardi, is a distorted image of the god-head. Despite its activity of hunting for "lost" pearls, the Parki, is blood-stained and treacherous and lacks a sufficient degree of freedom, equality, and wholeness. The captain of this vessel, the sensual Annatoo, is greedy and suppresses her spouse. A symbol of the fallen Thought, Annatoo is a heroic, rebellious Spirit. Nonetheless, she is a dark, self-assertive, perverse force who suppresses the Light even more than she advances it. Metaphorically speaking, the "serpent" Annatoo bites Taji when she subverts and tries to impede the progress of the ship toward Taji's vision of self (Self)-integration.

The episode in Mardi involving the Parki is an analogue of the event in Typee in which Tommo thinks that he is bitten by a serpent. But the theme of the savior's deterioration into his own worst self as he re-enacts the drama of the sinking of the Soul into Ignorance is given more emphasis in Mardi than in Typee. In regard to the episode involving the Parki, Taji's increasing reliance on a narrow rationalism and his moral deterioration are portrayed.

While he is on this ship, Taji usurps Annatoo's power and becomes the captain of the Parki. This occurrence is foreshadowed and its significance emphasized in the event in the narrative in which Taji, having been asked by Samoa to relate his motives for boarding the Parki, "[assumes] the decided air of a master" when he speaks (T, p. 90). Besides a will to power, Taji exposes a sensual, greedy streak in his nature in his dealings on board this ship. For example, when Taji discovers a choice cask of wine in the hold of the ship, he decides "to

withhold it from Jarl, Samoa, and Annatoo all together," and he rationalizes the act to himself (T, p. 107).

Taji's behavior in this episode is one of the numerous indications in the narrative that while he is en route from the Arcturion to Mardi, his own guilty impulses and inferior mode of perception begin to get the better of him. That he is transforming into his own worst self is suggested, too, by the fact that in a half-hearted way he wishes Annatoo dead. Soon afterward, she is killed, and then the Parki "dies," too. Taji's wish for Annatoo's death (which, in turn, is preceded by his wish for Jarl's death), foreshadows his murder of the old priest Aleema. As Jonas observes, according to the gnostic imagination, once "conceived," a thought, desire, or wish of a spiritual being is a powerful living entity in its own right.¹⁷

Taji's murder of Aleema in order to rescue the "lost pearl" from Error is justified in the narrative, but it marks another stage in the drama of the Soul's "death" in Darkness and Error, too. As Taji with Media, Babalanja, Yoomy, and Mohi make their way toward the isle of Ohonoo, Mohi relates the story of how the Isle of Rogues (Ohonoo) got its name. The story involves the idea that the great reformers and saints in history often are considered criminals and subversives by their contemporaries. As Bablanja observes, "Many great scoundrels of . . . [the past] are heroes to us" today (T, p. 270). However, Melville also uses this act to show that Taji's desire to comprehend the All and to become "the brain that enlightens the world" has a dark side.

As is the case with Taji's acquisition of power on the Parki, Taji's murder of Aleema involves his will to power--his guilty desire to dominate, tyrannize, and become the only God. Henceforth, to a greater

degree than previously, fear, desire, and dualism mark his emotional and psychological condition. In particular, these emotions and mode of perception drive him on in his descent into the world of Mardi. As he pursues the desired Yillah, Fear, Anxiety, and Desire pursue him in the form of Aleema's numerous sons and Hautia and her three heralds.

With the murder of the old priest Aleema, Taji, now paralleled with a favorite of the gnostics of the ancient world, the biblical Cain,¹⁸ more emphatically than before is cast out of the garden of innocence. Like Tommo after his "snakebite," Taji after the murder of Aleema increasingly becomes subject to the limitations and determinations of Time, Space, Fate, and his own lower "Nature." However, Taji's entry into the world of Mardi proper is the event that most emphatically symbolizes his "captivity" in his own lower "Nature."

Mardi corresponds to Typee in all important respects in regard to depicting the Soul's "captivity" in the lower "Nature." Just as Tommo's entry into the world of Typee is the episode which most emphatically signifies his "sinking" into Darkness, so the same holds true in Mardi. When Taji, accompanied by Yillah, Samoa, and Jarl, arrives in Mardi, he and Yillah in particular are regarded as "celestial visitants" (M, p. 164). Tommo, too, is regarded as a "celestial visitant" by the Typees (T, p. 109). Just as Tommo's and Toby's white skin is associated with the highest power of the universe by the Typees, so Taji's and Yillah's whiteness contributes to Taji's "[elevation] . . . in the world," where he is taken as "a superior being," the "white" god Taji (M, pp. 162, 164). In both novels, the protagonist is described as being overwhelmed and "drowned" by natives with skin darker than his, thereby suggesting the image of a pearl sinking into a dark pool of water. Among other

things, with this symbolism the point is made in both works that despite its pantheism the old pagan world view with its God-centered, hierarchical bias amounts to another form of dualism.

The same metaphors of division, dispersal, dependency, and imbalance which are employed to record Tommo's "burial" in *Ignorance and Error* are used in *Mardi* for the same purpose. In *Mardi*, however, Taji's personal relationship with Yillah is the primary means by which his transformation into his own worst self is depicted in a detailed way. Taji's relationship with Yillah mirrors his pattern of capturing a "vessel," dominating it, and "killing" it. After Taji and Yillah become lovers and settle in Mardi, he seeks to convince her "that the notion of her own spirituality" is a lie and that she, like him, is only "a mortal" (M, p. 159). His fall into dualism is expressed in this detail. At the same time that Taji, in private, is subjecting Yillah to the Western rational and Christian consciousness, in public he himself is enjoying being hailed as a god. Taji, too, takes pleasure in asserting his power over Yillah.

The effect of Yillah's "bath" in the waters of rationalism and Protestant Christianity is to confuse her about her identity and worth and to make her entirely dependent on Taji (M, p. 159). Yillah's and Taji's imbalanced union is a distorted image of a true "sacred marriage." Mysteriously disappearing, Yillah is taken from Taji, and she leaves. Like Taji's act of killing Aleema, Taji's effort to de-mythologize Yillah is justified in the narrative, but put most simply, the gnostic moral of Yillah's disappearance is that a narrow rationalism and hubris are the "death" of the higher spiritual self (Self).

When Taji, like Tommo, loses his soul mate, the event leaves him a

deficient "one" who lacks freedom and wholeness. After Yillah's disappearance, Taji is a god-figure who is carried about by the Mardians in that he hunts for Yillah in Media's vessel. This constitutes yet another point of correspondence between Typee and Mardi which refers to their protagonists' dependency on the fallen "Nature." At this point in the narrative, Taji represents the inverse of his former self. Like Tommo at the equivalent point in time in Typee, from being a relatively self-integrated, free-spirited, self-possessed "One," the protagonist is transformed into relatively self-divided, guilt-laden, morose individual. One of the greatest alterations in his personality is that he, like Tommo when he arrives in Typee, becomes relatively mute. "Some mourners load the air with lamentations," the formerly verbose Taji says, but his grief is so deep that "hereafter, in words, little more . . . [will he say]" until he learns Yillah's "fate" (T, p. 195).

Like Typee and Mardi, the action pattern and symbolism of Moby-Dick record the protagonist's "captivity" in the fallen "Nature." In connection with discussing the serpent symbolism in Moby-Dick, episodes, events, and details which refer to the Soul's entry into the fallen world and its transformation into the impaired man (Man) have been mentioned. Ishmael's entry into Spouter-Inn and his union with Queequeg are some of the metaphorical equivalents of the episodes and events in Typee and Mardi in which the protagonist, so to speak, is bitten by the serpent. Thereafter, as is the case with Tommo and Taji, Ishmael is tyrannized by tendencies toward a narrow rationalism and by guilty impulses; he becomes more rather than less subject to limitations and determinations; and he grows more deficient and divided.

Prior to the major episode symbolizing the protagonist's "captivity"

in Darkness, several other events in the narrative besides those mentioned mirror those in Typee and Mardi which portray in an especially emphatic way the subjection of the protagonist to Fate as he descends the "ladder" of (Self-) love to the highest god-head. One such event is Ishmael's agreement with Queequeg to let Yojo, who is identified with Fate, determine the ship on which he or he and Queequeg are to go whaling (M-D, p. 103).

As the flow of the narrative propels Ishmael toward the most impressive indication of his capture in the lower "Nature," details in the narrative suggest his moral deterioration. One of the indications to this effect is that when Ishmael and Queequeg leave the Spouter-Inn, Ishmael sells one of Queequeg's embalmed heads to pay the bill. For this, he uses only his "comrade's money" (M-D, p. 91).

The Ishmael who enters the Spouter-Inn is aware of a disparity in wealth, and the concept of sharing equally is important to him. That he has money is certain, for Queequeg "mechanically" split thirty dollars into "two equal portions" the night before and insisted that Ishmael take half (M-D, p. 85). According to the gnostic imagination, things usually get worse before they get better. Or, to put it more formally, the gnostic impulse holds that destruction, i.e. deterioration, precedes creation, i.e. spiritual rebirth. This detail, however, signifies that Ishmael's guilty inclinations are coming into play.

The episode which most emphatically marks Ishmael's engulfment in the lower "Nature" and dualistic mode of perception is portrayed in "The Quarter-Deck." With "a wild, mystical, sympathetic feeling" for the impaired man (Man) Ahab, Ishmael almost without reservation gives himself over to the dark inclinations of wanting to exact "violence and revenge"

on Moby Dick, thereby revealing that the qualities of man (Man) most hated by him reside in his own mind and heart (M-D, p. 239). But as he "[hails] the act of nailing the gold to the mast," Ishmael especially is overcome by the desire to comprehend the All in absolutist terms. Mixed with more hatred than Ishmael feels, this is the thought that "[possesses]" Ahab (M-D, pp. 218, 216).

One clue which foreshadows Ishmael's attainment of the "gold" of gnosis in this episode is that, unlike others, Ishmael feels a "dread in [his] soul" even when he, like Ahab, is "consumed with one . . . revengeful desire" (M-D, pp. 239, 271). According to Pagels, "The fear of the Lord" may mark the beginning of the gnostic adept's initiation into the higher 'Wisdom.'¹⁹ Nonetheless, with a "hiss," Ishmael drinks to his coming victory over the circumscribing power of the Serpent and, in effect, proposes himself as the next new Supreme Being (M-D, p. 225).

As Ishmael's feelings of "dread" imply, Ishmael does not hunt for the Truth via an onslaught on the White Whale in exactly the same "spirit" as Ahab. Explaining Ishmael's "double" motive for the quest for Moby Dick helps clarify the specific sense in which he becomes a "captive" of Darkness during his mission to redeem himself and the fallen world. Whereas Ahab's primary motive is revenge against an intelligent "Nature" which deliberately and knowingly prevents humanity from realizing more fully the ideals of freedom, individualism, and wholeness, and his secondary motive is the desire to save the "drowned" man (Man), the reverse with an added qualification is true in Ishmael's case.

Ishmael "comprehends" Ahab's view of the Leviathan, but he is more concerned that God is simply a universal substance which mechanically and mindlessly creates and destroys. According to Ishmael, if God is

nothing but a life force, then one cannot save the "drowned" man (Man). He indicates that these are his feelings as he in earnest begins to hunt for Moby Dick by specifying that the Whale represents the threat of "annihilation" and "atheism" to him (M-D, pp. 263-64). His line of reasoning is that if God is simply a cycle of self-renewing and self-consuming energy, then no metaphysical basis for selfhood or morality exists. How can there be a metaphysical ego which is subject to rewards and punishments if God is only a fountain of energy which gives birth to and dissolves all life forms back into itself? Without a metaphysical foundation, there is no firm justification for the ideals of freedom, individualism, and wholeness--there is only "atheism" and the "annihilation."

Ironically, Ishmael is led to entertain these views as a consequence of his union with Queequeg. When Ishmael and Queequeg identify with one another, Ishmael experiences the reconciliation of opposites. Being of a mind to perceive a metaphysical significance in all events and details, he interprets this experience to confirm his theory that God contains all opposites. Meditating on this idea, several lines of thought develop. One is that God is a universal substance or essence--a big pot in which all opposites "melt" back into one another at the time of death. From this, Ishmael begins to consider the view that no metaphysical basis for selfhood or morality exists.

The metaphors of deficiency, division, and dependency which one meets with in connection with the episodes in Typee and Mardi marking the engulfment of the protagonist by Darkness are features of the analogous occurrence in Moby-Dick, and the inversion of the protagonist is portrayed. For example, like Tommo and Taji, Ishmael loses his soul

mate, as represented by Bulkington, at approximately the same time that he is "consumed" with the will to dominate and entertains the idea that he is the new God.

With this symbolic event and his virtual assimilation into the one-legged Ahab, whose "eternal, living principle or soul" deserts him, the potential savior Ishmael, like Tommo and Taji at the equivalent stages of their spiritual histories, undergoes a reversal and becomes the deficient "one" whom he is sent to redeem (M-D, p. 272). Moreover, just as the "light" Tommo and Taji become dependent on the determinations of the dark, fallen vessel or vehicle of the Spirit which they are supposed to save, so, after merging with Ahab, Ishmael is portrayed as Light who is subjected to the power of an imbalanced, tyrannical Darkness and Error and is carried about by the vessel or substantial form of this power.

Another example of the correspondences between Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick in regard to the working out of the gnostic theme of the Soul's "captivity" in Darkness is that in all of these narratives, the protagonist is indicated never entirely to lose the sense that the "pearl" exists within him. Not only Tommo's longing for home, mother, the unknown, and freedom, but also his remembrance of Toby, and his refusal to ignore the danger to which he is subjected as a captive of the Typees are all indications that even when he is "buried" in Darkness, he retains a sense of his balanced "inner luminous self."

Like Tommo, even when Taji is "captive" of Darkness, he dimly perceives his unique, transmundane ego. The portion of the narrative in which Taji mirrors Yillah's activity and becomes a "silent and invisible . . . spirit" makes this clear (M, p. 102). After Taji awakens one

morning and finds his bride gone, he "withdraws" into himself. This inner self is described as a sea that contains a pearl (M, p. 194). Taji is portrayed as being vaguely aware that the pearl is within him. However, to use Ishmael's words about the drowned Narcissus-man's effort to comprehend Life, Taji is not able to "grasp" it (M-D, p. 26).

In Moby-Dick as well as in Typee and Mardi, the protagonist retains a sense of his trans-mundane, balanced self (Self) even when he is "sunk" in Ignorance. Paralleling Tommo's and Taji's actions after the loss of their soul mates, Ishmael "withdraws" into relative silence after Bulkington disappears, yet, like the "deficient" Tommo and Taji, at the deepest level of his being Ishmael remains relatively self (Self)-integrated. One item of evidence to this effect is found in Chapter 72, "The Monkey-rope" (LXXI). In connection with describing how Ishmael and his "twin-brother" Queequeg cooperate in a dialectical manner to save each other while raising (i.e. saving) the head of the whale, "The Monkey-Rope" employs the imagery of a dynamic balance of masculine and feminine energies. As Ishmael and Queequeg work, they are "wedded" by a rope (M-D, pp. 417, 415).

This image of Ishmael and his consort in a harmonious union, which is a reference to the Self-Integrated Androgyne enlightening the world, assures readers that even while "sunk" in Darkness, Ishmael, like his brothers Tommo and Taji, retains a degree of awareness about his secret identity with the Unknown God. It indicates that although Ishmael's transcendent soul mate Bulkington is split off from him, deep within himself Ishmael never loses his female aspect--his heart and soul--and the "pearl" of the integrated self (Self).

Before considering the image patterns of the hidden dynamo, the

fall of the "One" into the "Many," the "zigzag," and the "sacred marriage," some of the events which focus on characters other than Ishmael and record the theme of "death" of the Soul in Darkness deserve mention. Two of these events in an emphatic way make the point that one must have a firm sense of the self to undergo the experience of reconciling opposites and obtain the higher vision ($A=B$ yet $A \neq B$). These events express the view that all is one ($A=B$) but that if the individual does not allow for dualism and hierarchy, he suffers the "death" (the "forgetting") of the higher ego in the experience of mythic identification. This is the lesson taught by Pip's encounter with God: "I look, you look, he looks; we look, you look, they look" (M-D, p. 556). Pip's reading of the gold doubloon indicates that the immature boy perceives the higher Truth about the radical unity and divinity of all forms of life as a result of his encounter with the Depth but that his inner ego is "lost" in the process.

Another event which expresses these ideas is recounted in the chapter "Cistern and Buckets" via the story about Tashtego nearly drowning in the a whale's head. Described as the "secret inner chamber of the whale," Tashtego's close call is likened to drowning in "Plato's honey head." The storyteller Ishmael observes that only this death could be a "sweeter end" than the one which Tashtego almost experiences in the "fragrant spermaceti" (M-D, p. 445).

With the goal in mind of noting some specific sources of Melville's allusions to the gnostic mythos of the ancient world, it is relevant to point out that some versions of the Valentinian myth of the fall of Wisdom portray this figure as narrowly escaping being "swallowed up . . . [in] sweetness and dissolved in the general being" when she transgresses

the limits of Love (the Unknown God) and attempts "to comprehend . . . the Father" in absolute terms. As one version of this myth reads, a "power . . . called Limit" intervenes to prevent her dissolution. "By him she was stopped, consolidated, brought back to herself, and convinced that the Father [mother] is incomprehensible."²⁰

The reference to drowning in sweetness in the storyteller Ishmael's report about Tashtego's brush with death appears to be derived from this passage in the Valentinian mythos of the fall of Wisdom. The fact that, as Pagels observes, certain gnostic scholars, such as Arthur Darby Nock, take gnosticism to be "a kind of 'Platonism run wild,'" while others, such as Harnack, consider it to represent the "'acute Hellenizing of Christianity'"²¹ probably explains why Tashtego's close call with drowning in the whale's head is compared to a death in "Plato's honey head" (M-D, p. 445). Evidently Melville understood that the gnostic mythos reflects the influence of Platonism.

Melville uses the stories about Pip and Tashtego to convey the gnostic doctrine that humanity is identical with the ineffable One in essence but not in degree, to depict in metaphysical and mystical terms the theme of the "captivity," "sinking," and "burial" of the Soul in Darkness, and to foreshadow Ishmael's "death" by drowning which is his rebirth. Tommo and Taji risk being drowned in the sweetness of a sensual existence when they "sink" themselves into the female aspect of the deity in search of a "knowledge" of the Primal Depth--the androgynous Father.

The Fall of the "One" into the "Many"
and the Hidden Dynamo

The image pattern of the fall of the "One" into the "Many" receives expression in the first half of the plots in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick by means of the metaphors of the emanation of the One and the "captivity" of the Soul, which, of course, relate to and describe math functions and a number symbolism. In these narratives, however, the fall of the "One" into the "Many" and the return to Unity also is signified by means of a symbolism which combines numbers and geometry. This symbolism involves the gnostic adaptation of the Pythagorean cosmology that explains the coming to be of the universe in terms of the generation of the decimal system by the Monad.²²

Relating to Melville's pervasive use of the pyramid as a cosmic metaphor, this symbolism is fascinating, but it is too complex to be explored in this discussion. Therefore, the image pattern of the "One" and the "Many" is greatly simplified in terms of its numerological depiction and called attention to here only in relation to the event which truly marks the fragmentation of the "One." This event also signifies the time at which Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael begin serving not only as symbols of the Soul who is a captive of Darkness but also as symbols of the hidden dynamo. One reason for mentioning the symbolism of the fall of the "One" into the "Many" in connection with that of the hidden dynamo and the Soul's "captivity" is that doing so highlights the fact that these two multivalenced metaphors are essentially twin image patterns. Because the hidden dynamo symbolism describes the redeemer's descent into rather than the Soul's "captivity" in the fallen world, however, they carry antithetical meanings.

Before commenting on this event and on some of the other more noteworthy signs that the hidden dynamo image pattern operates in these narratives, this study provides some additional information about the metaphor of the hidden dynamo in regard to its similarity to yet difference from that of the Soul's "captivity" in *Darkness* and the type of gnostic mythos which appears to have exercised the most influence on Melville's treatment of both of these image patterns.

The image patterns of the hidden dynamo and the Soul's "captivity" in *Ignorance* both allude to the idea that the way "down" is the way "out" and that destruction accompanies creation. Evidence of the organicism in the gnostic world view, metaphors of division and conjunction, death and rebirth, and assimilation attend on both. The hidden dynamo symbolism, however, firmly links the protagonist to the most potent of all forms of energy, the transcendent "Great Life," and it is used to indicate that the protagonist, the emissary of the deity, is transforming and enlightening the fallen god-head even while he himself is struggling to attain enlightenment and may, in fact, appear to be "dead" or to have disappeared. Thus, while these two image patterns are essentially twins, they have different functions.

The soteriological mission and the attainment of Illumination of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael depend on the act of withdrawal. This act signifies self-contemplation and self-renewal. It links a "dead" or "sleeping" protagonist to the transmundane "seed" or "sun" that mates with, invigorates, and is reborn in or by means of a passage through *Darkness*. Melville is well aware that the withdrawal into the Self involves penetration and requires sexual metaphors for its expression. For example, the event in *Moby-Dick* in which Ishmael withdraws into

himself and has a beatific vision of a row of angels squeezing case represents an allusion to the idea that the withdrawal into oneself is the way "up" to the "heaven" of self-integration and the "stimulation" or regeneration of the self (M-D, pp. 531-33). Basically the hidden dynamo metaphor involves using the protagonist to exemplify virility, the transmundane Alien Man, the rational intellect, the Mind and Word, and the metaphysical, mystical, and socio-political search for freedom, individualism, and wholeness by which world and self-salvation is effected. As readers have noticed, however, in connection with discussing the image patterns of the Serpent, the potential gnostic redeemer's redemptive activities and acquisition of "knowledge" do not all take place while he is relatively passive and "underground."

The metaphor in the Valentinian mythos of the androgynous "Father" reflecting, dividing into Mind and Thought, and sinking himself "like a seed," a sun, a phallus, and a mirror, into his twin yet female aspect, seems to have exercised a great deal of influence on Melville's use of the closely related symbolisms of the "captivity" of the Soul in Darkness and the hidden dynamo. One feels justified in perceiving a close connection between the hidden dynamo symbolism in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick and the buried "seed" metaphor in the Valentinian school of thought because, in varying degrees of emphasis, these novels make a forceful, indirect reference to the terms of Depth and Silence in connection with the protagonist's depiction as the hidden dynamo, and these symbolic terms are pronounced features of the Valentinian speculation. But it is obvious that Melville understood that the "lost pearl" and "drowned" Man images of the "Hymn of the Pearl" and the Hermetic Corpus are the metaphorical equivalents of the Valentinian symbolism of the

"seed."

A number of puzzling features concerning characterization, plot, and point of view in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick are understandable as references to the gnostic metaphor of the hidden dynamo. A list of some of the more noteworthy of these features comprises (1) Tommo's pattern of withdrawing into and emerging from himself during the period of his captivity; (2) the mystery of the more pronounced "disappearance" of Taji and Ishmael from the plot after they truly begin their descent into the depths of the soul (Soul); and (3) the noticeable vacillation in focus in Mardi and Moby-Dick from the protagonist to peripheral characters, one of whom receives more attention than the others and is identified as or with a subversive spirit.

These points deserve illustration. As readers may recall, when Taji, imitating the precedent of his soul mate Yillah, withdraws into the depths of his own soul, which includes the world of Mardi and the circle of characters who make up the hunting party for Yillah, the "welling up" of the subversive spirit Azzageddi in the mystical philosopher Babalanja concurs with his "disappearance." Moreover, Babalanja becomes the primary spokesman for the now silent Taji. This occurrence especially signifies the way in which the transcendent deity "inspires," i.e. "in-spirits," its elect.

Taji's "withdrawal" and the accompanying manifestation of a subversive spirit finds its analogue in Moby-Dick in the transference of attention from the vanishing Ishmael to Starbuck, Flask, Stubb, and other members of the Pequod's crew and the concurrent "welling up" of the monumental, subversive spirit Ahab. There is no shift of focus in Typee from the protagonist to another character, but while Tommo is

"buried" in Darkness, a sudden "upspringing" of a rebellious spirit occurs on one notable occasion. This is signified by the "dead" Tommo's effort to break the Marquesan taboo which forbids women to enter canoes.

The reference in these narratives in regard to these features is to the protagonists' metaphysical identity as the most potent form and emissary of the transmundane deity who reflects, divides, and sinks himself into his Thought in order to "know" himself and to effect Self-integration. As these features imply, the real "subversive" spirit is the protagonist, the potential gnostic savior. Further, the hidden dynamo symbolism confirms that the transmundane spirits Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael are infinite, ubiquitous, integrated, and omniscient at the same time that they are the divided Soul who is entrapped in Error and Ignorance.

The omniscience of the protagonist during the time that he is a symbol of the Soul buried in Darkness is referred to most obviously in Moby-Dick in chapters, such as "Sunset," in which the storyteller Ishmael, relating his tale in retrospect, suddenly and blatantly violates the limits of a first person method of narration. He records Ahab's soliloquy as if he himself were in Ahab's cabin. Although the storyteller Ishmael is relating his tale as an act of recollection, the implication of his becoming omniscient on occasion during this narration is that while the protagonist Ishmael is on board the Pequod and, relatively speaking, is withdrawn from the action, as Brodtkorb observes, at the deep level of the symbolism, Ishmael essentially "is the action" and the characters who claim the reader's attention.²³

With this symbolism, which suggests the ideas of a mirror, a lamp, and a spirit, the protagonist in his transmundane aspect is alluded to.

Thus, the metaphor of the hidden dynamo is seen to relate to the idea that One Player acts all the roles in existence and that the Self exists in all conditions at all times. A slightly more complicated theory is that the omniscient aspect of Ishmael's characterization also may be a reference to "the interesting theological idea of a twin brother or eternal original of the savior remaining in the upper world during his terrestrial mission." Jonas discusses this concept in connection with his analysis of the "Hymn of the Pearl." The omniscient aspect of the protagonist may represent the transcendent original with whom the "ignorant" gnostic savior unites in the experience of illumination. This is the case, says Jonas, in the "Hymn of the Pearl."²⁴

The same point concerning the radical identity of the protagonist and the quest object in Typee and Mardi holds true. Although the narrator Tommo briefly and subtly transgresses the limitations of the first person point of view in relating an episode which involves his identification with the birds, lizards, and dogs of Typee valley during the time of his captivity, the symbolism of inverted mirrors, emanation by the Monad, the hidden dynamo metaphor itself, and the devices of plot and characterization bear the burden of implying the fundamental unity and divinity of the central character and his quest object in Typee. It is in Mardi that Melville first begins to exploit the resources of point of view to reinforce the metaphysical, soteriological, and mystical implications of the hidden dynamo image pattern, and this novel signals the first time that the hidden dynamo metaphor is employed in an exaggerated way.

In order to understand the image pattern of the hidden dynamo more fully, readers need the benefit of some specific illustrations, and the

point that the hidden dynamo symbolism is responsible for the protagonist being treated as an internal engine who is connected with rationalism as well as the search for gnosis deserves more comment. While providing readers with some concrete examples of the metaphor of the hidden dynamo, the event which truly signifies the transformation of the "One" into the "Many" is pointed out. With this event the multivalenced nature and interrelatedness of gnostic symbolism is clearly evidenced. This is so because the event which emphatically signifies Tommo's, Taji's, and Ishmael's "captivity" in the lower "Nature" not only most truly represents the transformation of the "One" into the "Many" but also marks the point at which these protagonists begin serving as hidden dynamos of transmundane energy. Showing that the metaphor of the fall of the "One" into the "Many" operates in the narratives in regard to one specific episode involves recapitulating in terms of number symbolism the protagonist's history prior to this event.

The symbolism of fall of the "One" into the "Many" can be explained in a simple, straightforward way. For example, the episode in which Tommo projects his quest object as a dream-world, and the portion of the plot which records Tommo's emanation with Toby refers to the idea that the "One," othering itself to itself, becomes "Two" in the act of creating. With Tommo's and Toby's entry into the world of the "Many," the Typees, the transformation of the "One" into the "Many" is truly signified. Since Mardi and Typee employ the same symbolism and also describe the protagonist's "captivity" in a fallen world, readers can infer that the fall of the "One" into the "Many" is depicted in Mardi and Moby-Dick in essentially the same way as it is portrayed in Typee.

The event truly signifying Tommo's transformation into the "Many,"

his "captivity" in Darkness, and the time at which he begins to serve as a hidden dynamo reveals that he represents a form and a reminder of the transcendent Alien Light to those Typees who are concerned with, to quote Pagels in regard to the interests of the gnostics of the ancient world, "the perceived meaning" of "actual events."²⁵ When Tommo arrives in the valley of the Typees with Toby and is quietly made a captive, he begins to serve as a powerhouse of the transmundane god-head. With his startling entry into the world of Typee, Tommo begins the process of awakening some of the natives to the higher, gnostic truths which are contained in their own pagan religious system, such as are implied by the adherence of some to a doctrine of a negative theology and their sacred, midnight meal of fish. One of these gnostic truths is the superiority of a sacrifice for "knowledge" (gnosis) over the inferior Typee magical belief in the efficacy of attaining power over death and one's enemies by means of acts of cannibalism.

The potential Christian gnostic savior Tommo is portrayed at the onset of his encounter with the world of Typee as willing to sacrifice himself to "know" the All and reform the fallen world. But he is again identified as the transcendent Alien Man who undergoes a sacrifice for "knowledge" when he descends into Typee valley. Readers are given hints to this effect in a variety of ways. One is that the Typees are depicted as knowing full well that Tommo and Toby are risking their lives in entering Typee valley. With good cause (and in a double sense), their tribal name, Typee, means a "lover of human flesh." Their notoriety as fierce cannibals frightens almost all white men and keeps them from any meaningful communication with the Typees (T, p. 74).

Other hints complete the identification of the newly captured Tommo

with the transcendent Alien Light who sacrifices himself to heal the fallen god-head. For example, the Typees are shown to identify the light, alien man Tommo with "knowledge," and the language which is used to describe their reaction to Tommo and Toby suggests that the Typees associate them with the transmundane Spirit. Thus readers are directed to perceive that Tommo and Toby exemplify the potential gnostic Illuminator in quest of gnosis to the more metaphysically oriented Typees.

The Typees are portrayed as regarding the virile Tommo and Toby as "the receptacles of invaluable information" when they and the alien, light-skinned men first meet. Although Tommo and Toby do not know many words in the Typee dialect, they "endeavor by every method in [their] power to communicate . . . desired intelligence" (T, p. 75). Defined as mana (mana=vessel=jar=receptacle,) the spiritual essence of existence, via the identification of Tommo and Toby as vessels or "receptacles" of "information," and imaged as the double or androgynous Alien Light, Tommo-Toby in this episode is portrayed as the transcendent Messenger, the Word of Light, the Call, or the "awakener" of gnostic religiosity. Since Tommo is being taken a captive of Darkness at the same time that he is serving to arouse the Typees to the higher, secret wisdom of their own religious system, here he is being depicted as transforming into a symbol not only of the fallen Soul that he is to enlighten but also into the hidden dynamo of Light who enlightens.

The turmoil which Tommo's and Toby's appearance effects among the Typees alludes to Tommo's soteriological function as one who upsets the status quo, and it is interesting to note the precedence for this turmoil in the gnostic mythos of the Illuminator. According to one Valentinian text, which Jonas cites, "When the Word appeared, . . . a great

confusion reigned among the vessels 'Error' was agitated, not knowing what it should do." Another text treats the transcendent Alien Man's inability to speak the language of those who represent his estranged Self as a reminder of the Unknown God. Threatened by the transcendent "Stranger," Error tells those whom she holds captive, "The man does not belong to us, and his speech is not your speech."²⁶ However, the Soul's loss of "knowledge" of the Self during the descent into the world also is referred to by the young Americans' inability to speak the Typee dialect.

Lest readers miss the implications of his symbolism, Melville once again in an exaggerated way dramatizes the idea that the elect of God sacrifice themselves to obtain and reveal gnosis. While Tommo is imprisoned by the beautiful world, which itself is held captive by its own Ignorance and Error, he is willing to and, by necessity of being a captive, is forced to risk his life for "knowledge" by attending the Typees' highest religious festival at which he might be sacrificed. His behavior and apparel at this sacred holiday are silent symbols of gnostic doctrines and beliefs about the highest god-head and the way to obtain "knowledge." Studying the Typees' religious symbols during this event, Tommo signifies the savior in the act of "gathering in" Light.

At this religious festival Tommo sees a field of "poles"--young trees stripped bare of their bark--which are decorated either with baskets of fruit or pennons of white cloth (T, p. 167). Like Ishmael's gnostic version of the Narcissus myth, these trees are highly condensed, cryptic symbols which refer to all the main tenets of gnosticism. But they emphasize the doctrines of salvation by gnosis and the essential unity and divinity of all life. White is the color associated with the

spiritual essence of existence, law, order, and power by the Typees; a tree with fruit suggests "knowledge" and the crucified Word of Life which, according to the gnostic vocabulary of symbolism, is this world; and "flayed" young trees connote ignorance, innocence, suffering, and sacrifice. Put most simply, one perceives that the trees, which are inverted mirror images of one another, refer to the idea that the deity is immanent in the self-consuming, self-renewing cycle of life but that the Spirit provides for salvation and transcends the forms in which it is manifest.

Relating the episode as a past event, the storyteller Tommo says that in adorning himself with flowers, dressing himself in white and going to this festival, he "ascended the rock" (T, p. 162). With numerous references to symbolisms such as this, Melville hints to his readers that the "buried treasure" and Alien Light Tommo serves as a "secret sun" of the transmundane, masculo-feminine Spirit during his own eclipse in "night." In this scene as in the one in which he and Toby first meet the Typees, Tommo, with his being and his behavior and with some degree of awareness, manifests the mythos and tenets of gnosticism. Doing so awakens to gnosis those Typees who are sufficiently "mature" to perceive the metaphysical and mystical meaning of his appearance and actions. In order to make the point that the gnostic redeemer manifests the god-head in his attitudes, actions, and demeanor, Pagels observes that one Christian gnostic text quotes Jesus' saying, "By their fruits you shall know them."²⁷

While he is sunk in Error, Tommo continuously evinces the techniques of the way of "knowledge" and points to the ideal, self-integrated man (Man). His desire for freedom and wholeness, his insistence on his

separateness and individuality, his participation in the life of the community, and his rationalism indicate that he is acting the part of the gnostic savior even as he is symbolically dead. Tommo is the "stranger" who identifies with "strangers." He involves himself in every aspect of his captors' world, yet all the while he remains apart from them, such as by refusing to become tattooed. Following the way of "knowledge," one recalls, involves a rejection of the deficient status quo and stripping the self to find one's "naked" ego. At the same time, it requires coming to know the Self and radically identifying with and sympathetically comprehending yet remaining critical of the impaired aspect of the Self. "The stranger," says Jonas, referring to the gnostic redeemer, must learn "the ways of the foreign land." To save his impaired Self, he must "become a 'son of the house.'" However, "if he learns its ways too well, he forgets that he is a stranger and gets lost . . . by succumbing to the lure of the alien world and becoming estranged from his own origin."²⁸

This process of assimilation or "gathering in" and rejection is a preparation for and part of the experience of mythic identification with the Unknown God, says Jonas. Citing a Christian gnostic text, Pagels observes that the personal goal of this process is to become the fully enlightened gnostic who "considers himself equal to everyone, maintaining his own independence of anyone else's authority: 'And he is patient with everyone; he makes himself equal to everyone, and he also separates himself from them'"²⁹ These remarks apply to Tommo.

Learning to appreciate and care about the Typees, noticeably withdrawing into himself on occasion during his captivity, becoming a "son of the house," and giving evidence of being distraught by his lack of

freedom and wholeness yet secure in his selfhood constitute some of the more important ways that the relatively unenlightened Tommo serves to enlighten his captors while he and they are enmeshed in Ignorance. Another way involves the protagonist's identification with the Mind and the Logos and thus the rational intellect. With his curiosity about and unobtrusive but persistent, systematic study of their culture, Tommo awakens the most perspicuous Typees to an awareness that they need to develop stronger rational and empirical interests and preserve an awareness of their own past if they are to avoid being totally overwhelmed and exploited by the culture of the West.

By means of this symbolism, Melville alludes to the theme of identity and origin and makes the point that the self-integrated man "knows" the history of Man, develops all of his faculties and potentialities, and strives to use all of his powers wisely. Thus Melville implies that in the endeavor to "know" the self (Self) rather than in cannibalism or in the conversion to Christianity lies the salvation of the fallen world-Soul. And he portrays the potential gnostic Illuminator Tommo as he meditates on and investigates aspects of the Typees' life as the "secret sun" assimilating the Darkness into which he is being assimilated.

Yet another indication that Tommo acts to transform the fallen world while he, hidden in its depths, reflects on it and is reflected on by it, is that he instigates a cultural revolution during his stay with the natives. One of the outward signs of the spiritual, social, and political change that he occasions is the non-violent civil war between the factions of the Typees who divide on the question of allowing him to leave. Tommo's killing of Mow-Mow, the most influential religious leader among the Typees and the leader of those who oppose his escape,

is part of this revolution. Further, Tommo is an "enemy" who is gentle, kindly, and friendly, and he introduces the Typees to singing. These are other ways that Tommo transforms his fellow inmates' consciousness. That he awakens some of the Typees to the ideals of harmony and Self-Integration is indicated by the fact that those natives, such as old Marheyo, who are willing to allow him his freedom are the ones to whom he has taught the words "'Home' and 'Mother'" or to whom he symbolizes in his captivity and alienation from his origin the universal condition of humankind (T, p. 248).

In Mardi as in Typee, the idea is conveyed that even while becoming a "captive" of Darkness, the potential Illuminator awakens people to gnosis. Further, numerous specific parallels exist between Typee and Mardi in regard to the way in which each records the theme of the hidden dynamo. For example, just as Tommo and Toby are portrayed as awakening the Typees to the concept of the transmudane Man when they truly enter the fallen world, so the same applies to Mardi. In both novels, the "Many" are described as representing a possible threat to the protagonist and as excited by the image of the transcendent Alien Light, whom they desire to "possess," descending into their midst. Recalling the image of Tommo and Toby, the "other-worldly" Yillah and Taji together present them with a visual symbol of the Self-Integrated, heavenly Man. Intuitively responding to the sense latent in themselves that they possess the rose-colored pearl, after Taji and Yillah arrive in Mardi, Media's subjects gather around and adore Yillah as if she were the baby Jesus in the manger.

During his encounter with the fallen world-Soul, the impaired Taji is more emphatically portrayed than Tommo as a kind of internal engine

and unseen driver of a vehicle. The visual and tactile image which the narrative presents is that Taji "steers" Media, Babalanja, Yoomy, and Mohi through the fallen world-Soul and into its depths as he himself, silent and withdrawn in their midst, is pulled along by and pursues the silent, withdrawn Yillah. Nonetheless, Tommo's depiction as the hidden dynamo is essentially similar to that of Tommo.

Corresponding to the mate and freedom-seeking Tommo in relation to the Typees, all of the Mardians who come in contact with Taji and witness or hear of his search for Yillah are presented with the opportunity to meditate on the transmundane god-head and its mode of self-salvation. It is during his assimilation into the world-Soul that Taji, like Tommo, is recorded as becoming a "son of the house," "gathering in" the "knowledge" of man (Man), following the negative way to illumination as well as the "left-hand path," and rejecting the deficient status quo, all of which exemplify the way of gnosis to spiritual maturity. Tommo's quest for "knowledge" of Toby and for a return to his "home" and "mother" and his refusal to rest content with the world of Typee are some of the allusions to the negative way of enlightenment and the "left-hand path" in Typee.

Just as there are particular episodes in Typee which emphatically signify Tommo's acquisition of the higher, gnostic truths in the religion of the Typees, so the same holds true in Mardi. Before illustrating this point, however, it is interesting to note in more detail some of the similarities and differences which exist between these novels in terms of the way each presents the protagonist as exemplifying the potential savior in quest of self (Self)-knowledge. In both novels, few obvious signs at the level of the "experienced landscape" indicate that

the protagonist is being initiated into the arcana of Wisdom and thus is serving to the "Many" as a silent symbol of the process of salvation. Further, in both novels, as is typical of gnostic mythos, both protagonists are presented as more or less passively receiving gnosis. In this they resemble the gnostic adept of the classical world, and one finds an explanation of the hidden dynamo symbolism in relation to the protagonist's relative "stillness" during his quest for gnosis beyond or perhaps reinforcing that which mandates that he re-enact the drama of the fall of the Soul and, like a seed, "die" to regenerate the world. Discussing "the Hermetic treatise of rebirth (C.H.XIII)," Jonas notes that "the initiate . . . is throughout receptive rather than active" as he goes through a ritual which involves his assimilation of the positive and rejection of the matching negative "'powers of God.'" This ritual, Jonas adds, culminates in the initiate's "ecstatic experience of deification." Here the passivity of the potential gnostic savior is a reference to redemption by God's "grace."³⁰

Illustrating the more sustained emphasis on the concepts of Depth and Silence and the greater degree of indirection accompanying the hidden dynamo image pattern in Mardi as compared with Typee, the attention in Typee remains focused on Tommo's acquisition of the gnosis, but in Mardi, more often than not, a surrogate figure plays the role of initiate, and readers are invited to image the mute Taji as meditating on what he sees and hears. In other words, Mardi makes a greater use than Typee of the device of the tableau. Further, another difference between the two novels is the greater emphasis placed in Mardi on one character enlightening the protagonist. For example, Babalanja, "inspired" by the principle of illumination (Taji), on occasion is depict-

ed as acting the part of the mystagogue in relation to the silent, watchful protagonist.

A notable example of one of Taji's "masks" enacting the role of the primary initiate while Taji observes and listens is portrayed in the episode on the isle of Marammo which describes Yoomy's encounter with Hivohitee. Summoned to ascend for an interview with Hivohitee, Yoomy climbs up into a ten-story "bamboo ediface" which is likened to a "hindoo pagado" and given an "Egyptian reception" by an old hermit with "steel-gray eyes, hair and beard, and a horrible necklace of jaw-bones." They sit in absolute darkness for a time, and Yoomy becomes frightened. Then, led by Hivohitee, the following conversation takes place:

'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.' (M, pp. 360-61)

Depicted as the secret center of a pyramid-like structure, which is assigned the number value of ten and identified with "Nothing," Hivohitee is portrayed as the distorted image of the Unknown God of gnosticism--the non-existent point which manifests the universe in ten stages of emanation. Like all of the other symbols of the fallen Soul, however, he is capable of showing forth the jewel of Truth. The necklace of jaw-bones refers to the self-consuming, self-renewing round of energy which is the cycle

of life and death. Hivohitee conveys the gnostic doctrine of a negative theology by wearing the necklace and yet claiming that he is the "Nothing" that transcends the warfare of opposites which is life. It is significant in a twofold sense that he is identified with "darkness" and only a "dim gleaming." None of Media's party, including Taji, fully understands Hivohitee or his cryptic comments to Yoomy, who relates the interview to Taji and the others. This constitutes one sense in which God lives in darkness, but Hivohitee's association with darkness refers to the "ignorance" and Error of organized religion and the fallen god-head, too.

The hidden dynamo Taji "passively" continues to "gather in" the "dark light" which exists in the fallen world-Soul as he and his party travel throughout the world(s) of Mardi, rejecting each country they visit as not coming up to the standard of the rose-colored pearl. Throughout the portion of the narrative that records this phase of Taji's spiritual history, the unredeemed Soul Babalanja serves most fully as the silent Taji's spokesman. He not only voices many of the thoughts that are uppermost in the unenlightened Taji's mind, but also on occasion he serves as an Illuminator in relation to the protagonist. One of these occasions constitutes a direct reference to the gnostic paradigm of higher vision ($A=B$ yet $A \neq B$).

Taking the form of a neat little parable, the occasion is portrayed as Donjalolo's effort to learn whether the coral on a particular reefbar in Mardi is either red or white. As this episode and the color symbolism in it indicate, a psychological, metaphysical, and socio-political reading here is clearly ascribed to the rose-colored pearl. Frustrated because the two deputies whom he has sent out to investigate the world

for him return to his royal retreat with conflicting reports and specimens of coral to back up their opinions, Donjalolo despairs of ever learning the truth about the nature of reality. He quits the scene. After his departure, the crowd that has assembled argues about which of the deputies, Zuma or Varnopi, is right. No agreement can be reached. Is the reefbar red, or is it white? Babalanja solves this puzzle. "Marking all this, Babalanja, who had been silently looking on, leaning against one of the palm pillars, quietly observed to Media:--'My lord, I have seen this same reef at Rafona. In various places, it is of various hues. As for Zuma and Varnopi, both are wrong, and both are right'" (M, p. 250).

Besides resembling Typee in that the "buried" Taji risks being killed throughout the time that he searches for "knowledge," and to some among the "Many" he may represent a mute symbol of the way enlightenment is acquired, the hidden dynamo image pattern is portrayed in Mardi in other ways essentially identical with its depiction in Typee. For example, Taji, like Tommo, represents the rational, scientific mind even as he searches for metaphysical and mystical apprehension of freedom, individualism, and wholeness, and he is the cause of revolution. The journey through Mardi is the occasion of a review of its entire mythical, legendary, and factual history, a survey of its present status, and a forum for an exchange of ideas about metaphysics, politics, art, ethics, and manners.

During this journey, the "missing" Taji effects spiritual, intellectual, and political revolution. "Inspired" by the energy and quest of Taji, the religious philosopher Babalanja discovers the truth of Alma, has a mystical vision, and, accompanied by Yoomy and Mohi, settles

in Serenia, a community of quietistic, ascetic Christian gnostics. Media, too, is affected by Alma. He renounces his claim to divinity and vows to introduce liberal reforms in his kingdom, but his change of heart may be too late. While he is gone, his subjects rebel against his tyranny. They are goaded into action by Aleema's sons who spread the "word" that Media is not a divine being who rules by divine right. The precedent for their denial of Media's divinity is the Western Taji's attempt to convince Yillah that she is only a mortal.

Motivated by revenge rather than by the desire to save the impaired Man, Aleema's sons implement Taji's rationalistic and Christian assertion of the fundamental difference between humanity and God, and they help realize Taji's dramatically presented advocacy of liberalism in government. This feature of the protagonist's characterization refers ultimately to the identification of the transmundane deity with freedom, individualism, and wholeness. With the ironic symbolism involving Aleema's sons, Melville expresses the gnostic idea that the will to bring about good is inextricably involved in evil and vice versa. Further, he shows how the transmundane spirit in an indirect, causal way, operates immanently to reform its impaired Self. And since Taji ends up accepting as the highest Truth the view that man in his true self is identical with the Divine, which is the belief that his descent through the world displaces, one perceives that Taji's demythologizing of Yillah is a microcosmic foreshadowing of his influence on the world, and one understands as well that the next stage of the drama of the world's progress toward spiritual maturity involves following its leader's example.

Moby-Dick follows Typee and Mardi closely in regard to depicting

the image pattern of the hidden dynamo. Two parallels exist in Moby-Dick to the episodes in Mardi and Typee in which the protagonist symbolically "fragments" into the "Many," "sinks" in Darkness, and transforms into an "internal engine" of the most potent aspect of the Divine. Whereas one of these events identifies Ishmael with harmony and depicts him as the Self-Integrated Man, the other shows him as the firebrand--the revolutionary who destroys the old forms. The scene in which Queequeg and Ishmael, boarding the Pequod, subject themselves to the power of Darkness, here represented by the distorted image of the gnostic trinity, Bildad, Peleg, and Charity, shows Ishmael becoming the internal dynamo who harmonizes and heals the divided Man.

As readers recall, Ishmael awakens these ignorant "Many" to a sense of reconciliation, brotherhood, and unity with his inspired speech about them all belonging to one Church. After Peleg wants to prevent "the son of darkness," Queequeg, from joining the Pequod's crew, Ishmael makes a speech about the fundamental unity of them all. Following his impassioned assertion that "every mother's son and soul of them," dark pagans and white Christians alike, are so many forms of "the . . . ['One'] grand belief," the amazed, old bigot Peleg, "drawing nearer" to Ishmael, exclaims, "Young man, you'd better ship for a missionary; I never heard a better sermon . . . Why Father Mapple himself couldn't beat it, and he's reckoned something" (M-D, pp. 128-29).

In this scene, as in its analogues in Typee and Mardi, the protagonist and his consort visually refer to the balanced Alien Man. Further, they are associated with the idea that they are risking their lives in truly entering the fallen world. The reader learns in this episode that the business of whaling is man-killing.

Another episode in Moby-Dick portrays Ishmael simultaneously transforming into the "Many," becoming a symbol of the Soul submerged in Error, and beginning to act as the hidden dynamo. This event is portrayed in "The Quarter Deck" and commented on by the storyteller Ishmael in "Moby-Dick." It concerns Ishmael's virtual absorption into the crew of the Pequod and Ahab as they (almost) unanimously pledge themselves to pierce "through the wall" of appearances, as Ahab says, in their effort to destroy the deity's "mask" and "become" God (M-D, p. 221). Ishmael is nowhere mentioned in the account of the episode itself. But the storyteller reveals later that during this event, he yells "stronger" than any of the others, with whom he is "welded" (M-D, p. 239). Thus the effect of the description of this event is to image Ishmael as an internal dynamo, embedded in the heart of the crew, secretly fueling the whole enterprise.

After this event, Ishmael "pops" in and out of the narrative at the level of the "experienced landscape, and the occasions on which he appears repeatedly relate him to transmundane, self-integrated Man who withdraws into the depths of the self (Self) to rescue the "drowned" man (Man). For example, in the dreamy atmosphere of "The Mat-Maker," Ishmael, like "each silent sailor . . . [resolves] into his own invisible self," and meditates on the metaphysical and philosophical implications of the image which he and Queequeg, who are "weaving . . . a sword-mat," suggest and on those of their dialectical activity. As Charles Feidelson, Jr. suggests, Ishmael's "reverie is a dream of wholeness" and unity (M-D, p. 288). But what might be added is that both Ishmael's thoughts about fate, free will, and chance and the visual image that he and Queequeg present describe a dynamic interaction of polar opposites (which is

equated with a trinity) in a context of indeterminacy and freedom.

Feidelson compares this passage with one previous to it in which Ishmael, standing mast, also withdraws into himself and "ascends" to a vision of wholeness. But again one can be more specific. This episode, too, which is recorded in "The Mast-Head," refers to Self-Integration and the gnostic paradigm of higher vision. In it by implication Ishmael, while standing mast, is suggested to imagine himself "striding along the deep, as if the masts were gigantic stilts, while beneath [him] and between [his] legs, as it were, swim the hugest monsters of the sea, even as ships once sailed between the boots of the famous Colossus at old Rhodes." While thus firmly based, the potential sun-god Ishmael "resolves" into the depths of "that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature." His spirit ebbs away to whence it came "--back into "life," the "sea," and from the sea to "God" (M-D, pp. 209, 214).

But just as his "spirit . . . becomes diffused through time and space, like Cranmer's sprinkled Pantheistic ashes," and he "[risks] perishing" as he "loses his identity," he is saved from being swallowed up in the Abyss (i.e. "Descartian vortices") by the "knowledge" of his "identity" (M-D pp. 214, 210, 215). Those "Pantheists" to whom it is not granted to "know" their true self--the "one insular Tahiti" which exists in "the soul of man"--experience the "death" of the inner self (Self) and drown in "the summer sea" (M-D, pp. 215, 364).

That Ishmael's "identity" is linked to the Unknown God and his salvation clearly credited to the pneumatic spirit in the psychical soul is revealed in the second episode in the narrative which describes Ishmael's withdrawal into himself while he is again standing "at the foremast-head." Related in Chapter 61, "Stubb Kills a Whale" (LXI),

Ishmael again falls into "that dreamy mood" in which he "[loses] consciousness . . . [and his] soul [goes] out of [his] body." But once again, as he risks losing his identity in a merger with the All, he is saved. In this instance, he is aware that it is "some, invisible gracious agency" which saves his life. This "agency" gives him a "shock" so that he "[comes] back to life" (M-D, p. 373).

Episodes such as these identify Ishmael with the transcendent Alien Man who sinks himself into the depths of the soul (Soul) to teach and obtain gnosis. With his "absence" from the narrative as well as with these episodes, he is portrayed as the hidden dynamo. The episodes which portray the silent, solitary Ishmael as risking his life while standing mast in order to sight, as Stubb puts it, that "gold cup of sperm oil," portray him as the most potent form of the divine energy on the Pequod (M-D, p. 292). In locating him at the top of the ship, they simultaneously describe him as the internal engine and "driver" of this vehicle of the Spirit. The terms and images accompanying these episodes indicate that the highest and lowest or deepest or most profound truths coincide.

Metaphors of vision and royalty, as well as those of height and depth, beginnings and endings, and special gnostic terms attend on the relatively few episodes after "The Quarter-Deck" in which Ishmael at the level of the "experienced landscape" rather than Starbuck, Ahab, Flash, or some other character claims the reader's attention. For example, in "The Mast-head," the storyteller Ishmael states that "the earliest standers of mast-heads were the old Egyptians." He envisions them climbing the pyramids to "the apex" in order to "sing out for new stars." (M-D, p. 207). As one learns from Zweig, the "divine spark" or star in

the soul is imagined in gnostic mythos to exist as the innermost, central point in the soul, which also is referred to as the "apex."³¹ Further, when Ishmael stands mast, it is at the "foremast-head." This is to say, it is at the apex of the ship, which, as Feidelson notes, is connected with royalty (M-D, p. 373). Thus Ishmael's "withdrawal" into himself when he stands mast is related to his quest for the "gold" or "star" of self (Self)-integration. These episodes characterize him as the hidden dynamo which moves the vessel of the Spirit toward the same goal and as the revolutionary principle of gnosis.

Other parallels exist between Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick in regard to the way in which the protagonist is portrayed as the hidden dynamo. Like Tommo and Taji, Ishmael is portrayed as having strong rational and empirical interests. Chapters in the narrative, such as "The Blanket," "The Sperm Whale's Head--Contrasted View," "The Right Whale's Head--Contrasted View," "The Cassock," "The Try-Works," and "Stowing Down and Cleaning Up" all pertain to the effort to teach and obtain salvation by gnosis, but they also reveal that the protagonist is an acute observer with a keen interest in minute detail. Thus these portions of the narrative, as well as the many others which relate to the mythical, religious, legendary, and factual history of the Leviathan, correspond to the Tommo's survey of the culture of the Typees and the "dark light" "gathered in" about Mardi by the "buried" Taji.

As part of the "gathering in" motif, Moby-Dick contains some episodes which in an emphatic way showcase important truths about the self (Self) which Ishmael must apprehend. Three of these which might be mentioned concern (1) Ishmael's apprehension of the Town Ho's Story," (2) Queequeg's rescue of Tashtego from death by drowning in the fragrant

contents of the Sperm Whale's head, (3) and the discovery of ambergris in the bowels of the dead whale which the Pequod's crew obtains from the Rosebud. The Town-Ho story portrays Moby Dick as the Destroyer of Ignorance--the Illuminator who, as Ishmael is charged with doing, manifests the deity in its soteriological aspect; therefore, the tale about Moby Dick, Steelkilt, and Radney, which Ishmael hears while "buried" in the dark hold of the Pequod, opens his eyes to the possibility that the Spirit which is engaged in "universal cannibalism" also provides for the salvation of the "inner man" (M-D, p. 322).

The rescue of Tashetego by Queequeg serves as an object lesson to the watchful Ishmael that the way "down" is the way "out," and it provides him with more assurance that the fallen Soul possesses the highest power which regenerates the self (Self). Here readers should recall that the silent Ishmael is a witness to the episode in which Queequeg by means of cutting a large hole in the bottom of the whale's head and pulling Tashetego out "the good old way--head foremost" rescues Tashetego (M-D, p. 444). Thus the fallen Soul is shown to have "the courage and great skill in obstetrics" necessary for "the deliverance, or rather, the delivery of . . . [the fallen Man]" (M-D, p. 444).

The discovery of ambergris, which is identified as "gold" and a "purse," in the bowels of the dead whale whose body is "almost entirely bankrupt of anything like oil," refers to the inner luminous self (Self) in the fallen soul (Soul) (M-D, pp. 522, 516). Described as looking "as anxious as gold-hunters," Stubb and the crew of the Pequod with "high excitement" suffer the terrible odor of the whale in order to obtain "six handfuls" of the ambergris, which looks "like ripe windsor soap, or rich mottled old cheese," smells like "perfume," and is "worth a gold

guinea an ounce to any druggist" (M-D, p. 522). With depictions of events such as these, readers are given hints about the way in which the "missing" Ishmael, who, like Taji, is suggested to be an onlooker, is initiated into gnosis, and the relative passivity of the protagonist, which is part of the hidden dynamo image pattern, is portrayed.

Additional features of the hidden dynamo metaphor which operate in Moby-Dick as in Typee and Mardi are the motifs of rejection and becoming "a son of the house." The idea that the gnostic initiate not only identifies with the impaired Man, and assimilates the wisdom he has to offer unto himself while being assimilated into the fallen world-Soul but also rejects the deficient status quo and revolts against the lack of self-integration is applied in Moby-Dick in connection with Ishmael serving as a "secret sun" of the transmundane deity. For example, Ishmael sympathizes with and "comprehends" Ahab, but, as has been indicated, he also keeps himself separate from him and the other members of the crew, and ultimately he rejects--or rather transcends--the state of mind and spirit which the Pequod and Ahab represent.

The "Zigzag" and the "Sacred Marriage"

The "zigzag" image pattern is a metaphysical symbolism which coincides in many respects with other image patterns, such as emanation by means of twin and opposite energies and the Serpent. The "zigzag" image pattern, however, especially describes the dialectical interplay of the polar opposites which are the manifestations of the Monad. The idea of progression or change by the energy of contraries is depicted in the gnostic mythos of the Graeco-Roman world. For example, the Valentinian myths of creation and the fall portray the Cosmic Androgyne dividing

into male and female parts and image life not only as the Self-Integrated and Self-Divided Man but also as the patterned movement of the union, separation, "crossing over," and union, and so on, of the polar opposites.

In these myths and the stories about the potential gnostic savior, a pervasive idea is that the two aspects of the One, such as the upper and lower "worlds" or the gnostic savior and the fallen Soul, play an active-passive role in relation to one another. Thus the old gnostic creation and salvation myths dramatize the "zigzag" symbolism. But as Halevi's discussion of the Cabala and Friedman's observations about Boehme reveal, the details of a symbolism of progress or movement by contraries are elaborately developed by the mystical scholars of Judaism in the Middle Ages and then, "partly under the influence of the medieval Kabbala," by the early seventeenth-century "Lutheran gnostic" Boehme, to whom the German idealists, says Friedman, owe an "enormous debt."³²

Determining where Melville first met with the image pattern of the "zigzag" is beyond the scope of this study. What his major fiction makes clear, however, is that he was familiar with it as it receives expression in the Cabala and that he syncretically identified it with the Serpent, lightning, and other kinds of cosmological symbolisms of the gnostic imagination which ultimately pertain more to salvation than to the Fall in the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer. As this part of the study demonstrates, in Mardi and Moby-Dick Melville even uses the term "zigzag" to describe some references to a gnostic cosmology.

Melville may have invented the term "zigzag," or the occasions in Mardi and Moby-Dick when he uses it may indicate his knowledge of the Cabala. When Halevi is describing the cosmology of the Cabala, he employs the term and its more formal equivalent. Speaking of the emana-

tion of the "Absolute Nothing," Halevi says that "the flow" of the Spirit "which manifests the ten Sefirot can be visualized as zigzigging in a 'Lightning Flash' from a central position . . . to the right . . . and across to the left," and so on. The whole pattern, he adds, is called "the Tree of Life."³³

In this portion of the discussion, first the direct references in Mardi and Moby-Dick to the "zigzag" symbolism and one dramatization of it in Typee are noted. The point made in this exercise is that Melville is quite aware that the "zigzag" image pattern is a cosmological symbolism. Then the connection between the "zigzag" and "sacred marriage" symbolisms and the themes of the saved savior and the redeemer's rescue of and union with the fallen Thought of God is explained, and the episodes which record Tommo's, Taji's, and Ishmael's first major effort to unite with the fallen Soul are pointed out. What becomes clear in discussing the "sacred marriage" image pattern is that the dialectical interplay of opposites, which is the main characteristic of the "zigzag" symbolism, is mirrored in it.

An example of an allusion to the "zigzag" symbolism is found in Typee in the portion of the narrative which describes Tommo's and Toby's trek across the highest mountain on Nukuheva Island. Tommo and Toby are depicted as alternately taking the lead in their journey and pulling one another along as they walk. Combined with the idea that the way "down" is the way "out," the metaphysical symbolism of the "zigzag" is signified by this action, and the theme of a dialectical interplay of opposites to effect progress is conveyed.

In Mardi and Moby-Dick as in Typee, the "zigzag" symbolism describes the divine energy "crossing over" in a dialectical manner from "right"

to "left" as it devolves and evolves. Many of the vessels on which Taji travels, Taji himself, and the women (and men) whom he hunts and who hunt him are described as moving in a "zigzag" pattern. For example, the Arcturion spends several weeks "chassezing to and fro across the Line" (the Equator), as she hunts for the sperm whale (M, p. 4). The Chamois graphically portrays a "zigzag" pattern as it travels up and down the waves of the ocean (M, p. 37). And one of the first things that Taji notices about the Parki is that she "[yaws] in her course" (M, p. 57). Further, speaking of the captain of the Parki, the story teller Taji says that she was not "the first woman that ever led men into zigzags," meaning that in her symbolic and mythical identity as the female aspect of the god-head, Life, Annatoo is this "first woman" (M, p. 102). And, of course, Yillah-Hautia leads and pursues Taji on a zigzag chase through the world(s) of Mardi.

In Moby-Dick as in Mardi, a direct reference to the "zigzag" image pattern which specifies that this symbolism is a cosmological metaphor is found in the narrative. In Chapter 44, "The Chart," (XLIV) readers learn that the vessel of the Spirit, the Pequod, crosses over from right to left as it descends into the depths of the world-Soul. In the episode which this chapter records Ahab is described as sitting at his table at night with various maps. He is working out a course for the Pequod to follow in order to have the best chance of catching Moby Dick. With a lamp over his head that "continually rocks with the motion of the ship," he draws up the plan which the Pequod follows in the hunt for the White Whale. It describes a "devious zig-zag world-circle" (M-D, pp. 267, 270).

The "zigzag" image pattern serves to express the themes of the

saved savior and the savior's "sacred marriage" with and rescue of the oppressed, defiled, misunderstood, or ignored highest Truth which exists in the depths of the world-Soul. These two themes reflect the dialectical interplay of the potential gnostic redeemer (m.) and the fallen Soul (f). Together they depict the "zigzag" pattern whereby the potential savior is enlightened by the fallen Soul in its aspect of the highest Truth and the redeemer, in turn, enlightens the fallen world-Soul and saves the highest Truth. The potential redeemer starts the process when he is portrayed as rejecting the fallen world and seeking to "know" a new one. Thus the action pattern in regard to the protagonist is "active-passive-active."

Both the theme of saved savior and the redeemer's rescue of and union with the fallen Thought of God express the idea of the reconciliation or "mating" of opposites and give this idea a mystical and metaphysical reading. Other gnostic symbolisms, such as the Soul's "captivity" in the lower "Nature," refer to the union of opposites, but in the context of the image pattern of the Soul's "captivity," the idea is more metaphysical than mystical, and the event or condition is tragic or problematic. To specify particular episodes which emphatically record the mystical experience of the conjunction of opposites, the term sacred marriage is employed. The term "sacred marriage" also signifies an image pattern because the mythic plot of the stories of the gnostic redeemer portray the protagonist's quest to redeem and be redeemed by the fallen world in terms of his and the Soul's protracted effort to enact a true "sacred marriage."

Depicting the first half of their protagonist's spiritual history, Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick include specific episodes which portray a

"sacred marriage" and to some degree express both the theme of the saved savior and that of the savior's rescue of and union with the Soul. These episodes not only are microcosms of the mythic monoplot which informs these works at the level of the "experienced landscape," but also they foreshadow the protagonist's transformation into the saved savior and the Illuminator who destroys Ignorance and brings the jewel of gnosis into the future. In these episodes the protagonist and his quest object perceive their fundamental unity and divinity by means of their common identity as the Alien Light or Alien Man. However, in none of these episodes does the experience of the reconciliation of opposites produce a permanent state of enlightenment. Rather, these episodes indicate that the attainment of self (Self)-integration is a gradual process, which, nonetheless, depends on quick flashes of insight and requires psychic transformation whereby the mind, in effect, is turned upside down so that it perceives according to the dictates of the gnostic paradigm of higher vision.

In its working out of the first half of Tommo's spiritual history, Typee contains an important episode which illustrates the "sacred marriage" image pattern. This episode concerns the portion of the plot that deals with the subject of the disappearance of Toby. In it the captive Tommo seeks out Fayaway, whom he trusts because of the kindness that she has shown him, in order to learn the "truth," as he says, about Toby's disappearance (T, pp. 107-08). As Tommo's activity clearly indicates, in looking for Fayaway, Tommo is looking for Truth. In regard to understanding the gnostic mystical and metaphysical implications of the Truth that Fayaway manifests in this scene, readers should recall that Fayaway is something of a harlot and a cannibal, but she is

characterized as a paradoxical union of opposites (she has blue eyes and olive-toned skin) and via her name is identified with the unknown. Thus she is portrayed as a symbol of the fallen Alien Life in its aspect of the highest Truth.

After Tommo locates Fayaway, with whom he later has a romantic relationship, she reveals to him that the deep sympathy which she feels for him as an alien and a captive is based on her awareness that even though Typee is her home, sometimes she, too, feels like a captive and an alien in it. Tommo is struck not only by this fact but also by the revelation that Fayaway seems aware that there "were ties rudely severed, which had once bound . . . [him, Toby, and, by implication, her] to [their] homes." In these "homes" wait "sisters and brothers anxiously looking forward to [their] return" (T, p. 198). With this symbolism, a "sacred marriage" between a mother-daughter-sister figure and a father-son-brother figure is depicted, the soteriological and eschatological implications of the term the Alien Life are conveyed, and the theme of the saved savior is stressed.

That opposites are identical ($A=B$) is part of the mystical message of this episode--a message which subverts Tommo's narrowly rational consciousness, turning his mind upside down, so to speak, so that he perceives according to the dictates of the higher vision ($A=B$ yet $A\neq B$). Stated in more metaphysical and mystical terms, the message of this passage is that man in his true, innermost self (Self) is identical with the Other--the great Alien Life who transcends all terms and images but who may be thought of as ideally existing a dynamic balance of energies in context of love and freedom. Here Tommo is being portrayed as glimpsing the "divine within," which is necessary for his this-worldly and

other-worldly salvation from Ignorance.

Fayaway reminds Tommo of his own alienness, which, says Jonas, in reference to the archetypal figure of the unredeemed redeemer, "is the beginning of the return" to Unity. The sense of alienness, he adds, is a cause of "suffering" and a mark of "superiority." Thus the awareness of one's "split-off existence in the world" implies the perception of self (Self)-division, which, in turn, suggests the need for self (Self)-integration. In her being and behavior, Fayaway points to self (Self)-integration. She, like the Valentinian prophet Marcus whom Pagels quotes and paraphrases, leads Tommo to realize "not only . . . that God is dyadic . . . but also that 'humanity, . . . was formed according to the image and likeness of God (Father and Mother).'"³⁴ The perception of the fundamental unity, divinity, and "doubleness" of the Self is critical to Tommo's initiation into gnosis.

The theme of the saved savior is emphasized in Tommo's and Fayaway's encounter, but that of the savior's rescue of Truth is portrayed as well. In their meeting, the primary symbol of the impaired Alien Life (Fayaway) acts the role of the savior. With her revelations she, in effect, rescues Tommo and enacts a "sacred marriage" with him. However, Tommo seeks her out in her aspect of Truth. The "zigzag" pattern is well illustrated in this event, which foreshadows Tommo's final acquisition of "knowledge" and depicts its progressive attainment. This symbolism hints that Tommo, when he is saved from the state of Ignorance, will take with him not Fayaway but the Truth which, like pearls, he has "gathered up" while in the depths of the world-Soul. This Truth will allow him to save the captive Fayaway more adequately than would her actual removal from the valley.

Mardi and Moby-Dick both include episodes which portray a "sacred marriage," express the themes of the saved and saving redeemer, and foreshadow the protagonist's final attainment of the jewel of gnosis. Moreover, as is the case with the encounter between Tommo and Fayaway, the protagonists Taji and Ishmael and their quest objects relate to one another as manifestations of the Alien Light. In Mardi, this episode is the one in which the alien, light-skinned man Taji rescues and is rescued from Error by the alien, light-skinned woman Yillah (the rose-colored pearl). Following this act, as is the case with Tommo and Fayaway, they become lovers. The mystical, psychological, and metaphysical implications of the episode in Mardi and its parallel in Typee are identical. Taji and Yillah are polar opposites. One comes from West and speaks English; the other is from the Eastern realm of Mardi and speaks Polynesian. Yet when they meet, there is an instant, sudden flash of insight that they are more identical than different and that, like the twins Tommo and Fayaway, they share the same far away "home" and "origin."

Alluding also to the gnostic symbolic term for the androgynous son of the Unknown God--the Word (m.) of Light (f.)--as he relates the story of his and Yillah's first meeting, the narrator Taji makes these comments about his immediate perception of their fundamental identity:

So powerful was [the] impression, that unconsciously I addressed her in my own tongue. She started, and bending over, listened intently, as if to the first faint echo of something dimly remembered. Again I spoke, when throwing back her hair, the maiden looked up with a piercing, bewildered gaze. But her eyes soon fell, and bending over once more, she resumed her former attitude. At length she slowly chanted to herself several musical words, unlike those of the Islanders; but though I knew not what they meant, they vaguely seemed familiar. (M, p. 137)

An event in Moby-Dick which is the metaphorical equivalent of the first emphatic depictions of the "sacred marriage" in Typee and Mardi

is, of course, Ishmael's and Queequeg's union. Here, as in the analogous episodes in Typee and Mardi, the gnostic symbolic term the Alien Man and the complexes of terms and images concerning identity, origin, and the far away are the ground on which the image pattern of the "sacred marriage" is based. As readers recall, it is Queequeg's "unearthly complexion" which sends a bolt of "lightning" through Ishmael and makes him remember that a man's skin is "only his outside" and that perhaps Queequeg is "a white man," like him, only one whose skin has been altered by the hot sun of the tropics (M-D, p. 48). In other words, Queequeg's alienness engenders in Ishmael thoughts of their fundamental similarity and the unknown.

The psychological, mystical, and metaphysical implications of Ishmael's perception of Queequeg as the Alien Man and his identity with Queequeg are further underscored by the fact that both entertain the idea that the other is "the devil" in the first moments of their encounter (M-D, pp. 48, 51). Moreover, the gnostic symbolic term the Word of Life is alluded to not only by the strange "writing" on Queequeg's body which so intrigues and appals Ishmael but also by the fact that Queequeg enters the room "holding a light in one hand," and he and Ishmael in their fright cannot communicate with one another (M-D, pp. 47, 51).

Melville continues to allude to the gnostic paradigm of higher vision in his depictions of the "sacred marriage." The principle of identity ($A=B$) and that of non-identity ($A\neq B$)--or a moral and transmoral vision--is conveyed with the symbolism in this event. As the episodes subsequent to their first encounter which detail the flowering of their relationship reveal, the perception of the fundamental unity of opposites prevails with Ishmael. While he becomes confused in undergoing the

experience of illumination, he does not become so confused that he loses the ability to make moral judgments and to perceive a hierarchy of values.

As is the case with the first emphatic depiction of the "sacred marriage" in Typee, the "zigzag" image pattern in connection with the themes of the saved savior and the redeemer's rescue of and union with the fallen Thought of God are worked out in the analogous episodes in Mardi and Moby-Dick. Obviously, however, Mardi and Moby-Dick are more complete and direct than Typee in regard to the way in which they record the potential gnostic savior's effort to unite with and rescue the fallen world-Soul. What is perhaps less obvious in Mardi than in Typee and Moby-Dick, however, is that these episodes, like the one involving Tommo and Fayaway, continue to represent the protagonist as a saved savior as well as one who saves.

In Moby-Dick as in Typee, it is fairly obvious that the accent in the "sacred marriage" episode is on the concept that the fallen Soul saves the would-be savior. Like Tommo, Ishmael seeks out Truth. When he finds it, however, he, like Tommo, is in a dependent, passive position. As readers may recall, Ishmael is in bed in total darkness when Queequeg enters their room at the Spouter-Inn and continues the radical transformation of Ishmael's consciousness which is suggested to have begun prior to the narrative (one of the ways that this idea is conveyed is that after the first lowering, during which Ishmael is almost killed, he resolves to make out his will for "the fourth time in [his] nautical life") (M-D, p. 304). Although they fear one another, it is Queequeg who first acts in a "civil" way to Ishmael (M-D, p. 51). During their relationship, he shows affection, generosity, self-possession, bravery,

balance, curiosity, and religious tolerance, and he practices the equality which is a touchstone in Melville's fiction of the highest god-head.

Queequeg's effect on Ishmael after being in Queequeg's company for only two days is that of saving the potential gnostic savior. Sitting before the fire with Queequeg in their room in the Spouter-Inn and listening to the storm outside, Ishmael "[begins] to be sensible of strange feelings." He is conscious of a "melting" going on inside him. "No more," he thinks, rather prematurely, will "my splintered heart and maddened hand . . . [be] turned against the wolfish world. This soothing savage [has] redeemed it" (M-D, p. 83).

In regard to taking pleasure in the patterns of symbolism in these narratives, it is interesting to note that the "general Serpent" Queequeg quietly enters his room in the Spouter-Inn and then "swims" into Ishmael's inner soul in a way analogous to that in which Wisdom (=Grace=Life=Charity)--the world-Soul--imaged as the "one grand hooded phantom" with infinite sets of twins, silently "floats" into Ishmael's inner being during his vision of the whale and the sea. Other parallels between the whale in Ishmael's dream-vision and Queequeg during the period of his and Ishmael's honeymoon are that Ishmael likens Queequeg to a "phantom," identifies him with "wisdom," and notes Queequeg's "really kind, . . . charitable" behavior (M-D, pp. 53, 83, 51).

Like the fallen world-Soul Moby Dick, who is represented in the abstract in Ishmael's vision of the whale, Queequeg acts the role of Wisdom in leading Ishmael to self (Self)-integration and in increasing in Ishmael, to quote the Valentinian Marcus, "her own knowledge." As Pagels says, the Thought of Grace of God not only falls but "also enlightens human beings and makes them wise. Followers of Valentinus and

Marcus, "she adds," therefore prayed to the Mother as the 'mystical, eternal Silence' and to 'Grace, She who is before all things' . . . for insight (gnosis)" and "protection."³⁵ In all likelihood, the Hermetic treatise on rebirth which expresses the view of salvation by "grace" is a variant expression of these same ideas, which cast light as well on Ishmael's act of worshipping with Queequeg and seeking to be protected by him and Coffin (M-D, pp. 85, 51, 95).

Because the theme of the savior's rescue of the fallen Soul in her aspect as Truth is so pronounced in Mardi, it is easy to overlook that the fallen Soul here as in Typee and Moby-Dick also is portrayed as saving the would-be Illuminator. Reminded of the idea that Wisdom leads men to "knowledge," however, readers perceive that this is the case in Mardi as in Typee and Moby-Dick.

In the episode in Mardi which portrays Taji's rescue of the "lost pearl" Yillah, Taji, the potential gnostic redeemer, plays the active role in relation to the fallen world-Soul. However, at the deep level of the symbolism, Yillah is saving Taji as much if not more than he is saving her. Although Yillah is associated with the concepts of a sacrifice for atonement and propitiation and is portrayed as lacking a concern for the socio-political realization of freedom, individualism, and equality or wholeness, she carries the content of the "Eastern" mystical mode of perception, which perceives the unity and divinity of reality, and by virtue of being identified with the rose-colored pearl, she especially represents the ideals of freedom, individualism, and wholeness as metaphysical, mystical, and psychological concepts. Taji, one recalls, carries the content of the Western consciousness, Christianity, the moral, socio-political vision, and the quest for the socio-political

realization of the ideals of gnosticism.

This symbolism mandates that the jewel of Truth, Yillah, be freed from Error by the rational consciousness and then that the rational consciousness attain and elevate the mythic, mystic mode of perception above itself. As the next part of the discussion which deals with these protagonists' experience of illumination indicates, this, in fact, is what occurs in Mardi and the other novels as well. In Mardi, Yillah is portrayed as saving the savior by means of rejecting their deficient, imbalanced relationship and withdrawing into the depths of the world-Soul --withdrawing into "nothing." To find her, Taji follows suit. Because Taji's return to the Depth--the Unknown God--is an act of following Wisdom (Yillah), the fallen Soul in its aspect of Wisdom and Truth can be seen to save the savior in Mardi fully as much as in Typee and Moby-Dick.

It is in the episodes in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick which portray the themes of the saved savior and the savior's rescue of and "sacred marriage" with the fallen Soul that the indebtedness of Melville's fiction not only to the gnostic version of the Narcissus myth in the Hermetic Corpus and the "Hymn of the Pearl" but also to the mythos of the Simonian and Valentinian schools of gnosticism in the ancient world is most easily recognized.

A paraphrase of Grant's discussion of the mythos of the Simonian school reads thus. In this body of literature, Simon Magus plays the role of the Illuminator. Descending to earth, he rescues the traduced and defiled Truth from a brothel. Then Simon Magus and the newly elevated Wisdom unite and exhibit themselves as an incarnation of the Self-Integrated Androgyne, thereby subverting established beliefs about

the God, man, and society and threatening the existing order. Although in the Simonian literature the gnostic savior throughout the drama plays the active role, in the Valentinian mythos about the potential gnostic redeemer and the fallen Wisdom, to quote Jonas, the protagonist and his quest object are treated as one entity which plays "an active-passive double role."³⁶ In regard to their depictions of the "sacred marriage" image pattern, Melville's Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick appear to combine and rely heavily on the Simonian and Valentinian myths of the gnostic savior.

NOTES

¹ Excepting the "zigzag," Jonas discusses all of these metaphors and more either in "Gnostic Imagery and Symbolic Language" or throughout his book.

The term hidden dynamo is borrowed from Raschke, pp. 35-36.

The term "zigzag" is derived from Halevi's discussion of the Cabala. Describing the emanation of the One in ten states or stages of being, Halevi says "the flow which manifests the ten Sefiroth can be visualized as zigzagging in a 'Lightning Flash' from a central position (Balance) to the right (Expansion) and across to the left (Constraint) . . . " (p. 6).

² Jonas, pp. 60-61.

³ Campbell, IV, 144; III, 467-70.

⁴ Jonas, pp. 128, 67.

⁵ Jonas, p. 52.

⁶ Campbell, IV, 154, 152-57; III, 371, 482.

⁷ Jonas, p. 55.

⁸ The Gospel of Thomas, as quoted by Pagels, p. 153.

⁹ Jonas, p. 70.

¹⁰ Jonas, p. 88.

¹¹ Book I, Hermetic Corpus, as reproduced in Jonas, pp. 148-50.

¹² Jonas, p. 93.

¹³ Jonas, p. 88.

¹⁴ Jonas, p. 88.

¹⁵ Jonas, p. 69.

¹⁶ The "Hymn of the Pearl" as quoted and paraphrased by Jonas, p. 120.

¹⁷ Speaking of the fall of the Thought of the Unknown God in Valentinian mythos of creation, Jonas observes that "even in error the thought of an Aeon constitutes reality and lives on in its effect The

intention or the Desire of the Sophia, hypostasized in its separation from her [becomes] a new personal being: the lower Sophia [Fallen world]" (p. 186).

- 18 See Jonas for a discussion of this point (pp. 94-96).
- 19 Pagels, p. 70.
- 20 See "The Valentinian Speculation," as interpreted and quoted by Jonas, p. 182.
- 21 Pagels, Introduction, p. xxxi.
- 22 See Chapter II, p. 86, n. 51 for some information about the gnostic adaptation of Pythagorean cosmological symbolism and the pyramid.
- 23 Brodtkorb, pp. 7-8.
- 24 Jonas, p. 122.
- 25 Pagels, p. 160.
- 26 Jonas, p. 76.
- 27 Pagels, p. 125.
- 28 Jonas, pp. 49-50.
- 29 Jonas, pp. 62, 286, 166-67; Pagels, pp. 158-59.
- 30 Jonas, p. 286.
- 31 Zweig, p. 15.
- 32 Halevi, pp. 5-7 ff.; Friedman, p. 18.
- 33 Halevi, pp. 5-6.
- 34 Jonas, pp. 49-50; Marcus, as reported by Irenaeus, Adversus Haeresus 1.18.2, and cited by Pagels, p. 67.
- 35 Marcus, as cited by Irenaeus in Adversus Haeresus, 1.14.1, and quoted by Pagels (p. 60). Pagels, p. 65.
- 36 See Chapter 3, "Simon Magus and Helen, His Thought," in Grant (pp. 70-96); Jonas, p. 79.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND PART OF THE SPIRITUAL HISTORY OF THE POTENTIAL

GNOSTIC REDEEMER: TOMMO'S, TAJI'S, AND ISHMAEL'S

TRANSFORMATION INTO THE ILLUMINATOR

The analysis of Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick which has been conducted leaves little doubt that these works represent Melville's interpretation of the mythos of the potential gnostic redeemer. Some of the more important points which have been made yield the following evidence:

(1) Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael symbolize the potential gnostic savior, and their quest object(s) represents the gnostic concept of the fallen Thought of the Unknown God. (2) In carrying out their mission to "know" the ineffable All, these protagonists follow the path laid out by the Soul in the pre-cosmic (and continuously occurring) event of Creation and the Fall. Like the archetypal figure of the gnostic savior, in a qualified way, Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael re-enact this drama. (3) To structure and inform these narratives, Melville employs the metaphysical symbolisms of gnostic myths of Creation and salvation. Those which have been discussed include the emanation of the Monad, inverted mirror images, the Serpent, the "captivity" of the Soul in Darkness, the fall of the "One" into the "Many," the hidden dynamo, the "zigzag," and the "sacred marriage."

In order to leave no doubt that Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick portray the myth of the potential gnostic savior, what remains to demonstrate in

these works is that these narratives do live up to their promise of describing the transformation of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael into the Illuminator. Toward this end, this portion of the discussion concentrates on the latter part of these protagonists' spiritual biographies and pays particular attention to certain critical episodes in relation to some of the themes and image patterns which have been discussed.

As is the case with the portions of Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick which describe the protagonist's re-enactment of the fall into self (Self)-division, the presentation in these novels of the central characters' recovery of self (Self)-integration (Unity) is progressive. Indeed, the point has been made in the preceding discussion that Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael are "gathering in" Light about the Self and working toward self-integration throughout the time that they are portrayed as transforming into the Soul who is self-entrapped in Ignorance. From this readers can infer that many episodes, events, and details in these narratives could be cited to illustrate the protagonist's "turn" from Darkness to Light.

In their working out of the mystical and metaphysical theme of the self (Self)-salvation of the deity, however, these narratives record episodes which function as the climax. These episodes signify the time at which the protagonist really begins the final leg of his journey, which involves his "becoming" God--an event which has both personal and cosmic significance. The first concern of this segment of the discussion, therefore, is with the episodes in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick that signify the protagonist's "conversion" toward illumination. Subsequent to this experience, Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael reveal that they have obtained the "gold" of gnosis and know themselves to be one of those

elected by the Unknown God to serve as a fully authoritative master of gnosis. After noting those episodes which signify the climax in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick, the ones which record the protagonist's salvation and new status as the Destroyer of Ignorance claim the attention that they deserve.

The episode in Typee which describes Tommo's successful effort to take Fayaway sailing with him represents the climax of the narrative. Some indication of its importance in terms of Tommo's spiritual biography is indicated by the fact that this episode is centered in the mathematical middle of the story. The storyteller hints that locating this event in the center of his story is important, for elsewhere as a general principle he states, "Truth, who loves to be centrally located, is . . . found between the two extremes" (T, p. 205). As readers recall, the gnostic redeemer is identified with the center of a circle or the middle space between two columns. Thus even the location of the episode in the text relates to the protagonist's attainment of balance, harmony, and wholeness.

The episode itself portrays these themes as well as those of freedom and illumination. It illustrates the gnostic principles of reflection, reversal, and inversion and constitutes a depiction of the "sacred marriage." Like the earlier episode in which Fayaway and Tommo, identifying with one another, enact a "sacred marriage," in this occurrence the "zigzag" pattern operates. However, in this episode Tommo takes the active role, and, in fact, plays the part of the Illuminator who rescues, elevates, and achieves a true "sacred marriage" with the fallen Soul in her aspect of Truth.

The narrative begins to build toward the episode long before it

takes place. Readers are told on several occasions prior to its depiction that the Typees strictly forbid women to enter canoes. When Tommo suggests the idea to Kory-Kory, the native finds it "something too monstrous to be thought of." He communicates in no uncertain terms to Tommo that it is against all the Typees' "established notions of propriety" and that such an act is "at variance with all their religious ordinances" (T, pp. 132, 224). Thus when Tommo, who can "not understand why a woman should not have as much right to enter a canoe as a man," succeeds in Fayaway's "emancipation," readers know that a revolution of sorts is taking place (T, p. 133).

Tommo's actions here essentially illustrate the following quotation from one Simonian version of the myth of the gnostic Illuminator which describes the savior's mission in the world in regard to the fallen Light:

He came, first to raise her up and release her from her bonds, and then to bring salvation to all men through knowledge of him. For since the angels ruled the world evilly, because each of them coveted the mastery, he has come to set things right.

Several details in the description of Tommo and Fayaway sailing together confirm the mystical and metaphysical significance of the event which its location in the text and story line imply. As they glide across the surface of a lovely lake, Fayaway is suddenly "struck with some happy idea" (T, p. 134). She casts off her tappa (a sarong) and stands naked before Tommo like a "mast." Then she uses her dress as fluttering sail, and they delight themselves all afternoon crossing from shore to shore (T, p. 134). Following upon an act which involves contravening the law and rescuing the suppressed "heart" side of the divine dyad, the use of symbols of nakedness, enlightenment, an inversion and

reversal which leads to standing upright, and a dialectical interplay of opposites in an atmosphere of harmony, peace, and joy signifies the attainment of self (Self)-integration. Thus, this episode unequivocally represents the time at which Tommo truly begins to reject the condition of self (Self)-division.

Senior's and Campbell's discussions of gnostic symbolism provide help in recognizing the deeper meanings of the imagery portrayed in Tommo's union with Fayaway. As Senior observes, "the naked self" is a metaphor in gnostic thought for the moment of enlightenment. In this moment, "stripped of illusions" about the substantiality of and differences between the multiple forms of life, the inner luminous self is "'yoked' (yoga=yoke)" to the Unknown Self which is immanent in as well as transcendent to Nature.² Fayaway's decision to stand naked in the canoe is described by Tommo in terms of enlightenment. When it occurs, she is said to be suddenly "struck with some happy idea" (T, p. 134). The phrase suggests that a thunderbolt hit her. As readers recall, a bolt of lightning, to quote Campbell, refers in gnostic circles to the destruction of "the World Illusion" and "the realization that divinity inheres in, as well transcends every particle of the universe and all its beings." In short, the thunderbolt refers to "the realization that duality is secondary."³

The symbolism of crossing from shore to shore contributes to the evidence that in this episode Melville is depicting the mystical union of opposites. One also learns from Campbell's discussion of one gnostic school of thought that the symbolism of crossing in a vessel from shore to shore refers to a "'Wisdom of the Yonder Shore' . . . which is, in fact, the ultimate wisdom of Buddhist realization; namely, knowledge

beyond all such dualistic conceptions as matter and spirit, bondage and release, sorrow and bliss."⁴

The following quotation, which is from the Gospel of Thomas, further illustrates the mystical, psychological, and metaphysical significance of Tommo's rescue of Fayaway, their "sacred marriage," and the "zigzag" imagery that their union evokes.

When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and female one and the same . . . then you will enter [the Kingdom].⁵

That the episode is intended to signify the soteriological effects of discovering that in one's true self (Self) one is a free and harmonious dyad of "masculine" and "feminine" energies seems additionally assured because immediately after it the spiritually mature Marnoo makes his first appearance in the narrative. The symbolism of a balance of opposing forces is projected onto Marnoo (T, p. 135). Marnoo, the reader is told, is the one who crosses borders (i.e. shores) freely (T, p. 139). And Marnoo is described in masculo-feminine terms. Discussing the gnostic theme of wholeness and self-integration, Senior observes that the spiritual master of gnosis is usually depicted as "sexually androgynous."⁶ The implication of Marnoo's introduction into the story immediately after Tommo and Fayaway sail together is that their attainment of a true "sacred marriage" represents the resurrection of the "drowned" Man Tommo and the brief re-unification of the estranged aspects of the god-head.

The closest analogue in Mardi to the climax in Typee is found in "Dreams," a chapter which, significantly enough, is located in the middle of the narrative and portrays a "sacred marriage" in terms of flamboyant symbols and an ecstatic tone. With "Dreams" Melville vio-

lates the logic of the first person method of narration and most if not all of the other rules governing fiction. Although it is "sandwiched" into the approximate center of the story, this chapter is actually the last episode in the plot. Melville probably intended for it to do double duty as the climax and conclusion to his narrative's "experienced landscape." But the mystical experience of Taji's union with the "lost pearl" and the Unknown God which is portrayed in it are so out of keeping with the events in the plot that are related before and after it--events which characterize Taji as the Soul in Darkness and the hidden dynamo--that, not knowing what to make of "Dreams," one simply passes over it. And, in fact, another, later episode, which, nonetheless, is almost as bizarre as "Dreams," functions more truly as the climax.

Set in Vivenza (America), this episode, which is portrayed in "They Harken unto a Voice from the Gods," is mentioned previously in this discussion. In it a "fiery youth mounted upon the bowed shoulders of an old man, his sire" reads from a mysterious scroll (which is found nailed to tree) to an unruly crowd of people who are lauding the victory of democracy as signs of the millenium. The document is a treatise on liberty. As the following quoted passage indicates, the opening lines announce that its unknown author is the Word of Wisdom.

Sovereign-kings of Vivenza! it is fit you should hearken to wisdom. But well aware, that you give ear to little wisdom except of your own; and that as freemen, you are free to hunt down him who dissents from your majesties; I deem it proper to address you anonymously.

And if it please you, you may ascribe this voice to the gods; for never will you trace it to man. (M, p. 524)

The symbolism of an unknown author who teaches people about wisdom and claims that he is a god is a clear allusion to the gnostic Word of Wisdom.

After the reading is concluded, Babalanja, the silent Taji, King Media, Yoomy, and Mohi leave as quickly as possible, for the people think that the text is a defense of monarchy and are anxious to find a target for their anger. Then the subject of the identity of the author becomes the focus of concern. Babalanja and Media maintain that the other wrote it (M, p. 530). Some time later as the group makes its way toward Porpheero, the question of who wrote "the mysterious parchment" is again introduced and again left unresolved (M, p. 540). No one in the party suspects or accuses Taji.

The importance of this episode, which leaves little doubt that the "ignorant" Taji will attain full illumination, lies in the gnostic theme of identity, i.e. self (Self)-Knowledge. The storyteller Taji emphasizes the question of the identity of the author of the scroll by presenting it as a riddle: "The settlement of this question," he states, "must be left to commentators on Mardi, some four or five hundred centuries hence" (M, p. 530). But readers need not wait quite that long. Clearly, with this symbolism the unknown "sun" Taji is portrayed as "stepping forth" from behind a cloud, so to speak, and revealing himself in his transmundane aspect as the Illuminator. During his "emancipation" of Fayaway, Tommo, too, suddenly acts the part of a fully enlightened gnostic savior. A closer parallel to this occurrence, however, is the evidence of Ishmael's omniscience at the time that he is most withdrawn from the narrative's "experienced landscape." This episode reminds one that the Illuminator is identified with a trickster, a puzzle maker, a poser of riddles, and a magician.

The climax in Moby-Dick is recorded in "The Try-Works." It differs somewhat from its analogues in Typee and Mardi. One of the more inter-

esting differences involves the directness with which the gnostic concept of an inversion and reversal is depicted. Combined with references to the hidden dynamo image pattern and the idea that the way "down" is the way "up," this principle comes into play when, in the dead of night, Ishmael, "[standing] at . . . the helm, and for long hours silently [guiding] the way of this fire-ship on the sea," listens to and watches some members of the Pequod's crew as they entertain themselves while gathered around huge pots of boiling whale oil. In appearance and "unholy" behavior, they remind him of a conclave of devils gathered in hell. He thinks, too, of the fact that pieces of blubber are used as fuel. To him now, the ship seems like "a plethoric burning martyr, or self-consuming misanthrope" (M-D, p. 539).

With the sea [leaping], the wind "[howling]," and the ship "[groaning and diving]" about him as he stands "wrapped . . . in darkness," he begins to "better see the redness, the madness, the ghastliness" of the whole enterprise. He visualizes the Pequod as a "red hell [descending] further and further into the blackness of the sea and night," and he thinks of the "rushing Pequod," . . . plunging into the blackness of darkness" as "the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul" (M-D, p. 540).

Getting sleepy and withdrawing into himself, next "a strange . . . and inexplicable thing [occurs] to [Ishmael]." As he again begins to lose his identity and to merge with the All, he is awakened. This time he becomes "horribly conscious of something fatally wrong." What he sees before him while dozing is the "death" of the spiritual self in Ignorance, which is imaged as a condition of sleep and hell. Moreover, "uppermost [is] the impression, that whatever swift, rushing thing [he

stands] on [is] not so much bound to any haven ahead as rushing from all havens astern." "A stark, bewildered feeling, as of death, [comes] over [him]." He realizes that he is "inverted." In his "brief sleep," i.e. the fall into self-division, Ishmael has turned himself about. Awakening, "[he faces] back" (M-D, p. 541).

It is at this time that Ishmael, like Sophia in Valentinian myth of the fall, is implied to be saved from experiencing the "death" of his higher ego by a "power . . . called Limit."⁷ Obviously undergoing a change of heart, this "turn" signals an inversion and reversal. This one begins to counteract the Narcissus-like Ishmael's fall whereby he is imaged as upside down; therefore, it suggests that he is on his way to standing upright. Significantly enough, it is the vision of the hell of self-division and the absence of "the steady binnacle lamp illuminating" the compass, i.e. the deficiency and Darkness of the status quo, which is implied to be the cause of his conversion (M-D, p. 541).

The Valentinian myth of the fall of the Sophia does appear to be the basic source of the symbolism of inversion and reversal in this episode. Discussing this literature, Jonas observes that after the fallen Thought comes to exist as the lower "Nature," she suffers "bewilderment" and sets out to seek after "the vanished light." This act of looking" toward the Giver of Life" signifies "the turning (conversion)" or "turning back" of the Soul toward self-Integration.⁸ Ishmael, too, feels "bewildered" before he seeks the absent Light (M-D, p. 541).

Besides the directness with which the concept of inversion and reversal is depicted, another difference exists between the climaxes of Typee and Mardi and that portrayed in Moby-Dick. Here the idea that the protagonist is grateful for a glimpse of the transmundane Alien Light is

directly acknowledged. A "glad and grateful" Ishmael gains "relief from [the] unnatural hallucination of the night" when he turns from it to "the steady binnacle lamp illuminating" the compass. The renewed "knowledge" of the highest god-head, which is signified by his "conversion" to "the steady . . . lamp . . . [which illuminates]," allows him to steer away from the "death" of the higher ego toward the "death" which is rebirth.

Ishmael's joy and gratitude, one recalls, is the response which Jonas says is typical of the newly-awakened soul. One Valentinian "formula" which is cited by Theodotus and quoted by Jonas reads:

If a person has the Gnosis, he is a being from on high.
If he is called, he hears, replies, and turns toward Him who
calls him, in order to reascend to Him.

Another from the same text states: "Joy to the man who has rediscovered himself and awakened!" Ishmael's expression of gratitude and joy reinforces the theme of inversion and foreshadows his attainment of full enlightenment. These emotions begin to edge out the feeling of anger against God, which is involved with his "lawsuit against concerning the world." His act of turning away from the smoky fire of the try-works illustrates the exhortation in the Hermetic Corpus, "Turn ye away from the dark light."⁹

Despite the differences in emphasis on particular aspects of the experience of "turning back" or awakening, the episodes in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick which clearly foreshadow Tommo's, Taji's, and Ishmael's success in acquiring the jewel of gnosis are fundamentally the same. In each instance, the protagonist briefly is indicated to be and/or is portrayed as definitely en route to becoming the Illuminator. The implication of the symbolism of "conversion" and inversion or reversal,

which more or less directly is expressed in all of these episodes, is that afterwards the protagonist is imaged to continue to withdraw further, i.e. to penetrate more and more deeply, into the depths of the (world-) Soul.

As is the case with the episodes in Moby-Dick in which Ishmael is portrayed as withdrawing into himself, the way "in" is the metaphorical equivalent of the way "down." Further, according to the gnostic imagination, if one penetrates far enough into the depth, one, paradoxically, emerges in the "heaven" of self (Self)-integration. The way "down" is the way "up" or "out." The episodes in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick which record the protagonist's final experience of illumination in varying degrees of emphasis make use of this idea. Further, they illustrate the concept of the "sacred marriage" and employ the metaphors of "stripping" and "gathering in," which emphatically pertain now to the protagonist's final achievement of mystical and metaphysical Unity.

The episode in Typee which signals Tommo's final experience of mythic identification with the Unknown God is that which records his participation in the Typees' holy meal of tiny multicolored and gold-colored fish. As this episode has been described in some detail, it only remains to call to readers' attention that the accent in this episode is on the idea that the "gold" contained in the fallen world-Soul saves the savior and to point out some references to the symbolisms that attend on the ultimate "sacred marriage."¹⁰ Alluding to Tommo as the saved savior, it is the Light from the Typees' candles and torches which during this ceremony allows Tommo to see into "the innermost recesses of the vale," i.e., the heart of "Nature" (T, p. 207). Thus the Typees act the mythic role of Wisdom (Grace) who leads men to the

Depth--the highest Truth or highest god-head--thereby transforming their consciousness into a mirror and light of the self-integrated One and providing for self (Self)-salvation.

Other points concerning this event mandate that readers understand it to signify Tommo's most emphatic experience of mystical identification with the god-head. One concerns the metaphor of nakedness. The natives on this occasion are naked (T, p. 207). Presumably Tommo, too, strips off his mantle of native cloth to participate in this ceremony. In commenting on this "moving illumination," the storyteller Taji observes that he "made a point of doing as the Typees did" while he was among them, but participating with them in the ritual of the fish "was the farthest I ever went in the way of conformity" (T, pp. 208-09).

As readers recall, the metaphor of nakedness represents the moment of enlightenment. It refers as well, however, to the entire process of enlightenment, which involves the concepts of the negative way and "the left-hand path." Implicit in Tommo's and the natives' nakedness is the idea of a progressive denudation whereby one rejects the deficient status quo in regard to the enmity and separateness of polar opposites and re-experiences the condition of harmonious self-integration. The libertine schools of ancient gnosticism which originate the technique of the "left-hand path" are the first to employ nakedness in their rituals. Consequently, nakedness as a symbol becomes a "code" for the advocacy of the way of the body, the senses, and nature to spiritual insight. Following the Typees to the beach to participate in this ceremony constitutes another means by which Tommo is portrayed as endorsing the "left-hand path" to "knowledge." Yet another is that once there, Tommo follows Fayaway in eating the fish.

Melville might have discovered these themes and symbols in the Hermetic Corpus. Speaking of the "sacred marriage" symbolism in the Hermetic Corpus, Jonas observes that it "is described as a series of progressive subtractions which leaves the 'naked' true self free to enter the divine realm and to become one again with God." The idea is that the Soul is "putting off the worldly nature." Stripped to its transmundane original, self-integrated nature, "the soul unites with the spirit as bride with bridegroom" and is "reborn as the god." According to Senior, in the course of attaining the higher vision, "The dualist learns the truth about the world, that it is illusion; the monist learns that the illusions are the fantasies of God." Variant terms, Jonas says, for "'re-birth'" are "'reformation' (metamorphosis)" and "'transfiguration.'" After his mystical "marriage," the subject 'knew' God and also 'knew' himself to be saved."¹¹

The fundamental identity of the episodes in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick which depict the protagonist's final "sacred marriage" is revealed in the themes and symbols common to them all. One which deserves notice concerns the fact that at the conclusion of these episodes, all of these protagonists indicate that they "know" themselves to be the fully enlightened savior. Tommo is no exception to this rule.

Tommo behaves like the "purifying" Word. Although he participates in the Typee's sacred meal of the fish, unlike the natives, Tommo guts the fish before eating them (T, p. 209). The act means that now he knows his true identity, origin, and destiny. The significance of this act might go unnoticed were the idea of the "cleaning" Word not a repeated pattern in Melville's fiction. For example, in "Etymology (Supplied by a Late Consumptive Usher to a Grammar School.)," one of Mel-

ville's mystagogues, "the pale Usher," is described as "ever dusting his old lexicons and grammars" (M-D, n.p.).

The episode in Mardi which records Taji's experience of a mystical "marriage" with the Unknown God--the "lost pearl" in its aspect as the luminous, self-integrated god-head--is recorded in "Dreams." As is the case with its equivalent in Typee, not only the concepts of the "left-hand path" and "the negative way," but also the metaphor that the way "down" is the way "up" to the "heaven" of self (Self)-integration inform this depiction of ecstatic illumination. The most striking differences between Typee and Mardi in regard to this episode are the extraordinary directness with which Melville portrays it in Mardi, and his pronounced use of cosmic symbols and an ecstatic tone. In order to appreciate Melville's dramatization of the "sacred marriage" in Mardi, one must consider first the implications of the next-to-final episode in the narrative's "experienced landscape." The episode makes it clear that as he prepares to take a final "dive" to the Depth, Taji, according to the dictates of way of "knowledge," is stripping the self to "the naked ego." Also, he is shown to be "gathering in" a "knowledge" of the Self and pursuing Love. As readers will learn, this portion of the plot emphasizes the metaphor of the "death" of the Soul prior to the ultimate experience of uniting opposites.

The next-to-last episode in the plot of Mardi portrays Taji's experiences on Hautia's island. Here he has a vision of the fallen world-Soul Hautia as the cosmic jewel, but he can not "grasp" the non-dualistic, mystical implications of this occurrence. Therefore, he can not "grasp" the pearl Yillah. Hautia even reveals to him that she possesses "Yillah's rose-pearl" (M, p. 652). But Taji still cannot

apprehend the concept of the essential unity and divinity of reality. He threatens to "slay" Hautia, calling her a "shining monster" and a "vipress." She replies, "Go, go, and slay thyself: I may not make thee mine" and directs him to a mysterious cavern where he is to dive for the "lost pearl" (M, p. 652). The "dead" Taji, she concedes, is destined to follow the path of the "dead" Yillah (M, p. 653). Rushing to a whirlpool in the cavern, Taji sees the "pearl" "revolving" in the "deepest eddies" and then carried through an arch out toward the sea (M, p. 653).

After a night wandering on the beach, during which Taji becomes "so dead, he has no ghost," Yoomy and Mohi, who return to Hautia's isle, try to force him to go with them to Serenia (M, p. 653). But once they are in their boat, Taji seizes control of the helm and starts for "perdition," which is equated with "the deep beyond, [from where] no voyager e'er puts back." Yoomy and Mohi seek to dissuade him from pursuing Yillah to the Depth. But Taji says that if death is his fate in following Yillah to the "realm of shades," then he will be "the unreturning wanderer." After they jump out of the boat and begin to swim for the "haven" Serenia, the "madman" Taji declares, "Now, I am my own soul's emperor; and my first act is abdication." With this, the tide, "like a hand omnipotent," sweeps him and three of Aleema's sons, who follow him with "arrows poisoning," through an outlet in the "circumvallating reef" of the world of Mardi, out to an "endless sea" where the "outer ocean" and "clouds" merge into one (M, p. 654).

In this episode one finds clear references to the stripping or naughting of the self, pursuing Love, which is identified with Depth, death, and "Nothing," violating limits to re-enter the Kingdom (the Eden

of self (Self)-integration), and reconciling opposites, thereby attaining the ultimate harmony and Unity of "the pursuer and the pursued" (M, p. 654). For example, this part of the novel shows Taji rejecting not only all worldly ties and the lower "Nature," but also turning away from the ascetic Christian gnostic community of Serenia. Thus one perceives in Taji's rejection of the "general Serpent," the world of Being, a hint that Taji's impulse toward a mature religious philosophy actually seeks the middle way: it is one that denies asceticism and lust in order to find the balanced Love that is erotic and mystical, spiritual and physical.

In regard to the significance of Taji's rejection of the community of the followers of Alma (Jesus), it is interesting to note that, according to Jonas, in the gnostic vocabulary of symbolic terms the Aramaic word alma signifies this "world" or "aeon" as "opposed to 'the coming aeon.'"¹² Besides relating to the metaphor of "stripping" the self, Taji's rejection of lust and asceticism and his refusal to accept Babalanja's Serenia as the best interpretation of the concept of the Kingdom of God portray him as "the coming age."

The "stripping" of the self to the "naked ego" is specifically referred to in Taji's declaration that he is his own "soul's emperor" but that his first act is "abdication." In other words, in the experience of finally perceiving Hautia and Yillah--polar opposites, such as man and God and God and Nature--as essentially identical, Taji, like Ishmael, becomes confused. As is the case in Moby-Dick, this confusion threatens the "death" of his transmudane inner ego, and it involves him in atheism because it implies that there is no God who guarantees individual immortality and moral values. In this sense, Taji's statement

refers to the "death" of God, which makes his soul a "nothing"--an empty void. But, as Senior observes, gnosticism employs the idea that two negatives make a positive. Having killed his soul's "emperor" and then "murdered" the luminous self, Taji now is ready for the experience of mythic identification with "Nothing"--the Unknown God who is identified with a "full" Void. This symbolism is repeated. One recalls that Hautia refers to Taji as "dead" before she sends him to dive again in the "lost pearl." Taji then claims to die during the night on the beach. These two "deaths" foreshadow his rebirth.

The references in this episode to the "left-hand path" are implicit in Taji's decision to go to the lustful Hautia's isle, his romance with her, his rejection of her in her aspect as the worldly "Nature," and his pursuit to his "death," i.e. the Depth, of Yillah, the divine Love that is self (Self)-integration. Jonas' comments help explain this complex of symbolism and relate it to the gnostics of the second century A.D. According to Jonas, the "sacred marriage" which involves the "direct beholding of the divine reality" and the "mutuality" of "knowing" and "being known" is "often described in metaphors of death" as well as "sexual soul-imagery." In one version of the Valentinian mythos of the fall of the Sophia which Hippolytus relates, the Depth, i.e. the androgynous "Father" is called "love."¹³ With this information, readers can perceive the connection between the symbolism of the "stripping" of the self, that of the "left hand path", and the metaphor of death.

The metaphysical and psychological implications of the antinomianism which is conveyed in the symbolism of negative way and the "left-hand path" in relation to the reference to the Bible which is being made in Taji's effort to attain the "heaven" of self (Self)-Integration

deserve comment. The biblical allusion is to Genesis 3:22 and 3:24. Verse 24 stipulates that after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, God "placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Verse 22 explains that God sets up these barriers "lest man put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." The idea of the necessity of violating limitations to return to the Unknown God, says Jonas, is widespread in the gnostic mythos of salvation. Calling attention to the gnostic concern with the psychological transformation whereby one overcomes the limits of the dualistic mode of perception, Pagels compares the "cryptic and compelling" gnostic "sayings" with "Zen koans."¹⁴

The antinomianism expressed in the episode on the Hautia's isle and the extreme symbolism which characterizes it relate to the attainment of the enlightened mind which, according to the gnostic imagination, is one's salvation in this world and after death. Exaggerating the idea of Yillah's withdrawal into "nothing" and Taji's pattern of following the path of his twin and opposite, the episode on Hautia's island establishes the context of Taji's final mystical union with the pearl. It mandates that one understands that Taji's departure from the world of Mardi, which images him as heading downward for death in the open sea, is a prelude to his final dive at a deeper level into the (world-)Soul where he attains the "lost pearl." Describing this episode, which is recorded in the chapter "Dreams," is now the focus of concern.

That this mystical "marriage" is located out of but imbedded in the time and space of the narrative has its precedent in the old mythos of gnosis. Speaking of the experience of ecstatic illumination, Jonas

says, "With an apparent, brief suspension of time, it stands within existence for the end of all existence: 'end' in the twofold, negative-positive sense of the ceasing of everything worldly and of the goal in which the spiritual nature comes to fulfillment."

Its position in the symbolic middle of the narrative refers to the idea expressed by the storyteller Tommo that "Truth . . . loves to be centrally located" (T, p. 205). One is to imagine that Taji, after rejecting rationalism and the worldly "Nature," dives so deeply into the unknown that he emerges in Truth, the central point of balance and harmony, whereupon all is affirmed as one divine Unity. Senior observes that after "Hegel's negation of the negation," by which the world and infinity are abolished, in the higher reaches of the occult tradition, "the great embrace" of all that has been discarded occurs. This is the "ultimate unspeakable paradox" wherein one has "the continuous awareness of the entire created universe as God."¹⁵

In "Dreams," Taji first is portrayed as the cosmic Dreamer-Hunter of the world-dream, thereby referring to the mystical identity of the hunter and the hunted and the theme of reconciling opposites. "Dreams! Dreams!," cries the ecstatic Taji as he begins to transform into the cosmic Hunter of his own estranged female aspect, the dream of Life.

Golden dreams; endless, and golden, as the flowery prairies,
that stretch away from the Rio Sacramento, in whose waters
Danae's shower was woven;--prairies like rounded eternities;
jonquil leaves beaten out; and my dreams herd like buffaloes,
browsing on to the horizon, and browsing on round the world;
and among them, I dash with my lance, to spear one, ere they
all flee." (M, p. 366)

Lest there be any doubt in readers' minds that the "golden dreams" which the ecstatic, visionary Taji images himself as pursuing are the symbolic equivalents of the Eastern world of Mardi and Yillah, Taji specifies

that the dreams with which he is striving to unite are like "Oriental empires in history" (M, p. 366).

After emphasizing that the world is made up of warring dual forces, next Taji visualizes himself as the mysterious point at which opposites coincide and are transcended, thus calling attention to his mythical and symbolic identity with the Unknown God, the nameless and non-existent (yet existent) Monad or point who manifests, reconciles, and transcends opposites. At the same time that he is depicted as the Monad, he symbolizes Man uniting in a "sacred marriage" with the earth and the universe "Beneath me," Taji rhapsodizes, "at the Equator, the earth pulses and beats like a warrior's heart; till I know not, whether it be not myself. And my soul sinks down to the depths and soars to the skies; and . . . methinks all the worlds are my kin" (M, p. 367). Speaking of the metaphysical and mystical significance of the attainment of the self-integration and "knowledge," Jonas observes that in the Valentinian system "their doctrine justified the equating of individual unification with the reuniting of the universe with God."¹⁶

It is after the "sacred marriage" occurs that Taji, like Tommo but in a more exaggerated way, expresses the new-found "knowledge" (gnosis) of his identity as the fully illuminated gnostic redeemer. He is identified with the symbolic term the Word of Light. Further, he is portrayed not only as knowing himself to be the suffering savior who bears the burden of gnosis to humanity but also to be the Paraclete.

At the conclusion of "Dreams," the newly awakened Word of Life Taji groans under the burden of bearing the jewel of gnosis into the future:

Fain would I hurl off this Dionysius that rides me; my thoughts crush me down till I groan; in far fields I hear the song of the reaper, while I slave and faint in this cell. The fever runs through me like lava; my hot brain burns like a

coal; and like many a monarch, I am less to be envied, than the veriest hind in the land. (M, p. 368)

Indicating that he has come to "know" his true identity and God-ordained role in life, the newly illuminated Taji is imaged in the act of writing, which to the gnostic imagination is a metaphor for Creation and salvation by means of the Word. As he writes, he transforms into the gnostic Paraclete. "Fire flames on my tongue," he exclaims, realizing that he is expressing divine Truth during the act of composition (M, p. 366). As readers remember, the forked flame in connection with the serpent as a symbol of Truth and Wisdom is one gnostic image of the Paraclete, and one especially associated with Christian gnosticism. Through such imagery, Taji is portrayed as the gnostic Illuminator who annihilates the Darkness of Ignorance and Error with the thunderbolt or searing rays of the Light which is gnosis.

More direct evidence exists that after illumination Taji knows himself to be a vehicle of the transmudane God. Explaining as well the metaphysical significance of the fact that Taji is the fictional author of Mardi as well as the hidden dynamo in the cosmic Thought that he "emanates," Taji says, "Yet not I, but another; God is my Lord; and though many satellites revolve around me, I and all mine revolve round the great central Truth, sun-like, fixed and luminous forever in the foundationless firmament" (M, p. 368).

The implication of identifying "the great central Truth" as a "luminous" sun, which in Valentinian gnosticism is a symbol of the transmudane deity, is that it is the "lost pearl" in its aspect of the highest god-head.¹⁷ Thus, according to the symbolism of Taji's sacrificial "dive" for the rose-pearl and his "sacred marriage" in "Dreams," Taji is portrayed as being saved by "the lost pearl" and as saving,

elevating, and placing the rose-colored pearl at the apex of his mind. Recalling that the name taj means crown, one perceives a reference here to the idea that the "crown" Taji hereby obtains and is united with the jewel of price--the "pearl" of the higher consciousness. With this vision, to quote Senior again, one preserves the moral awareness of the deficiency of life but possesses "the continuous awareness of the entire created universe as God."¹⁸ Before preceding to consider Ishmael's experience of mythic identification, which resembles Taji's closely, it is interesting to note that Taji's contact with the Depth is, paradoxically, set between heaven and earth and in heaven. Thus, the ultimate "sacred marriage" in Mardi illustrates the idea that the way "down" leads to the "heaven" of self (Self)-integration.

Ishmael's culminating experience of illumination is recorded in the "Epilogue." It involves essentially the same symbolisms as depict this event in the analagous episodes in Typee and Mardi. For example, the mystical union between the "naked ego" and the Depth is expressed in this part of the narrative. Further, the idea that the attainment of gnosis involves the "death" of the initiate, the image of the protagonist as Truth, the central point between polar opposites, and the concept that the deepest, most inward Truth is the "heaven" of self (Self)-integration are stressed. What is more clearly portrayed in Moby-Dick than Typee or Mardi is the metaphor of "self-gathering." Common to all three novels, however, is the protagonist's apprehension of his true identity. In these episodes the protagonist either directly or indirectly indicates that he knows himself to be the one chosen to serve as the Illuminator.

In order to recognize and appreciate the degree to which and way in

which the motifs of the "gathering in" and "stripping" the soul to the "naked ego" are portrayed in connection with Ishmael's initiation into gnosis and to emphasize as well that the action pattern signified by the idea that the way "down" is the way "up" to the heaven of self (Self)-integration operates in a sustained way throughout this narrative, readers need to consider the symbolic implications of the games which the Pequod engages in. Moreover, they should remember that the Pequod's movement is not only counter-clockwise in a "zigzag" pattern but also downward in direction. While Ishmael's perception in "The Try-Works" that the Pequod is "plunging into that blackness of darkness, "the depths of the sea, reminds readers of the downward movement of the action pattern of the story and foreshadows the "death" of the vessel and the protagonist, the episodes in the narrative which record the ship's encounter with other vessels depict the motifs of "gathering in" and "stripping" the Soul to nakedness (M-D, p. 540). Further, the games refer to the concept of a union of twin and opposite entities.

Being obsessed to the point of monomania with locating the White Whale, Ahab rejects all other aspects of the ships with which he meets save those that pertain to Moby Dick (M-D, pp. 316-17). These other aspects relate not only to the worldly nature but also to the "heart" or female part of the divine dyad. Denuding himself of the "heart," he rejects wholeness and the highest Truth. Here one should recall that Ahab, as well as the other officers of the Pequod, never hears the Town-Ho story. Moreover, in his haste to pursue Moby Dick, Ahab makes his crew desist from digging the "gold" ambergris out of the old, dead whale obtained from the Rosebud, and he denies the request of captain of the Rachel for help in looking for the captain's lost son.

The symbolism which implies the radical identity of Ishmael with Ahab in a qualified way leads one to perceive that Ahab's actions apply to Ishmael's spiritual development. Ishmael's "gathering in" of the Town-Ho story, however, and the other symbolisms which link him with the concept of withdrawal, ascension, salvation, and self-integration, indicate that, in contrast to Ahab, during the gams Ishmael is rejecting "ignorance" and the worldly nature, but not the "heart" or the highest Truth in the Soul. This symbolism and that involving the Serpent Moby Dick in its aspect of "lightning," i.e. the principle of illumination which destroys Ignorance, implies that when the Pequod and all but Ishmael are annihilated by the Leviathan, the event signifies the destruction of Ishmael's "ignorance" and the "marriage" of his "naked ego" with the Depth.

Another sense in which the image pattern of the Serpent helps confirm this interpretation of Ishmael's salvation is that throughout the narrative Ishmael, "wearing" the Serpent nature, has been following its downward path. In this respect, his rebirth as portrayed in the "Epilogue" implies that he and the Soul (the Serpent) in its aspect of Truth are united in the Depth in the moment during which the last remnants of Darkness and Error in which Ishmael was enmeshed are destroyed. The metaphor of the "zigzagging" Serpent-Soul who withdraws into the Depth--"nothing"--readers recall, is pronounced in Moby-Dick. The image in the "Epilogue" of Ishmael "gaining the vital center, the black bubble" of the "vortex" is one which in several respects lends support to this view (M-D, p. 724). This image portrays Ishmael as the central point of a whirlpool which consumes and renews life. The whirlpool, readers recall, is a gnostic symbol for the round of life, and the center is

identified with the transmundane god-head, self-integration, balance, and Truth.

A second detail which points to Ishmael's self-integration is the emphasis in the "Epilogue" on the protagonist as "the single one." Ishmael is the sole survivor of the wreck. Floating on Queequeg's canoe-shaped coffin, sea-chest, life-buoy, he is depicted as the solitary "one" of gnostic religiosity. For a day and a half he drifts on the sea. Then he, an "orphan," is picked up by the Rachel (M-D, p. 724). The references here in regard to the images and terms denoting oneness and alienness are to the self-integrated Alien Man. A third indication of his attainment of gnosis is Ishmael's implied perception of the Rachel as a "devious-cruising" vessel. It suggests that he is united with his transmundane aspect, which long before this episode "sees" Ahab alone in his cabin laying out a "devious zigzag" course for the Pequod (M-D, p. 270). Further, it implies that Ishmael possesses the higher vision (A=B yet A≠B).

Other indications of his illumination and self-integration are found in the "Epilogue." The fact that Ishmael's life is preserved by the coffin with its "great buoyancy" links him with the sea-chest in his and Queequeg's room in the Coffin's inn. One recalls that a candle, i.e. the Light, is identified with the middle point or center of this chest. The "buoyancy" of Queequeg's coffin, sea-chest, life-buoy which preserves Ishmael's life is due to the air--the spirit--contained in it. These images and terms indicate that the buoyant Ishmael centered in the deadly whirlpool and Ishmael floating on the coffin, life-buoy, sea-chest are metaphors for the Soul which contains the "gold" of the pneumatic Spirit. In particular, these symbolisms portray Ishmael as the

saved Alien Light and refer to the fallen Soul--the world Coffin--as the savior. Ishmael's "chosen" status is reinforced by the images in the "Epilogue" which portray the "sharks "[gliding] by him as if with padlocks on their mouths" and "the savage sea-hawks . . . [sailing by him] with sheathed beaks (M-D, p. 724).

Another aspect of the symbolism of the gams and the care which Melville takes to associate the entire fallen Soul with the Depth contribute to the depiction of Ishmael's "sacred marriage" and his attainment of the higher consciousness. The gams signify the meeting or union of two vessels; therefore, they pertain to the idea of a reconciliation of opposites. Obviously depicted in the story are nine gams or meetings of opposites. However, the tenth gam or union of opposites is recorded in the drama of Ishmael's union with the "button-like black bubble" in the center of the whirlpool.

In gnostic numerology, ten is a favorite number symbolizing completion. Here one recalls that Hivohitee's pyramid-shaped house is identified with the number ten. To gain some idea of Melville's consistent use of this number as a cosmic symbol of the ten stages of the emanation of the divine Monad, it is helpful to know that the pyramid-shaped mound of empty calabashes, i.e. vessels or gourds, which is the Typees' symbol of the cosmos, is assigned the number value of ten (T, p. 160). Further, it may be necessary to remind readers that, as Ishmael has been working his way "up" while descending into the Depth, this "tenth gam" represents, in the language of the Cabala, his union with the "Crown," the first emanation of the Absolute Nothing. It is this emanation which "knows" the ineffable All.

Ishmael's boarding of the Rachel represents the return of the fully

enlightened savior figure to the world. The implication of Ishmael's statement after the first lowering which is that he, in effect, already has died four times implies that the "death" depicted in the "Epilogue" is his fifth "death." Senior reports that "'five,' the magic pentagram, is the symbol by which the human will dominates this fourfold universe. It is the sign of magic power." Thus Ishmael's fifth "death" may be assumed to transform him into the highest degree of Illuminator. Speaking of the return to the world of the gnostic savior who, after numerous rebirths, finally attains the permanently transformed consciousness, Jonas says, "Its entrance this time is of a very different nature: sent by the Great Life and invested with authority, the . . . [fully initiated] Alien Man does not fall but betakes himself into the world" to continue the process of the salvation.¹⁹ The reference to Ishmael's "adoption" by the Rachel suggests both the Christian gnostic nature of his stabilized and matured world view and the idea that the fallen world-Soul in a progressive, ongoing way will be healed by a continuous series of gnostic redeemers.

Before noting that, like the newly illuminated Tommo and Taji, Ishmael indicates that as a result of his union, he realizes his true identity, it is interesting to observe evidence of the care that Melville takes to associate the white vortex and its black center with the major symbols in the narrative of Ishmael's quest object. Ishmael, one recalls, thinks of Moby Dick as a whirlpool (M-D, pp. 261, 264). Not only the Whale, however, but also the gold doubloon, Bulkington, everything connected with the term coffin, the Pequod, and Ahab's hat are identified with the Depth. Therefore, Ishmael's final "sacred marriage" more emphatically than Tommo's or Taji's exemplifies the motif of "gathering

in," which, when "completed," signals the re-attainment of Unity. In this regard, Moby-Dick appears to interpret, update, and illustrate a line from the gnostic Gospel of Eve, which, according to Jonas, is preserved in Ehiphianus' Haeresus. It reads:

I have come to know myself and have gathered myself from everywhere.²⁰

At the level of the "recollected landscape," Ishmael in the "Epilogue" indicates that following his final "sacred marriage," he "knows" that he is the fully authoritative Word of Light. Quoting from Job 1:14-19, he conveys this by characterizing himself as the single or solitary Word which sheds light on an event: "And I only am Escaped Alone to Tell Thee" (M-D, p. 723). At the level of the "experienced landscape," however, the fully enlightened Ishmael is portrayed as the gnostic redeemer in his aspect of the suffering savior. The counterpart in Moby-Dick to Taji's identification as the gnostic savior in his aspect as the suffering redeemer is the newly awakened Ishmael's depiction in the "Epilogue" as "another Ixion," revolving on the burning wheel of Life (M-D, p. 724). The idea of the soul who bears the burden of gnosis is repeated in the images in the novel which relate to the words hump, heap, hunch, pack. Analyzing the "Hymn of the Pearl," Jonas observes that the "burden" which the King and Queen of heaven give to their son as they send him into the cosmos to find the pearl signifies "the transmudane spiritual instruction, the gnosis, which he communicates to the faithful."²¹

After the episodes which record the protagonist's transformation into the Illuminator, Typee and Moby-Dick include those which portray the protagonist as the fully illuminated master of gnosis serving as the Destroyer of Ignorance. The themes and symbols in "Dreams" make such a

scene irrelevant in Mardi. In Typee, Tommo is shown to serve as the Destroyer of Ignorance during the episode which describes his rescue from the valley. Tommo's effort to board the Australian whaler the Julia is almost aborted by Mow-Mow, the tribe's most influential religious leader. Mow-Mow, however, is not one of the natives who worships the Unknown God. Rather, he is portrayed as the chief symbol among the Typees of the malicious will and corrupt power, i.e. "ignorance." Thus, when he "with his tomahawk between his teeth" tries to capsize the boat bearing Tommo to the safety of the Julia, and Tommo kills him, readers are to infer that here Tommo, overcoming his "horror" and "pity," is acting as the Destroyer of Ignorance (T, p. 252).

Ishmael's story within a story, the tale of the Town-Ho, records the episode in Moby-Dick which portrays Ishmael acting as the Destroyer of Ignorance. As Dryden observes, this episode, which is set in Lima in the Golden Inn, involves "Ishmael's account of himself as he was after the voyage but before the period of creative authorship."²² In other words, it takes place after Ishmael's attainment of gnosis. Surrounded by a group of his "Spanish friends," Ishmael tells them a story which is an interpretation of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer. The story involves depicting Moby Dick, the "general Serpent," in its aspect of the Destroyer of Ignorance and as the fallen Soul in its aspect of the savior of the potential gnostic savior (in this instance, Steerkilt) (M-D, p. 341). Ishmael's story mirrors the role that the White Whale plays in the destruction of the Pequod and in his own salvation.

Ishmael's story is heretical and anti-authoritarian on a number of counts. At one point depicting Steerkilt as Christ crucified between two thieves but a Christ figure who rejects martyrdom, Ishmael's story

portrays the passionate, virile, and rebellious Steerkilt as a gnostic Jesus, conflicting with the powers of the fallen world which would suppress human dignity and prohibit equality (M-D, pp. 338, 323, 326-27). Indeed, with Steerkilt, Melville provides his readers with one notable portrait of the potential gnostic redeemer in his aspect as "laughing" savior (M-D, p. 344).²³ The antinomian and heretical element in this portrait is the implicit assertion that man in his true self (Self) is identical with the highest god-head and thus that in all matters of morals and faith, an enlightened humanity is its own highest authority. Obviously Ishmael's story conveys theological doctrines quite different from those of orthodox Christianity. Thus, Ishmael's Spanish friends are concerned about his telling this story in Lima, which, they allow, has only been free of the Inquisition for a relatively short time (M-D, p. 331).

Besides the content of the story, the setting and other symbolic details contribute to characterizing the storyteller Ishmael, who survives the destruction of the Pequod, as the Illuminator acting out his revolutionary role. For example, Ishmael is imaged to be the Word of Light in the center of the fallen world-Soul as he relates the Town-Ho's tale. He is portrayed as within a "circle" of his Spanish friends, and they are imaged as being in the center of the Golden Inn, which, in turn, is implied to exist in the heart of the corrupt city of Lima (M-D, pp. 322, 331). With this symbolism, Melville gives his readers his most elaborate portrait of the potential gnostic savior who, newly transformed into the Illuminator, carries out his soteriological mission.

NOTES

¹ Irenaeus includes this passage from the Simonian treatise The Great Exposition in Adversus Haeresus, XXI.2.4. It is quoted by Jonas (p. 108).

² Senior, p. 17.

³ Campbell, IV, 467, 267.

⁴ Campbell, IV, 157.

⁵ The gnostic Jesus, the Gospel of Thomas, as quoted by Pagels, p. 155.

⁶ Senior, p. 40.

⁷ "The Valentinian Speculation," as quoted by Jonas (p. 182). Accounts of the Valentinian school of thought, Jonas says, are found in Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Ephiphanius, and Theodotus (p. 178).

⁸ "The Valentinian Speculation," as paraphrased and quoted by Jonas. Jonas states that this portion of his analysis of Valentinian mythos is taken from Irenaeus, Adversus Haeresus I.4.2. (pp. 187-88).

⁹ Theodotus, Excerpta Theodotus, 78.2 and 30:13, and the Hermetic Corpus as quoted by Jonas, pp. 89, 58.

¹⁰ See Chapter IV, pp.

¹¹ Jonas, pp. 166, 182, 166, 287; Senior, p. 22.

¹² Jonas, pp. 54, n.2.

¹³ Senior, p. 143; Jonas, pp. 284-85; 181, n.9.

¹⁴ Jonas, p. 93; Pagels, p. viii.

¹⁵ Jonas, p. 285; Senior, pp. 142-43.

¹⁶ Jonas, p. 61.

¹⁷ See "The Valentinian Speculation," in Jonas, p. 188.

¹⁸ Senior, p. 143.

¹⁹ Senior, p. 36; Jonas, p. 77.

²⁰ The Gospel of Eve, in Epiphanius, Haeresus 26.3, as quoted by Jonas, p. 60.

²¹ Jonas, p. 113, n.2.

²² Dryden, p. 24.

²³ See Dart, The Laughing Savior, for a discussion of this aspect of the characterization of the gnostic savior in the mythos of the ancient world.

CHAPTER VIII

MELVILLE'S INTERPRETATION OF THE Gnostic MYTH OF THE POTENTIAL
ILLUMINATOR IN "BARTLEBY THE SCRIVENER," "BENITO CERENO,"
THE CONFIDENCE-MAN, AND "BILLY BUDD": SIMILIARITIES
AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE "EXPERIENCED
LANDSCAPE" IN THE LATER WORKS OF
MELVILLE'S MAJOR FICTION AND
THEIR PREDECESSORS

If the preceding analysis of Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick has succeeded in all of its purposes, readers are especially aware of Melville's familiarity with the gnostic imagination in its first period of flowering and the use to which he puts this knowledge in creating the "experienced landscape" of Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick. Further, readers now are initiated into the arcana of the way of "knowledge" to the extent that they can recognize the main features of Melville's interpretation of the myth of the potential Illuminator quickly and move about with some ease in the mazes of the gnostic imagination.

The expertise that is gained in the time spent closely analyzing the influence of gnostic mythos on the "experienced landscape" in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick should serve readers well in this part of the discussion. This statement is made because the works that are the focus of interest here--"Bartleby" (1853), "Benito Cereno" (1855), The Confidence-Man (1857), and "Billy Budd" (1924)¹--vary sufficiently from

Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick and resemble one another closely enough to warrant treating them as one of two types of the interpretation of the gnostic mythos of the potential revealer which Melville depicts in his major fiction. This is to say, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" do not differ in any fundamentally important way from Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick in regard to their "experienced landscape." Nonetheless, differences do exist between these works which must be acknowledged. Further, the difference between The Confidence-Man and "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," and "Billy Budd" is sufficient to mandate special notice.

Providing readers with proof of the essential identity of the "experienced landscape" in Melville's major works and thus revealing their common indebtedness to the old mythos of the potential gnostic savior is the primary concern of this part of the discussion. With this goal in mind the basic parallels which exist between the depictions of the gnostic myth of the potential Illuminator in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick and "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" first are demonstrated to exist.

The first important point of correspondence between all of Melville's versions of the mythos of the potential gnostic Illuminator concerns the symbolic and mythical identity of the protagonists and their quest objects. Like Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael, the protagonists of "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" are characterized as the potential Illuminator, and the quest objects of these central characters, like those of their prototypes, are portrayed as the fallen Thought of the Unknown God. The main symbols of these protagonists' quest objects include the following entities: (1) "Bar-

tleby"--the world of the lawyer, the Master of Chancery; (2) "Benito Cereno"--the world of the San Dominick; (3) The Confidence-Man--the world of the Fidele; (4) and "Billy Budd"--the world of the Bellipotent.

Besides the characterization of the central figure and his quest object in "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" as the same gnostic symbolic and mythical entities that Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael and their quest objects represent, other important similarities between all of these works regarding image patterns, plot, and themes exist. To be more specific, the works currently the focus of concern resemble their predecessors in that they tell the story of the gnostic redeemer's effort to attain and effect self (Self)-integration, express the main tenets of a Christian gnostic vision of reality, and, by and large, are informed and structured by the same gnostic image patterns as one finds in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick. These points of correspondance are touched on in the course of demonstrating that the protagonists of "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" represent the potential Illuminator and that their quest object(s) symbolizes the (world-) Soul.

The primary difference between the "experienced landscape" in these works concerns Melville's treatment of the protagonist. This difference involves the degree to which these protagonists are portrayed as a symbolic and mythical figure, and the question of whether or not as a result of their encounter with the world-Soul, they attain a permanently transformed consciousness. Judged by this criteria, these works separate into two categories. Whereas Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael are portrayed in an even handed way as gnostic redeemers and as specific, historical individuals, Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy

Budd are treated as more abstract representations than their prototypes either of a particular culture, as is the case with Delano, or of the potential gnostic redeemer. The Confidence-Man, for example, is clearly portrayed as a more mythical and allegorical figure than any of the other protagonists. Further, whereas Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael are implied to attain a permanently transformed consciousness as a result of their encounter with the depths of the world-Soul, this is not true for the other protagonists.

This alteration regarding the treatment of the protagonist in Melville's major fiction accounts for the other subordinate differences which exist between the "experienced landscape" in each group. Having outlined the more important similarities and differences between the working out of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer in Melville's major fiction, this study now focuses attention on demonstrating the appropriateness of these views. For example, Bartleby, Delano, and Billy Budd essentially re-enact only the first half of the journey to self (Self)-knowledge. Unlike them, the Confidence-Man does attain illumination, but the symbolism in the narrative indicates that he will continue indefinitely to re-enact the drama of the Fall.

The Basic Points of Similarity Between the
 "Experienced Landscape" in Typee, Mardi,
 and Moby-Dick and That Portrayed in
 "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The
Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd"

Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy
Budd as the Potential Gnostic Redeemer

Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy Budd all are portrayed as savior-reformer figures who are paralleled with the orthodox concept of Christ but then treated in ways which qualify this association to the extent that they are linked with the Narcissus-like savior-reformer of gnosticism. For example, the depiction in these stories of the theme of sacrificing or risking one's life to teach and attain "knowledge" is one of the means by which these characters, like Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael, are identified as the divinely elected potential gnostic savior. Further, the central characters of the later works in the canon of Melville's most highly regarded literature are identified with the symbolic terms and images which are associated with the archetypal figure of the gnostic savior or the transmudane Spirit. By means of these devices, Melville indicates that Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy Budd represent the same symbolic and mythical entity as Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael.

That Bartleby's mission in the world involves sacrificing himself to obtain a "knowledge" of the self (Self) is perhaps nowhere so clearly referred to as in the episode which records his last exchange with the lawyer, the main symbol in the story of Bartleby's estranged Self. As

the lawyer walks toward the dying Bartleby, who on account of the lawyer (the fallen world-Soul) is imprisoned in the Tombs, the Master of Chancery hails him by name. "I know you," Bartleby answers, "without looking round, 'and I want nothing to say to you'" ("B," p. 508). The lawyer then directs him to look at the sky and the grass, but Bartleby refuses. "I know where I am," he says ("B," p. 509).

This episode emphasizes the idea that Bartleby's conflict involves attaining "knowledge." In it Bartleby is clearly depicted as a less than fully enlightened gnostic savior who, nonetheless, awakens people to the truths of gnosis. While gnosis involves the "knowledge" of the entire history and tendencies of the self (Self), it is especially associated with, to quote Jonas, "the knowledge of [God's] unknowability."² Bartleby's claim to "know" the lawyer and to "know" the world in absolute terms symbolizes his lack of "knowledge" of the self (Self). While Bartleby's vision of the world and his experience in it are truthful revelations of its deficiency, Melville's specification that Bartleby answers the lawyer "without looking round" is a hint concerning Bartleby's lack of a "wholeness" of vision and a way for Melville to stress the idea that Bartleby's mission in the world involves his quest for gnosis ("B," p. 508).

That Bartleby's mission in the fallen world refers to the theme of the sacrifice for gnosis is verified by his death. This occurrence, the emphasis on the themes of "knowledge" and reflection shortly before the episode which images the dead scrivener in the Tombs on the "soft imprisoned turf" in its inner courtyard, and the symbolism in this episode which identifies him as the hidden dynamo provide more evidence that Bartleby is intended by Melville to represent the potential gnostic

redeemer. Here the dead Bartleby is likened to a "seed" of grass which is identified with "the heart of the eternal pyramids" and "by some strange magic" finds its way into the heart of the world-prison ("B," p. 511).

One finds allusions in this scene to the entire range of terms and images which are associated with the gnostic version of the myth of Narcissus and Bartleby clearly described as the transmundane Narcissus-like deity whose effort to save the fallen world-Soul requires innumerable re-enactments of the Soul's "death" and rebirth in the lower "Nature." The gnostic theme of Creation, the Fall, and salvation as occurring by means of acts of reflection, inversion and reversal is signified by Bartleby's identification with meditation and the reference to the world as a prison. And Bartleby's symbolic and mythical identity is highlighted by the imagery which associates him, buried in the world-prison, with latent potency, Egypt, and the heart or central point of a pyramid, which is a symbol of the cosmos.

Other details of Bartleby's characterization leave little doubt that he represents the transmundane Alien Man of gnostic mythos. Among all Melville's portraits of the potential Illuminator, the "pallidly neat, pitiably respectable, incurably forlorn" and thoroughly rebellious scrivener is most obviously identified with other-worldliness, reflection, alienness, and "nothing" and associated with special names for the gnostic savior or the pneumatic principle, such as the "stranger," the "awakener," the Word of Life, the "Call" or its variant symbol, a letter, and the sovereign spirit. For example, the "cadaverous" Bartleby, who is more alive to the lack of true "Life" in the world than any of his fellow cadavers, is portrayed as the "strangest" of scribes or

"law copyists." He is "one of those beings of whom nothing is ascertainable, except from the original sources" which "in his case . . . are very small" ("B," pp. 497, 466).

Among other things, what his "astonished" employer does ascertain about him, however, is his persistent habit of meditating on "the dead brick wall," which is the view from a window beside his desk, his eventual refusal to do any kind of work save reflect in his "hermitage," his "solitude," and his "quiet mysteries" ("B," pp. 466, 488, 480, 487). In particular, it is the lawyer's discovery of the passionately cold Bartleby's "miserable friendlessness" and his glimpse into the alien and exile Bartleby's perception of life as a "sheer vacancy"--"an emptiness"--which "for the first time in [his] life" awakens the lawyer to a sense of "the bond of a common humanity" ("B," pp. 486-87).

With the aforementioned symbolism, Bartleby is described as the revolutionary, transmundane Alien Light of unknown or remote, i.e. "small," origin and the reflective, i.e. Narcissus-like, "solitary one" of gnostic mythos. His identification with various names for the gnostic savior, such as the Word of Light, and his depiction as a rebel against a deficient status quo are alluded to by means of portraying him as the pale one who after first doing so later refuses to "mechanically" copy legal papers. They are implied to express judgments which are made in regard to the letter rather than the spirit of the law and reflect inequity instead of equity ("B," p. 475). With this act, Bartleby rebels against the self-mirroring or multiplication in the fallen world of Error, and he is identified as the potential Word of Life.

Besides the aforementioned evidence of his effect of awakening, contravening the status quo, and causing its reformation (e.g. the

lucrative position of Master of Chancery is canceled after Bartleby's death), all of which describe Bartleby as the emissary or "Messenger" of the highest god-head, his identification with a "letter" points to his symbolic and mythical identity as the revolutionary potential Illuminator ("B," p. 512). Jonas's discussion of the symbol of the "letter" in the "Hymn of the Pearl" and the apocryphal Odes of Solomon suggests some specific sources for Melville's use of it and casts light on its meaning.

Jonas observes that the gnostic symbol of the "the letter belongs to the general imagery of the 'call.'" Thus it is especially connected with "the messenger" who is sent into the world to effect the "'plan of salvation,'" as the idea is stated in the Odes of Solomon, and bring enlightenment to "the soul dormant below."³ Jonas's remarks apply to Bartleby. At the conclusion of the story, the "eminently safe," i.e. symbolically dormant, lawyer likens the dead Bartleby to a "dead letter" ("B," pp. 466-67, 512). Yet this "dead letter" inspires ("in-spirits") him to meditate on and to write about the deficient, divided, and tragic nature of life in such a way so as to make his readers aware of the "non-existent" state of self (Self)-integration. Thus operating from within the world-Soul, the "dead letter," Bartleby, goes some distance toward resurrecting the "drowned" Man as represented in part by him but especially by the lawyer. With this symbolism Melville indicates that Bartleby is one of the "letters" who is a vehicle of the "the plan of salvation."

Bartleby's symbolic and mythical identity is further alluded to by his association with royalty and kingship. As readers recall, Mardi and Moby-Dick both link the potential gnostic redeemer with these metaphors.

In half-conscious testimony to Bartleby's demonstration of the power of the "sovereign spirit" over the worldly nature and to his heroic protest against a deficient world, the lawyer ranks the dead man "with kings and counselors" ("B," p. 511). Further, Bartleby is compared with the King or Lord, Christ, in the episode which describes his journey through the streets of New York to the Tombs ("B," p. 508). Associated with Christianity and the same range of metaphors relating to royalty as Melville's potential Christian gnostic redeemers Taji and Ishmael and, like his predecessors, depicted as a Narcissus-like savior-reformer, Bartleby stands recognized as another Melville protagonist who represents the potential Illuminator.

Like Tommo, Taji, Ishmael and Bartleby, Delano is portrayed as the Narcissus-like savior-reformer of gnosticism who risks or sacrifices his life to attain a "knowledge" of the self (Self). Moreover, he, too, is associated with special terms and images relating to the gnostic savior. Delano is simultaneously identified with the guilty and noble connotations of the gnostic version of the Narcissus theme, paralleled with Christ, and portrayed as one who is divinely directed to risk his life for "knowledge" in the episode which records his response to his first sighting of the San Dominick. Aroused by this vision, he packs "several baskets of fish, for presents, into his boat" and sets out to save this "ship in distress" ("BC," p. 2). His actions relate him to Tommo, Taji, Ishmael, and Bartleby in the sense that more or less directly and more or less emphatically they all are described as aroused by their quest object(s). Bartleby, for example, is "aroused" by the lawyer's advertisement for help ("B," p. 474).

But there is another sense in which Delano's actions identify him

with the potential gnostic redeemer. It is that they liken him to a knight in a fairy tale embarking on a mission to save a damsel in distress and to a Christ-figure going out to feed the multitudes. Linking him to the guilty and noble associations of the gnostic theme of Narcissus, such as curiosity, vanity, sensual desire, compassion, and sacrifice, and instigating the references in the story to Delano as the Word of Charity (=Wisdom= Grace), they help to specify that he is the Narcissus-like savior-reformer of gnostic belief.

Besides identifying Delano as the "solitary one" and the Alien Light who comes from another world into the world of his quest object, thereby associating Delano with the symbolic names and traditional depiction of the gnostic savior, with "Benito Cereno" Melville begins to use the word charity frequently as a synonym for the female aspect of the divine dyad and to depict his protagonist as the Word (m.) of Charity (f.). Delano's loquaciousness, association with Christ (particularly through the distribution of food), and imposition of a degree of order on the San Dominick identify him as the Word (Logos).

The idea that the potential gnostic savior's encounter with the fallen world-Soul involves him in a life-threatening situation is given a particularly compelling expression in "Benito Cereno." This aspect of Delano's descent into the fallen world of his quest object as well as Benito Cereno's observation that Delano survives because "God charmed [his] life," and he had "the Prince of Heaven's safe-conduct through all ambuscades" are some of the features of the narrative which help portray Delano as the special individual chosen to risk his life to attain "knowledge" ("BC," p. 73).

Characterizing Delano as the Alien Man who enters a fallen world at

peril to his life in order to "know" it, depicting him as the Narcissus-like Word of Wisdom or Charity, and associating him with divine protection are some of the means by which Melville identifies his protagonist with the arduous quest to comprehend the self (Self). But there are other more pointed allusions to this theme in the story. An explanation of the outstanding reference to this theme in the narrative follows. It concerns Delano's "quest of whomsoever it might be that commanded the ship" and thus the question of whether Delano will choose to follow as his leader an orthodox or gnostic Christ ("BC," p. 6).

That Delano's effort to save the fallen world involves his success in attaining the God-knowledge that is self-knowledge, i.e. a mature Christian gnostic vision of reality whereby he "truly" becomes "a Christ," is clearly referred to by his attempt to locate the commander of the San Dominick immediately after he boards her and by the train of symbolism that attends on the idea of finding the right leader to follow. As a commander is a leader, Delano's action relates to the critically important symbolic phrase "Follow your leader." This phrase, in turn, and the complex of symbols connected with it, lead one to perceive that in "Benito Cereno" a common theme in Melville's major fiction, the superiority of Christian gnostic world view to that of orthodox Christianity, receives a particularly forceful expression.

To be more specific, Delano's effort to "know" the self (Self), i.e. find the leader of and "in" the fallen world-Soul, entails that he discover the "jewel" of the highest Truth of gnosis in the depths of the impaired Soul. To do this, among other things, he must make the connection between the self (Self)-division, "ignorance," suffering, and persecution that characterize life on the San Dominick (the fallen

world) and orthodox Christianity, which, in Melville's view, underwrites a master-slave mentality. Further, he must overcome dualism and his baser inclinations, recognize himself as the God-chosen gnostic leader of the vessel of the Spirit, the impaired world-Soul, and see "the divine within" the crucifixions of Aranda, Benito Cereno, Babo, and the entire suffering populace of the impaired Spirit.

The phrase "Follow your leader" is linked to a complex of symbols involving death, cannibalism, crucifixion, a cycle of exploitation and domination, orthodox Christianity, vision, and truth. As readers may recall, the phrase is most obviously related to the crucified and cannibalized orthodox Christian Aranda, whose skeleton, masked by a swath of canvas, serves as the figurehead of the San Dominick ("BC," p. 4). The idea that a cycle of exploitation and domination is fostered by orthodox Christianity and its "inferior" concept of sacrifice is conveyed in a variety of ways in the narrative. But the most obvious of them is that the dead Aranda is the former owner of the blacks. Clearly, this relates him to the master-slave mentality which characterizes the fallen world-Soul. Being identified with Christ by means of serving as the emblem of a Catholic ship and by means of the hint in the narrative that his flesh and blood are ritually consumed by the blacks, the dead Aranda becomes a symbol of orthodox Christianity, and it is indirectly portrayed as a cause (and an effect) of the master-slave mentality that keeps the Light in Darkness.

Another symbol which Melville employs in "Benito Cereno" to describe the world as the impaired god-head and to implicate orthodox Christianity in the cycle of suffering, domination, and revenge is the stern-piece of the ship. Outstanding among the "mythological or symbolical

devices" which are carved on it is the image of "a dark satyr in a mask, holding his foot on the prostrate neck of a writhing figure, likewise masked" ("BC," p. 4).

This symbol is a reference to the gnostic drama of the Fall and to the theme of the mystical identity of the hunted and the hunted, rendered here as the persecuted and the persecutor. The emblem alludes to the suppression of the "heart" by the "head" and to the tragic cycle of suffering and revenge which marks the fallen, divided state of the Spirit because too few people possess the higher vision and "know" that the masked antagonists do differ ($A \neq B$) but that they are essentially one, divine, ineffable Unity ($A=B$). Identified first with the pagan-Catholic world of the San Dominick, whose self-divided, warring populace take turns brutalizing and suppressing one another (but ultimately related to Protestant Christianity, Delano, and his ship, the Bachelor's Delight), in "Benito Cereno" Life is shown to be the dramatized mirror image of this device. It is on this image of Life that Delano is to reflect if he is to attain self (Self)-knowledge.

By linking the most emphatic symbol of the fallen world-Soul in the narrative, the San Dominick, to the jewel of gnosis and to orthodox Christianity, despotism, weakness, darkness, barbarism, and a master-slave mentality, the point is made that the highest Wisdom is hidden in exoteric Christianity but that instead of promoting it, Christianity offers a barbaric, "pagan" version of Truth which fosters this tragic cycle of oppression and revenge. With this symbolism as well as that which portrays Delano as the potential Illuminator, Delano's effort to "know" the persecuting (slave-owning) and persecuted (slave-owned) Christ of the San Dominick is defined as the quest to become the fully

authoritative gnostic Christ who can lead the fallen Soul to Self-Integration.

That the fallen Soul contains in its deepest recesses the jewel of gnosis is given an explicit depiction in "Benito Cereno." As a confused and troubled Delano, "wrapped in thought," makes his way "down" from the poop and "[passes] near a dark hatchway, leading down into the steerage," he sees something "sparkle" in the dark, and he glimpses "one of the Spanish sailors, prowling there, hurriedly placing his hand in the bosom of his frock, as if hiding something there." Delano's curiosity is aroused. Speculating about what he sees, Delano is portrayed as thinking in terms of the language of the negative way to enlightenment: "It was no lamp--no match--no live coal. Could it have been a jewel?" ("BC," p. 23). As readers now know, the inner self (Self) is traditionally described in terms of these images in gnostic forms of thought.

Because Delano acts as the leader of the San Dominick during his stay on the ship and is paralleled with Christ, one understands that coming to "know" the crucified and persecuting orthodox Christ of the San Dominick signifies Delano's quest to "know" the self (Self). As the master and slave Babo and the master and slave Benito Cereno, too, are captains or leaders of the San Dominick, readers are given to understand that his quest for self (Self)-knowledge requires comprehending these symbols of the estranged aspect of his own self (Self). Babo and the blacks play the part of the fallen Thought of God in a twofold sense. They represent not only the heart side of the divine dyad which is suppressed by her own self-assertive powers but also the Darkness (the Intelligence and passions) that holds the Light captive. And the same holds true for Benito Cereno and the Spanish. With their adherence to

the "inferior" truth of orthodox Christianity and their endorsement of slavery, they hold the Light captive, and they themselves are entrapped in Ignorance. But regarded as absolutes, Babo represents the Depth, Mind, and Word--the fallen image of male aspect of the deity. Benito Cereno is identified with Silence, Church, and Wisdom, the female part of the distorted image of the deity.

Delano's failure to attain "insight" during this period of his spiritual history is recorded in the account in the narrative which depicts his crew's fight with the blacks. At the rescued Delano's instigation, members of the crew of the Bachelor's Delight return to the San Dominick with orders to "take her" ("BC," p. 59). As they prepare to board the slave-laden vessel, they see Aranda's "skeleton gleaming in the horizontal moonlight, and casting a gigantic ribbed shadow upon the water. One extended arm of the ghost . . . [seems to beckon] the whites to avenge it. 'Follow your leader,'" cries Delano's first mate, as he begins the attack ("BC," p. 60).

Since Delano's crew is following its leader's orders and Delano is identified with the Jesus who distributes loaves to the multitudes, one perceives another reference in this scene to the idea that orthodox Christianity underwrites the attitude which keeps the self (Self) in "ignorance," and readers are given to understand that Delano's attempt to "know" the self (Self) is unsuccessful. Speaking of the one Valentinian writing, Jonas observes that in it, the gnostic Jesus is held to have "abolished" the laws "tainted with badness and injustice," such as "'an eye for an eye.'"⁴ Obviously, the "benevolent" Delano in this episode is implicated in fostering the idea of a sacrifice for revenge, making clear his lack of spiritual maturity ("BC," p. 2). Nonetheless,

the symbolism connected with this protagonist, which includes his identification with the "chosen" country in the nineteenth-century, America, clearly portrays him as a potential gnostic redeemer.

The Confidence-Man's characterization as the Narcissus-like reformer-savior of gnostic belief who sacrifices himself to obtain a "knowledge" of man (Man) and become the Illuminator begins at the onset of the account of his entry into the lower "Nature." The description of the deaf mute's boarding of the Fidele portrays the Confidence-Man as the transmundane Alien Man--the gnostic "stranger"--who "awakens" the fallen world-Soul from "sleep." The text reads: "From the shrugged shoulders, titters, whispers, wonderings of the crowd, it was plain to see that he was, in the extremist sense of the word, a stranger" (C-M, p. 1). His "cream colored suit," "white fur" hat, "fair" skin, "dreaminess," and "flaxen" hair are some of the means by which Melville associates this Alien Light and dreamer of world reform with the divine substance of life and the connotations of the Narcissus theme (C-M, pp. 4, 2). The word cream conveys erotic connotations as does the concept of light in the gnostic vocabulary of symbolism. "The divine light-substance," says Saurat as he discusses the Cabala," is identified with the seed of human reproduction" and especially "semen."⁵

The Confidence-Man is further linked with the Narcissus-like, i.e. reflective, Illuminator of gnostic mythos in his first act after entering the fallen world of the Fidele, and the point is made in this episode that the quest to reveal and attain a "knowledge" of the self (Self) requires sacrifice and risking one's life. As the mute begins his redemptive mission by silently teaching five sayings about charity from I Corinthians 13, thereby becoming associated with Christ, Paul,

the favorite apostle of the Christian gnostics of the ancient world, and the gnostic symbolic term for the redeemer, the Word of Silence or Wisdom, which Melville identifies with charity, he is described as being set upon by "fighting characters." He is jostled and "thrust aside" by the crowd. Several of them also give him some "buffets" (C-M, p. 2). Described as well as a hunted man for whom "a reward" is offered, this "mysterious impostor, supposed to have recently arrived from the East" is again indicated to be risking his life in his hunt for man (Man). Further, like the potential gnostic redeemer Taji--another impostor from the East--with this symbolism the protagonist is defined as one of the special "masks" of the Unknown God (C-M, p. 1).

The identification of the Confidence-Man with suffering, enlightenment, reflection, and alienness continues to be repeated in the scene which describes him going to sleep on the deck of the Fidele. Inspiring numerous "epithetic comments, conflictingly spoken or thought . . . [by] a miscellaneous company" who look down on the deaf mute from "the upper deck" while he sleeps, the golden-haired mute is described like the mirror and sun-like gold doubloon in Moby-Dick (C-M, p. 5). To some of the passengers who reflect on the meaning of the sleeping alien in their midst, he appears "to have come from a very long distance." His suit looks as if he had been "traveling night and day from some far country beyond the prairies," and he looks like he "had long been without the solace of a bed" (CM, p. 4).

The sacrifice and suffering of the potential redeemer is suggested by the aforementioned terms and images with which he is characterized. Those which specify that his "aspect [is] at once gentle and jaded," care-worn and dreamy reinforce these ideas (C-M, p. 4). Here, as else-

where in Melville's major fiction, the potential redeemer is portrayed as a traveler of unknown origin, identity, or destiny. This Alien Light's association with an exhausting journey calls to mind the following quotation from Jonas about the potential redeemer: "The transcendent Life enters the world, sojourns in it, and endures its seemingly endless duration, and only through this long and laborious way, with memory lost and regained, can it fulfill its destiny."⁶ The deaf mute's depiction as an eternal traveler is one of the indications in the narrative that, although the Confidence-Man is portrayed as attaining enlightenment, the next stage of his spiritual history involves a re-enactment of the Fall.

While the fact that the deaf mute goes to sleep soon after he enters the fallen world is a reference to the gnostic savior's re-enactment of the gnostic drama of the fall of the Soul, the stipulation that as he sleeps he resembles "some sugar-snow in March, which, . . . with its white placidity startles the brown farmer peering out from his threshold at daybreak" provides readers with a hint about the potency of this hidden dynamo of energy (C-M, p. 4). Thus, the thrust of the symbolism which forms the reader's first impression of the Confidence-Man is toward portraying him as the special individual who is sent by the Unknown God to sacrifice himself to save the "drowned" man (Man) and to obtain self (Self)-knowledge. As the barber, William Cream, tells the cosmopolitan that before he will convert to the view to trust man and God he must have "a material pledge" from the Confidence-Man, and shortly thereafter the protagonist is indicated to undergo a "death" by drowning, one understands this symbolism to foreshadow the conclusion of the narrative (C-M, 203).

Melville provides his readers with a hint that the Confidence-Man's quest involves the necessity on his part to obtain a "knowledge" of the whole self (Self) in the episode which depicts the deaf mute presenting the passengers of the Fidele with only a few selected sayings about charity from I Corinthians 13. Besides love, one of the leading themes of this chapter is the imperfect nature of spiritual knowledge in this world and the difficulty of "seeing" the whole truth. The deficient spiritual wisdom is contrasted with the perfected wisdom which is to be when the Kingdom of God is attained. In this context, one finds verse 12, which reads: "For now we see through a glass, darkly." In all probability, to many Christian gnostics and to Melville this verse would describe the fallen Spirit, the inverted, dark mirror of the deity. Combined with the verses that refer to the desire for a wholeness of vision, the gnostic would see an allusion in I Corinthians 13:12 not only to the process of reflection, inversion, and reconciliation by which one attains the higher vision but also to the idea that in entering the world the soul suffers a loss of self (Self)-knowledge.

The claim that Melville intends for his readers to consult I Corinthians 13 to see what the deaf mute omits in his effort to enlighten the fallen world is corroborated in the novel. One indication of this concerns the episode in which the Confidence-Man, in his aspect as the man in gray, encounters the charitable widow. Here, the widow is depicted as distracted from reading this Pauline chapter in its entirety, which detail constitutes another allusion to a lack of a wholeness in vision, but she is portrayed as having been inspired by "the scene of the monitory mute and his slate" to study "the xiii. of 1st Corinthians" (C-M, p. 37).

That the deaf mute lacks a wholeness of vision is signified by the verses he omits and the ones that he chooses for his fellow travelers in the world to reflect on. They almost all define charity, i.e. Wisdom, as consisting of the "female" virtues of suffering, being loving, and enduring regardless of the degradation and pain one experiences. The first that he presents, "Charity thinketh no evil," is antithetical to the gnostic emphasis on the unity of God instead of the emphasis on God's goodness. Thus, it is opposed to the gnostic concept of a wholeness of vision. These verses represent high truths of the heart, but due to their one-sidedness, one sees evidence in this potential savior's first act that he is not yet the fully authoritative Word of Wisdom or Charity but rather is the gnostic savior who, in his passage into the world, has lost self (Self)-knowledge and now must regain it.

The fact that the idea of being too "one-sided" is a subject discussed by Charlie Noble (the world-Soul) and Frank Goodman (the potential redeemer) is one specific hint in the narrative that the salvation of the fallen god-head rests on the attainment of the enlightened consciousness (C-M, p. 152). However, the symbolism of a dialectic of polar opposites in the narrative which contrasts the multiform potential gnostic redeemer and his doctrine of "Trust" with the multiform fallen world-Soul, and his doctrine of "'No trust,'" as the barber's "gaudy sort of illuminated pasteboard sign" puts it, is the critical clue that a wholeness of vision is the ideal which the novel seeks to convey (C-M, p. 3). The symbolism connected with the barber's sign is an indication that the highest Truth, confounded with Error, is in the possession of the fallen Soul.

Besides depicting the Confidence-Man as the reflective, transmudane

Alien Light who sacrifices himself to "know" the All, the pronounced theme of the hunt in the narrative, the revelation that the Alien Man is the Son of Man who seeks his fellow passengers' "gold" for love more than money, and the descriptions of the soul as containing a hidden treasure contribute to the characterization of the Confidence-Man as the Narcissus-like Hunter of Light of gnostic mythos.

In the list of all of the hunters on board the Fidele, one finds not only "farm-hunters and fame-hunters; heiress-hunters, gold-hunters, buffalo-hunters, bee-hunters, happiness-hunters, [and] truth-hunters," but also "still keener hunters after all of these hunters" (C-M, p. 6). The allusion here is to the dominant theme of the narrative--the self-salvation of the deity: the keenest hunter of all is the special individual who hunts for man (Man). And since the transformational principle of Alien Light, the protagonist, is a hunter of the luminous or gold part of the Soul of man (Man), one perceives in the pronounced theme of the hunt in the narrative another way in which Melville characterizes the Confidence-Man as an "ignorant" gnostic savior on his way "down" to the depths of the world-Soul in an effort to obtain self (Self)-integration and effect the salvation of man (Man).

The Confidence-Man is identified as the Son of Man (another name for the gnostic savior) in the episode recounted in "The Barber's Shop." Dreaming in his chair late at night, the barber awakens as the Confidence-Man enters and says "Bless you" to him. The voice "[seems] a sort of spiritual manifestation" to the barber. But when he sees the Confidence-Man, he is "disenchanted," for he perceives "the stranger" to be "'only a man.'" "'Only a man?'" asks the comopolitan, "'As if to be a man were nothing.'" Comparing himself to angels and devils and empha-

sizing his association with an unknown "nothing," he says to the barber, "'Don't be too sure what I am You can conclude nothing absolute from the human form, barber'" (C-M, p. 193). With this symbolism, the protagonist is defined as the son of the Unknown God, Man.

Like the Hunter of the world-dream and the "lost pearl," Taji, and the gold-hunters Tommo and Ishmael, the Confidence-Man, being a hunter of the Alien Man, is a Hunter of the gold or jewel that exists in the fallen world-Soul. References to these symbols of the luminous inner man (Man) in the novel constitute yet another indication of the protagonist's symbolic identity. Speaking of the Missourian, the Confidence-Man in his aspect of the cosmopolitan images man's "heart" as "an inviting oyster in a forbidding shell," thereby not only linking him with appetite and alluding to his "ignorant" condition but also referring to the gnostic pearl and oyster metaphor for the pneumatic principle within the soul (C-M, p. 136). And other references are found in the text to the idea that the gold which the Confidence-Man hunts is the highest truth and spiritual essence of the man (Man). For example, the heart, i.e. Soul, is described by Charlie Noble as possessing in its depths a "hidden . . . jewel" (CM, p. 155). Further, immediately after, Charlie accuses the cosmopolitan of being "a man-trap" because he allows that he is "in want of money," which is to say, gold (CM, p. 155).

The Confidence-Man is in want of gold in a double sense: like Ishmael, his lack of gold signifies a lack of the self (Self)-knowledge that is identified with a balance of polar opposites; moreover, his quest for gold refers to his soteriological function of "gathering in" and "informing" the dispersed fragments of the god-head, moving the fallen Spirit in the direction of a moral and intellectual reform and

being "informed" and moved by it as well. In short, like Taji, he is the gnostic spirit of "the coming age." Another respect in which the Confidence-Man especially resembles Taji is that the Truth to which he seeks to convert the World-Soul during his sojourn in the world is not the final highest Truth of gnosis, but a truth with which the Soul must mate before spiritual maturity can come about. The emphasis on the theme of hunt in this novel, where it is described as a "wild goose chase," and the specific references to the fallen world-Soul as containing a buried treasure especially recall Mardi and help depict the Confidence-Man, like his prototypes who also are hunters of Light, as the potential gnostic Illuminator (C-M, pp. 10, 214).

Besides identifying the Confidence-Man as a Narcissus-like savior-reformer figure and associating him with special gnostic names and images, such as the Alien Light and the Hunter of man (Man), Melville portrays him in terms of several other characteristics which are identified with the archetypal figure of the Illuminator. For example, he is linked to the Unknown God by means of being portrayed as a unknown traveler who is an emissary of Love. The "puzzled" Missourian reveals that the Confidence-Man is a "trickster" and "seedy Rosicrucian" who operates "more for the love than the lucre" (C-M, p. 113). As readers recall, the archetypal figure of the gnostic savior is identified as a trickster, a seed, a puzzle-maker, and the emissary of Love, and Rosicrucianism is one of the vehicles of the gnostic impulse.

Further, like the archetypal figure of the gnostic Illuminator, the Confidence-Man is portrayed as a magician. He specifically resembles not only the gnostic Jesus, whose manifestations mirror the level of spiritual maturity of his disciples, but also Simon Magus, who was

reputed to be a great magician with powers of transformation. Like the gnostic Jesus and Simon Magus, the Confidence-Man's appearance is progressively adjusted to his environment. To quote Grant about the Simonian mythos, in his descent into the world, "Simon was 'transformed and made like the principalities and powers.'"⁷ Keeping in mind the gnostic dictum that only like cures like, it is relevant to note that the last form in which the Confidence-Man appears is the confident cosmopolitan and that at the onset of the novel, the dynamic "spirit" which characterizes the world-Soul is described as "cosmopolitan and confident" (C-M, p. 6).

The effect of this symbolism is that of lending even more weight to the theory about the gnostic identity of the Confidence-man, and it indicates as well that this protagonist is a more abstract mythical and allegorical figure than his predecessors. The view that the partly enlightened Confidence-Man is curing the fallen world-Soul (and himself) of the more vulgar of its Errors by means of turning its own weapon against it is suggested by the episode which involves the herb-doctor and the old Miser. After selling the sick man some Omni-Balsamic Rein-vigorator and then warning him against counterfeit medicine, The Confidence-Man is told by the Miser: "'You told me to have confidence, . . . and here you preach to me distrust. Ah, truth will out!'" (C-M, p. 11).

Like the other protagonists of Melville's major fiction, Billy Budd is treated as the potential Word of Wisdom. By means of a portrayal of one example of the "'Handsome Sailor,'" Billy Budd's characterization as the Narcissus-like reformer-savior figure of gnostic mythos who sacrifices himself to redeem and be redeemed by the fallen world-Soul is undertaken in the abstract in the narrative before readers are intro-

duced to Billy Budd himself. Organically related to the gnostic theme of Narcissus, references to potency and symbolic terms such as the Word of Light and the Alien Man are found in connection with the description of the "superior figure" of the African who, imaged as "the center of a company of his shipmates," serves as the first symbol in the story of the potential Illuminator ("BB," p. 43).

Whereas the Narcissus theme is inherent in the name "the 'Handsome Sailor,'" Melville's specification that this figure combines "strength and beauty," that he is "the champion" of the common sailors, and that he traditionally serves as their "spokesman" builds toward the characterization of Billy Budd as the immature masculo-feminine reformer-savior of gnosticism. Certainly Melville's abstract description of the "Handsome Sailor," via the idea that he is the spokesman, links him to the symbolic term the Word of Life. The references to this figure's virility and potency, such as are emphasized by likening him to the "grand sculptured Bull" worshipped in the old mystery religion cults, are allusions to the generative nature of the Word ("BB," p. 44). This metaphor also associates the potential gnostic redeemer Billy Budd to the dying and reborn "seed" of the "Great Life." It and Billy's lack of a command of language foreshadow the Narcissus-like reformer-savior's death in the lower "Nature."

For the aforementioned reasons, the symbolism involved in the abstract portrait of the "Handsome Sailor" helps to define Billy Budd as one who is divinely chosen to sacrifice his life for a "knowledge" of the self (Self). While the protagonist's death drives home the message of his sacrifice, the idea that Billy Budd's conflict involves the effort to attain the self-knowledge that is God-knowledge, i.e. "in-

sight" into man (Man), is made clear in the account of his assimilation into the fallen world. The story reveals that Billy's "ignorance" about the self (Self) leads to his death. Unlike the omniscient, intrusive narrator, whose attainment of "insight" is suggested by his reference to his story as "an inside narrative," Billy Budd is not portrayed as a "son of interior knowledge." His inability to comprehend either the old Dansker or the dark side of man (Man), as represented most emphatically first by the malicious Intelligence, Claggart, who plays the role of the gnostic devil, and then by the ambitious Vere, who acts the part of the inferior image of God, signify Billy Budd's "ignorance" and his denial of the darker inclinations of his own soul (Soul). And without a wholeness of "knowledge," Billy cannot grasp the jewel of the highest Truth which exists in the depths of the fallen world-Soul.

The specification in the narrative that Billy's "quest" involves the effort to find "the wrinkled one," the old Dansker, refers to the potential redeemer's search for the jewel of gnosis ("BB," p. 70). Moreover, this reference makes it clear that the potential gnostic savior must "know" about the negative proclivities of man (Man) before he can become the Illuminator. Described as the "Merlin" to whom Billy goes "for wise counsel," the old Dansker is portrayed as the disregarded jewel of the highest Truth which exists in the fallen "Nature" ("BB," pp. 69-70). Not only the "problematical little sparkles of his small ferret eyes" but also the masculo-feminine old sailor's nickname of "Board-Her-in-the smoke," his revelation to Billy that Claggart is "down on" him, and his refusal to do more than try to lead Billy Budd to a "knowledge" of man (Man) portray the Dansker as the jewel of Wisdom in the fallen Soul who may show man the highest Truth of gnosis ("BB,"

p. 69).

The narrative makes it clear that besides Claggart, the old Dansker, is the only person on the Bellipotent "intellectually capable of adequately appreciating the moral phenomenon presented in Billy Budd." Hence, he is identified with knowledge. The speed with which the old "seer" cuts through the smoke or fog of Billy Budd's account of "his mysterious little difficulty" with the "police" on the ship is a detail which contributes to the old man's characterization as the Word of Wisdom in the fallen Soul, and one that explains the symbolic implications of his nickname ("BB," pp. 78, 71, 70, 68). As readers recall, fog, smoke, and their variants, such as the term fleecy, which is connected with the Confidence-Man, are common metaphors in gnostic expressions of Thought for the condition of "ignorance."⁸

That the old Dansker not only comprehends Billy Budd, who represents the transmudane god-head in its most naive, pure, and potentially positive form, but also the gnostic devil Claggart, who symbolizes the Spirit in its most negative, destructive aspect, signifies the old man's grasp of the ineffable All. Such symbolism in the narrative indicates that the old Dansker is the true Father for whom Billy searches but is unable to "grasp." Because Billy cannot comprehend the old sailor's hint to him that he must "know" evil as well as good if he is to cease being "Baby" Budd and protect himself from the dark inclinations of the Soul, the protagonist's own dark forces come to the fore and contribute to his death ("BB," p. 70). The idea that "self-ignorance is a form of self-destruction," says Pagels, is prevalent in the gnostic literature of the Graeco-Roman world. Certainly Billy Budd's murder of Claggart illustrates Pagels's remarks and the passage

from the Gospel of Thomas which reads: "If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."⁹ Billy Budd's failure to "know" the negative aspects of the self (Self) are the chief cause his entrapment in Ignorance.

Claggart's depiction as the gnostic concept of the spirit of wickedness--the devil--provides more evidence of Billy Budd's symbolic and mythical identity and casts light on Melville's sources for this story. Claggart's identity is signified by the fact that he does "know" Billy Budd's true worth but "with no power to annul the elemental evil in him" is destined "like the scorpion for which the Creator alone is responsible, . . . [to] act out to the end the part allotted it" ("BB," p. 78).

In regard to Melville's familiarity with the various schools of gnostic belief in the ancient world, it is interesting to note the symbolism connected with Claggart suggests that Melville drew upon the mystery cult of Mithra and the Valentinian speculation for his portrait. As one learns from Campbell, the scorpion represents the most negative, destructive aspect of the Spirit in the iconography connected with the cult of Mithra. Identified with death, the scorpion plays a necessary role in renewal of the life in this school of thought.¹⁰ Melville appears to have combined this Mithraic symbol with ideas about the fallen Spirit from the Valentinian mythos.

From Jonas's discussion of Irenaeus's account of the Valentinian concept of Satan, one learns that this symbolic and mythical entity is held to have "originated from the 'grief'" of the fallen Thought. Even though it signifies the "'spirit' of wickedness," Jonas says, it possesses "the privilege of knowledge."¹¹ Melville's association of Claggart with terms and images such as grief, knowledge, and the scorpion,

as well as pride, envy, and a malicious intelligence characterize him as the Valentinian concept of the devil.

In regard to his quest for self (Self)-knowledge, Billy's failure to comprehend the old Dansker foreshadows his inability to understand not only Claggart but also Vere. Vere represents the inferior image of the deity. Signifying the Valentinian concept of the imperfect image of God produced by Wisdom in her fall, Vere, to quote Jonas about the Valentinian symbol, "is inferior to the ungenerated perfect God, . . . but properly called 'just.'" However, "his kind of justice . . . [is] a kind inferior to that of the Father."¹² The exile and orphan Billy, in his search for his true Father, i.e. the Self-Integrated Man, mistakenly identifies Vere as the Unknown God, and he acquiesces to Vere's inferior kind of justice.

The episode in the narrative which portrays Vere's mysterious death makes it clear that the captain of the Bellipotent, despite his fine qualities, is not the perfected god-head of gnostic belief. By means of portraying its immediate cause as a musket ball shot from the gun of an unknown member of the crew of the Athee, which vessel of the spirit is connected with the gnostic ideals of freedom, individualism, equality, and wholeness via the sentiments of the French Revolution as well as portrayed as a corrupted expression of gnosticism, Melville depicts Vere's death as an act of divine justice accomplished at root by the transmudane Spirit. And lest there be any doubt about Vere's lack of self (Self)-knowledge, the text specifies that due to this unfortunate (so-called) accident, "the spirit that 'spite its philosophic austerity may yet have indulged in the most secret of all passions, ambition, never attained to the fulness of fame" ("BB," p. 129). Besides relating

Vere to the guilty connotations of the gnostic theme of Narcissus, the sentence specifies that Vere lacks "fulness," which is to say, wholeness, completion, and spiritual maturity.

As the symbolism involved with not only the abstract portrait of the "Handsome Sailor" but also old "Board-Her-in-the-smoke," Claggart, and Vere reveal, Billy Budd, like Tommo, Taji, Ishmael, Bartleby, Delano, and the Confidence-Man, is the special individual who is divinely elected to sacrifice himself to obtain and effect illumination about man (Man). Other details of his characterization link him firmly to the archetypal figure of the gnostic savior or the transmundane Spirit. For example, like his predecessors in Melville's major fiction, Billy is the transmundane Alien Man in relation to the world into which he descends. His unknown origin, orphaned status, and roving bent are some of the details of his portrait which identify him as the son of the Unknown God effecting the plan of salvation in the fallen world.

More hints about his symbolic and mythical identity are conveyed by his association with freedom, individualism, and wholeness via his home ship, the Rights-of-Man. Further, the potential gnostic Christ Billy Budd is identified not only with the important symbol of the luminous inner self, the rose-colored pearl, but also with royalty. And, perhaps most telling of all, subsequent to his hanging, he is imaged as the "lost pearl" and the "drowned" Man of the gnostic version of the myth of Narcissus. The central character of Melville's last major piece of fiction is directly referred to as a "jewel" in the story, and the "jewel" is later imaged as a rose pearl that sinks to the depths of the sea ("BB," p. 46).

The following descriptions of Billy Budd provide evidence of his

identification with the gnostic symbol of the pearl. The first relevant passage reads thus:

He was young; and despite his all but fully developed frame, in aspect looked even younger than he really was, owing to a lingering adolescent expression in the as yet smooth face all but feminine in purity of natural complexion but where, thanks to his seagoing, the lily was quite suppressed and the rose had some ado visibly to flush through the tan. ("BB," p. 50)

The second passage which specifies the type of "jewel" that Billy Budd signifies is the poem "Billy in the Darbies." In it, the dead Billy is imaged as lying in chains made of "oozy weeds" at the bottom of the sea, "dreaming" in his "sleep" in the lower "Nature." Further, depicted at the time of his death, he is imaged as the "a jewel-block" and "pendant pearl" which is to be hung "from the yardarm" ("BB," p. 132). Thus with these symbols, Billy Budd is imaged as the gnostic savior in the condition of the "drowned" Narcissus reformer-savior of gnostic mythos and as the gnostic symbol of the highest god-head, the luminous rose-colored pearl, now "lost" in the depths of the world-dream.

Billy's connection with royalty repeats another detail of the pattern of images that Melville frequently ascribes to his potential gnostic redeemers. Like Ishmael, Billy is associated with the foremast or royal part of the vessel of the Spirit on which he travels. Further, Billy Budd is said to be "a foundling, a presumable by-blow" of "noble descent" ("BB," p. 52). When combined with his depiction as one whose "voice . . . [is] singularly musical, as if expressive of the harmony within" and all of the other evidence of Melville's care to identify him as the gnostic Christ who must discover the secret of his own identity and origin and become the fully authoritative Word of Life for man (Man), one has no recourse but to conclude that Melville intends for his

readers to perceive that Billy Budd, like Tommo, Taji, Ishmael, Bartleby, Delano, and the Confidence-Man, represents yet another interpretation of the figure of the potential gnostic redeemer.

The World(s) of the Lawyer, the San Dominick, the Fidele, and the Bellipotent as the Fallen Thought of God

Given the characterization of the protagonists of "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" as the potential gnostic savior, one expects to find evidence that Melville goes to some pains to depict the quest object of these exiles and aliens as the gnostic concept of the impaired god-head. The preceding discussion touches on some of the symbolism in these stories which relates to this claim. However, it is worthwhile to clarify this point by noting that all of the quest objects of this set of Melville protagonists, like those of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael, are described as a female-like dream or mental construct and repeatedly identified with the gold of gnosis that the protagonist seeks.

Other features of the characterization of the quest object(s) in the works under consideration define it as the fallen Thought of God. For example, the worlds represented by the lawyer's Wall Street office, the San Dominick, the Fidele, and the Bellipotent are portrayed as a state of self-division. This is to say, they are depicted as lacking freedom, individualism, and wholeness and are otherwise associated with the complex of terms and images relating to the gnostic concept of "ignorance," such as the Void, darkness, warfare, wrath, and prisons, all of which mark the fallen Thought of the Unknown God in gnostic

mythos.

To be even more specific, one perceives that, as is the case with Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick, both the quest objects of Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy Budd and the central characters themselves are identified with the gnostic symbolic term the Alien Life, or its metaphorical equivalents; and otherwise indicated to be fundamentally identical (A=B). Maintaining the essential features of the pattern of symbolism employed in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick to portray the potential gnostic redeemer and his quest object as polar opposites as well as duplicates of one another (A≠B), in "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd," one finds the quest object rather than the protagonist more emphatically identified with not only the hidden treasure of gnosis but also the despotic Orient, darkness, barbarity, paganism, and Catholic Christianity. Further, one continues to find the protagonist identified with not only the quest for the hidden treasure but also the Protestant Christianity, humanism, utopianism, liberalism, and revolutionism of the West. Such consistency in patterns of images define the lawyer and his Wall Street office, the San Dominick, the Fidele, and the Bellipotent as the impaired Alien Life which is in need of enlightenment and indicates as well Melville's persistent reliance on a symbolism of inverted mirrors.

The worlds of the lawyer, the San Dominick, the Fidele, and the Bellipotent are all identified as a symbolically female dream or thought which contains the gold or jewel of gnosis in its midst. These narratives portray the quest objects of their protagonists as this symbolical and mythical entity in a variety of indirect and, on occasion, direct ways. In all of these narratives, for example, the quest object is

indirectly assigned a female gender by means of depicting the protagonist as the potent Word of Life which fertilizes the world. Sometimes, however, the quest object is directly identified with women. Further, in all of these stories the imagery connected with the idea of the "sacred marriage" is stressed. This imagery constitutes another way in which the quest object is identified as symbolically female. The concept of reflection, which relates to the gnostic theme of Narcissus, and its wide range of linked terms and images, such as dreams, states of mind, Silence, and Depth, may also be more or less directly identified with the quest object. With this symbolism, the quest object is characterized as a female world-dream or thought.

In "Bartleby" the symbolically female gender of the Master of Chancery and his world in relation to Bartleby is indicated by the seed and wedding imagery in the narrative; the fact that, like the fallen Thought of God in gnostic mythos, the lawyer, in advertising for help, in effect, issues a call for divine aid; and references to the Narcissus-reflection symbolism. For example, the identification of Bartleby, the "response" from the Unknown God to the lawyer's "call," with a potent seed who ultimately is buried in the heart of the world-prison, i.e. the lawyer, portrays him as the fertile Word of Light or the bridegroom and thus indicates that his quest object represents the symbolically female fallen Thought of God.

Because the wedding imagery is repeated in the story in connection with the lawyer's reflections on Bartleby's death, one knows that references to it are not accidental. Having revealed that Bartleby's former place of employment was "the Dead Letter Office at Washington," the fallen world-Soul, the lawyer, visualizes "the pale clerk" [taking] a

ring" occasionally from out of the thousands of letters that are destined to be burned ("B," p. 512). The allusion here places the potential Illuminator Bartleby in the role of bride (the Soul) awaiting her mystical marriage with God. Because the gnostic redeemer must have played the role of the bride in relation to the highest god-head before he can with full authority act the role of bridegroom to the world, which in relation to him, is female, one perceives that the allusion to Bartleby as a bride awaiting her marriage actually provides yet another clue about the symbolic and mythical identity of the protagonist's quest object. The pairing of the lawyer and Bartleby, who are portrayed as twins and opposites, is yet another indication that they represent the transmundane (m.) and mundane (f.) forms of the Spirit.

That the fallen world of the lawyer contains the gold of gnosis in its depths is signified not only by the burial of the transcendent Alien Light Bartleby in the depths of the world-tomb but also by the identification of the lawyer with coins that are imaged as buttons ("B," p. 494). Here readers should recall that the inmost center of the whirlpool with which Ishmael unites in his mystical "marriage" with the divine Monad is portrayed as a "button-like black bubble" and that Melville employs money as a symbol for the "gold" or highest Truth of gnosis (M-D, p. 724). The identification of the lawyer with gold, money, and buttons indicates that the world-Soul possesses the luminous, self-integrated spirit in its depths or inmost center.

While the references to the gnostic image patterns of the soul's "captivity" in Darkness, the hidden dynamo, and the "sacred marriage" and the allusion to the idea of buried treasure, buttons, and gold in connection with an imperfect world are some of the means by which Mel-

ville portrays the world of the lawyer as the impaired Life, the devices of atmosphere, plot, and setting contribute to the characterization of Bartleby's quest object as this symbolic and mythical entity, for they are treated as vehicles for the gnostic Narcissus-reflection theme. Certainly it takes no particularly astute reader to perceive that the account of Bartleby's assimilation into the world has the nature of a comic nightmare and to note the repeated references in the narrative to the idea of reflection not only in relation to the Narcissus-like, i.e. meditative, protagonist and to the lawyer, who is strongly identified with "vanity," but also in regard to setting ("B," p. 495).

One of the means by which Melville refers to the world-Soul as a reflection, dream, or thought of the Unknown God is found in the description of the Master of Chancery's Wall Street office (a public office of justice which is supposed to be concerned with equity). As the lawyer reveals, prior to Bartleby's "advent," at which time he positions Bartleby in his office, "Ground glass folding doors divided [his] premises into two parts, one of which was occupied by [his] scriveners, the other by [himself] ("B," pp. 474, 468). Thus identified with the negative connotations of the gnostic Narcissus-reflection theme, the world of the lawyer is described as the fallen dream and inverted mirror image of God. Needless to say, the words "divided" and "ground glass" go a long way toward specifying the deficient quality of life in the realm of Being.

When one considers this description along with the allusions to the world of the lawyer as a fallen woman, one is provided with more evidence that Bartleby's quest object represents the self-divided world-illusion. The harlot metaphor with which one is familiar from the

treatment of the quest object(s) in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick applies to the world of the lawyer in regard to the hints in the story that he prostitutes the law and courts the favor of the wealthy ("B," pp. 466-67, 474). As a consequence, the world of the lawyer is identified as the fallen dream of Life.

Besides the world of the lawyer, the world of the San Dominick is depicted as the symbolically female dream or Thought of the Unknown God. That Delano's quest object is accorded a female gender is to be known not only from his perception of it as a damsel in distress but also from the identification of the ship with a "Lima intrigante." As John P. Runden explains, the term refers to the women of Lima, Peru, who were notorious among the sailors of Melville's day for actively seeking "illicit" sexual encounters ("BC," p. 2, n. 1). Here the San Dominick, like the quest objects of Tommo, Taji, Ishmael, and Bartleby, is portrayed as a harlot or syren, thereby building toward its symbolic and mythical identity as the fallen Thought of God. Moreover, a symbolism of potency, weddings, and rape is employed in "Benito Cereno" in regard to Delano and his relationship with the San Dominick and Benito Cereno. For example, the "saved" Delano's directive to his crew to "take her," referring to the San Dominick, connotes a rape. Further, his relationship with Benito Cereno resembles a frustrating courtship, and their "long, mild voyage to Lima" is depicted as a honeymoon ("BC," pp. 59, 73). Among other things, the symbolically female gender of the world-Soul is set forth with this symbolism.

The idea that Delano's quest object is a dream or thought is conveyed quite directly in the narrative. One notable passage portrays it as if it were a thought that wells up from the depths of the mind and

presents it as a revelation of Truth, thereby identifying the San Dominick with various symbolic terms for the female aspect of the deity and alluding to gnostic cosmological and soteriological myths and doctrines. After coming aboard the ship, Delano's "mind" is altered by the vision of "the living spectacle" which was hidden from his view as he traveled to it. "The effect" of the sudden "disclosure" of the previously unseen life on the ship is one "of enchantment. The ship seems unreal; these strange costumes, gestures, and faces, but a shadowy tableau just emerged from the deep" ("BC," p. 5).

Combining this symbolism with that which links the vessel to a fallen woman and portrays it as a suffering soul which contains the hidden treasure of a jewel in its depths, one perceives that the San Dominick is identified as the fallen Thought or dream of the Unknown God. In the aforementioned quotation, it is described as the Life that emanates from the Depth. Further, other gnostic symbolic terms for the female aspect of the deity, such as Church, Truth, and Nature, are attached to this "treasure-ship[s]" ("BC," p. 3).

Besides sexual symbolism and references to the Narcissus-reflection theme whereby the San Dominick is described as the female aspect of the divine dyad and the fallen world-Soul, "Benito Cereno" resembles "Bartleby" in that the devices of atmosphere, plot, and setting are used to portray life as a dream-nightmare. Here, however, no comic overtones are expressed. The depiction of Delano wandering about the ship as if it were a labyrinth, during which time he is in a state of inner turmoil and undergoes extreme shifts in mood and opinion, and the atmosphere in the narrative of leashed malevolence combined with intense suffering describe the fallen state of the Spirit as a nightmare and show Delano

acting out the role of the Soul who has forgotten its inner self (Self) and suffers in the Ignorance in which it is entrapped. The rescued Delano's decision to attack and capture the San Dominick records the idea that the "ignorant" Soul causes as well as undergoes suffering.

In connection with the depiction of life in the fallen world as a nightmare, which is so notable a feature of "Benito Cereno," and the subject of Melville's familiarity with the gnostic mythos of the ancient world, one possible source for this story deserves comment. This source may be a well-known passage from the Valentinian school of thought which, according to Pagels, is called by modern scholars the "nightmare parable." Referring to the inner turmoil of those who are unenlightened and the consequences of their lack of self (Self)-knowledge, the passage reads:

They lived as if they were sunk in sleep and found themselves in disturbing dreams. Either (there is) a place to which they are fleeing, or, without strength, they come from having chased after others, or they are involved in striking blows, or they are receiving blows themselves, or they have fallen from high places, or they take off into the air though they do not even have wings. Again, sometimes (it is as) if people were murdering them, though there is no one even pursuing them, or they themselves are killing their neighbors, for they have been stained with their blood.

The point of this parable, says Pagels, is that "self-ignorance is . . . a form of self-destruction."¹³

The "nightmare parable" and "Benito Cereno" correspond in numerous general and specific respects. Like the unenlightened souls who are depicted in the Valentinian passage, Delano's encounter with the San Dominick has the quality of "disturbing dreams" in which one thinks that one is going to be murdered. After being "accidentally jostled" by the blacks as he and they eagerly await the arrival of additional supplies of food and water from the Bachelor's Delight, Delano, one recalls,

orders them out of his way. Making a "half-mirthful, half-menacing gesture," he suddenly realizes that he risks being "massacred" on the spot ("BC," p. 36).

Besides this point of correspondence between the Valentinian "nightmare parable" and "Benito Cereno," others exist. For example, not only does Delano occasionally feel that his life is in danger, but also with the attack on the San Dominick, Delano does become "stained with . . . [the] blood" of his "neighbors." Further, the "nightmare parable" may be the source of inspiration in "Benito Cereno" for its episodes and details in which sudden outbreaks of violence occur and several of the Spaniards "pop" out at Delano from "high places" or abruptly appear as if from "air."

Because of the broad and specific correspondances which are easily perceived to exist between the Valentinian passage and "Benito Cereno," the theory that the "nightmare parable" is a source of inspiration for "Benito Cereno" seems credible. However, the point on which to focus at present is that with references to Delano's quest object as a world which is assigned a female gender, described as a dream-nightmare, identified with symbolic terms and images, such as Depth, Silence, Church, Nature, Life, Truth, a harlot, gold, and hidden treasure, Melville characterizes it as the fallen Thought of the Unknown God--the impaired image of man (Man).

The description below of the world of the Fidele as a dream occurs in the chapter which follows the Confidence-Man's encounter with the old Miser. It reads:

The sky slides into blue, the bluffs into bloom; the rapid Mississippi expands; runs sparkling and gurgling, all over in eddies; one magnified wake of a seventy-four. The sun comes out, a golden huzzar, from his tent, flashing his helm on the

world. All things, warmed in the landscape, leap. Speeds the daedal boat as a dream. (CM, pp. 64-65)

The sexual and military symbolism in this passage, which directly refers to this vessel of the Spirit as a "dream," as well as the references in it to expansion and magnification, which reveal its indebtedness to gnostic myths of creation, leave little doubt that Melville intends for his readers to recognize that the Fidele represents the fallen Thought of the Unknown God. Despite the stress on the maleness of the world in this passage, the references in the story to the gnostic image patterns which relate to a union of opposites, such as the hidden dynamo, the Soul's "captivity" in Darkness, the "zigzag," and the "sacred marriage," portray the world-Soul as an androgynous but symbolically female entity.

Allusions to the Confidence-Man, for example, as a bridegroom, help direct readers to perceive not only his symbolic and mythical identity but also that of his quest object. One such notable reference is found in Chapter 15, "An Old Miser, Upon Suitable Representations, Is Prevailed Upon to Venture an Investment." Here, the Confidence-Man is described as "the stranger" who, descending into "purgatory," i.e. the emigrant's quarters on the steamboat, is "like Orpheus in his gay descent to Tartarus." Further, like the bridegroom Orpheus in search of his bride, the Confidence-Man is identified with harmony via music and song. The Confidence-Man "hums to himself" as he goes down into Darkness after the old Miser's "gold" (C-M, p. 61).

Identifying the world-dream with hell, death, and a bride and the Confidence-Man with harmony, a bridegroom, and the sacrifice for gnosis, one sees in metaphors such as this evidence why the critics who maintain that the Confidence-Man represents the Christian concept of the devil

are wrong, and one is given good cause to believe that the protagonist's quest object symbolizes the world-Soul, who, in relation to the gnostic savior, is a symbolically female entity.

Besides this passage, there is an extended play on the idea of a "sacred marriage" in the narrative in the sense that the Confidence-Man's woos the passengers to convert to his vision of life and in the lengthy episode which records the dialectical interplay of the would-be lovers Francis Goodman, the potential redeemer in his aspect of the cosmopolitan, and Charlie Noble, the world-Soul in her guise as the cosmopolitan. Further, toward the conclusion of the story when the Confidence-Man leaves the barber shop and makes his way to "the gentlemen's cabin" and "death" in the lower "Nature," the protagonist, "redolent" with perfume, is described as a "bridegroom tripping to the bridal chamber" (C-M, p. 207). With these references to the protagonist as the bridegroom, the Confidence-Man is shown to be performing a soteriological mission during his descent into the depths of the world-Soul, and the world of the Fidele, his bride, is accorded a female gender.

In regard to appreciating the way in which Melville characterizes the Fidele as the fallen Thought of God which, nonetheless, possesses the truth of gnosis in her depths and draws his symbolism relating to charity, truth, gold, jewels, Christianity, and wisdom together, one other point about this novel needs to be set forth at this time. It is that these complexes of symbols do come together at the conclusion of the story in one symbol which mandates a gnostic reading. This symbol is the Bible which is connected with the "marble, snow-white and round . . . slab of a centre-table" in the gentlemen's cabin. To be more specific, it is the "apocrypha" in the Bible (C-M, p. 208). The

white-haired old man whom the Confidence-Man finds reading the Bible in the gentlemen's cabin describes its uncanonical part in terms of a kind of "black and white" truth that is non-dogmatic in nature. Moreover, as the following quoted passage indicates, he is portrayed as defining the apocrypha as the centermost point or section between two extremes.

Explaining to the Confidence-Man that one is not to accept this part of the Bible as the absolute truth, he says to him:

'Look,' turning the leaves forward and back, till all of the Old Testament lay flat on one side, and all of the New Testament flat on the other, while in his fingers he supported vertically the portion between, 'look, sir, all this to the right is certain truth, and all this to the left is certain truth, but all I hold in my hand here is apocrypha The word itself implies something of uncertain credit.' (C-M, p. 209)

Subsequent to this passage, the apocrypha is identified by the Confidence-Man with an ugly "wisdom" that teaches people to be their own highest authority, trusting no one absolutely. Reading from the "'Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach,'" the Confidence Man finds one passage which particularly upsets him:

This son of Sirach even says--I saw it but just now: 'Take heed of thy friends;' not, observe, thy seeming friends, thy hypocritical friends, thy false friends, but thy friends, thy real friends--that is to say, not the truest friend in the world is to be implicitly trusted. Can Rochefoucault equal that? I should not wonder if his view of human nature, like Machiavelli's, was taken from this Son of Sirach. And to call it wisdom--the wisdom of the Son of Sirach! Wisdom, indeed! What an ugly thing wisdom must be! Give me the folly that dimples the cheek, say I, rather than the wisdom that curdles the blood. But no, no; it ain't wisdom; it's apocrypha, as you say, sir. For how can that be trustworthy that teaches distrust?' (C-M, p. 209)

Identified with the center space between "polar opposites," the black "point" in a white circle, a non-dogmatic truth that teaches one to trust oneself, and a gnostic Jesus' words of wisdom, the imagery connected with the apocrypha in this episode defines it as the gold that

exists in the fallen world-Soul. The specification that the apocrypha is found in the center of the Bible recalls Tommo's assertion that "Truth, who loves to be centrally located, is . . . found between the two extremes" (T, p. 205). The counsel provided by the illuminated Son of Sirach in The Confidence-Man illustrates the gnostic spiritual master Silvanus' advice: "Have a great number of friends, but not counselors But if you do acquire [a friend], do not entrust yourself to him. Entrust yourself to God alone as father and as friend." The ideal referred to in this passage, says Pagels, is that of the self-integrated "one" who strives to mirror the highest god-head, which is imaged as a dynamic balance of opposites in a context of indeterminacy.¹⁴

The idea that the wisdom of gnosis concerns self (Self)-knowledge also is revealed in the episode which portrays a Christian gnostic text as the gold that is disregarded in the depths of the world-Soul. In the apocryphal Wisdom of Jesus, the Confidence-Man finds sayings that involve not believing the "'enemy . . . [who] speaketh sweetly with his lips'" and uses people "'for his profit.'" Following these warnings, one of the unsleeping sleepers in a berth in the cabin, whom the Confidence-Man describes as a "strange sort of dreamy man," comments, "Who's that describing the confidence-man?" (C-M, p. 208).

Put most simply, this detail in the episode indicates that the "gold" of gnostic wisdom teaches self (Self)-knowledge. In the apocrypha both the naive old man and his twin and opposite, the Confidence-Man find the truth about the "ignorance" that holds them captive. The sayings that warn them against those who "speaketh sweetly" and use people for their own "profit" refer to their own denial of the reality

of evil. It is this denial of evil which fosters the growth of a ruthless individualism and undermines spiritual maturity. Following a pattern established first in the narrative in the episode in which the deaf mute rejects the verses from I Corinthians 13 which would have great significance to the gnostic, here the cosmopolitan decides that the apocrypha must be "rejected" (C-M, p. 209). It is after this that "the solar-lamp" of Christianity which illuminates the white slab of a marble table "begins to burn dimly" and then goes out (C-M, p. 216).

One of the references here is to the idea that rejecting the apocrypha leads to the "death" of Soul and Christianity in that it signifies the forgetting of the "higher," gnostic truth about the integrated spiritual self (Self). But since two negatives make a positive in gnostic symbolism, one infers that the death of the potential redeemer and his soul-mate, which is implied to follow his scene, signifies the transformation of consciousness whereby a "New Age" arrives. More evidence sustaining this view is set forth later.

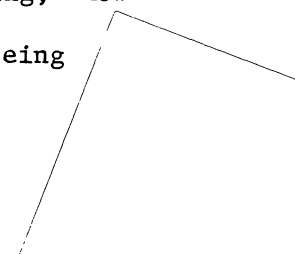
Given the emphasis on the virility of the "Handsome Sailor," as one might guess, the world of the Bellipotent also is characterized as the androgynous but female consort of the androgynous but male potential gnostic redeemer. Like the other stories under consideration, besides identifying the quest object with the jewel of Wisdom, a pattern of references not to the depiction but to the idea of a "sacred marriage" marks the account of the protagonist's assimilation into the lower "Nature."

For example, although Billy Budd is compared to the "rustic beauty transplanted from the provinces and brought into competition with the highborn dames of court," the revelation that Claggart's desire to

destroy Billy Budd involves his "soft yearning" to love him, which is out of the question because of "fate and ban," the identification of the "Handsome Sailor" with a bull, and the description of the central character's union with the lower "Nature" (f.) in death as an act of "consumation" provide evidence that the quest object of the protagonist, despite its masculine character, metaphorically speaking, is female in gender ("BB," pp. 44, 88, 123). The allusions in the narrative to Billy Budd as a girl (and a "lost pearl") function to define him as the potential gnostic redeemer who re-enacts the drama of the Soul (f.), and the identification of the world-Soul with "highborn dames of court" relates it to the metaphor of the impaired Life as a harlot or syren.

Organically related to the sexual symbolism, details of the Narcissus-reflection theme of gnosticism and that of sacrifice are employed to help specify that the protagonist's quest object symbolizes the fallen Thought of the Unknown God. The use of the symbolic terms sleep, dream, and phenomenon in the narrative are examples of this claim. Like other gnostic symbols, the words sleep and dream may refer to the condition of "ignorance" or "knowledge," depending on the context in which they are used. But regardless of the condition of the Spirit which is intended, they refer to the gnostic concept of reality as a psycho-spiritual construct.

Some direct references to the gnostic theme of reality as a dream occur in the ballad, "Billy in the Darbies." About to be hung, the rose-pearl Billy is portrayed as saying, "It is dreaming that I am." Then, after his death, as Billy is imaged to be sinking "fathoms down, fathoms down" into the depths of the sea, he is depicted as saying, "How I'll dream fast asleep" ("BB," p. 132). Here one of the ideas being



conveyed is that if one "sleeps" in life, one experiences the "death" of the higher, luminous self. Thus with this symbolism, life is described as a dream-nightmare, and it is referred to as the fallen Thought or dream of the Unknown God.

The word phenomenon, which is heavily emphasized in "Billy Budd," is used in a variety of senses, but it, too, connotes the psycho-spiritual nature of reality and plays a part in defining Billy Budd's quest object as the world-illusion which is the manifestation of God. The term phenomena is used in connection with the mysterious fact that Billy Budd's body does not react to a death by hanging in the ways that all other hanged men's bodies do. Here it particularly signifies the gnostic idea that the luminous spiritual self (Self) transcends and has power over the forms in which it is manifest. The idea that the Spirit transcends suffering in connection with the doctrine of the incarnation of the principle of illumination is found in Christian gnostic forms of thought, such as is represented by "Billy Budd," as one aspect of the interpretation of the Crucifixion.

Considering the symbolism pertaining to the idea that Billy Budd's death involves an act of atonement with Vere as well as that which specifies that his sacrifice is to reveal, effect, and attain gnosis, one perceives that in "Billy Budd" Melville portrays the Valentinian concept of the Crucifixion. As readers may recall, the Valentinian school of gnosticism held that the Crucifixion and the gnostic savior are multivalenced symbols. Weighing the implications of Billy Budd's crucifixion with the references in the narrative to the psycho-spiritual nature of reality, such as are conveyed by the the word phenomena, one realizes that his death reinforces the other aspects of the symbolism

which assert the unity and divinity of all aspects of reality but specify as well that life is the fallen Thought of God.

Designating the quest object(s) of *Bartleby*, *Delano*, the Confidence-Man, and *Billy Budd* as a female dream or thought which contains a jewel or spark, Melville continues to treat this symbolic and mythical entity in essentially the same way that the quest objects of *Tommo*, *Taji*, and *Ishmael* are treated. Evidence of the degree to which this claim holds true is apparent in the works. For example, like their prototypes in Melville's fiction, these entities are identified with the same complex of terms, concepts, and images, such as the Void, the shadow, fog, appetite, wrath, war, sleep, prisons, dualism, hierarchy, harlots, envy, and pride, and so on, which, along with islands, women, and vessels, operate in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick to define the condition of self (Self)-division.

In "*Bartleby*," for example, the self-divided world-prison is identified as the Void by means of *Bartleby's* perception that it is a "sheer vacantness" ("B," p. 486). The world-Soul as represented by the Fidele, the San Dominick, and the Bellipotent are characterized as a state of war or associated both with a rigid, mechanized order and chaos or anarchy. As readers may remember, the Bellipotent is actually portrayed as a man-of-war, and the Fidele and San Dominick are metaphorically described as such. The identification of these entities with the term white-washed, which is found in connection with the Fidele and the San Dominick, relates to the gnostic symbolic term for the fallen world, the "dark light." Derived from the Hermetic Corpus, this term is used to describe that vessel of the Spirit and "island" in the sea, *Moby Dick* (M-D, p. 30). Evidence of the consistency in detail with which Melville

characterizes all of the quest objects in his major fiction is found as one reads in The Confidence-Man that the vessel of the Spirit, the Fidele, resembles "some white-washed fort on a floating isle" (C-M, p. 5).

In "Billy Budd" the world-Soul is referred to by the symbolic term the Shadow of the Void, and the idea that the fallen Spirit is marked by appetite is given a particularly forceful expression. One allusion to the impaired god-head as the Shadow of the Void is found in the episode in the story which visualizes the magnificent figure of the "Handsome Sailor," represented by the "African," as standing near the Liverpool waterfront "under the shadow of the dingy street-wall of Prince's Dock" ("BB," p. 43). Moreover, chains and prisons are emphasized in this story. "Benito Cereno" relies heavily, too, on a symbolism of shadows, smoke, appetite, fog, and prisons to describe the unredeemed state of Being as the gnostic concept of Ignorance.

Judging Melville's major fiction as a whole in terms of these images, one realizes that in the course of creating them Melville's sense of the brutal aspect of reality deepened. However, the consistency of his vision is also revealed via this complex of terms and images. For example, given Melville's reference to goldfish in Typee and Moby-Dick in connection with the luminous self (Self) in the depths of the cannibalistic world of Typee and the beastly Leviathan, it is interesting to note that when Billy Budd is impressed into service on the Bellipotent, he is likened to a "goldfinch . . . [being] popped into a cage" ("BB," p. 45). In the last work as in the first novel, the symbolism of gold in conjunction with the motif of cannibalism pertains to the moral vision of life. But the more emphatic point, i.e. highest

or most inward truth, implied by this symbolism is that all aspects of reality are essentially one divine, ineffable unity: all must be affirmed as God.

The other device which Melville employs throughout his most significant fiction to portray the quest object as the fallen Thought of God and to specify the gnostic philosophical implications of the myths, themes, and symbols in them is that of identifying both his protagonist and the quest object of the central character as the Alien Light ($A=B$) but then treating them as well as polar opposites ($A\neq B$). Melville takes some liberties with but basically continues to differentiate these two entities from one another by relating the quest object, among other things, to the despotic Orient, exoteric Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular, paganism, myth and magic, and "inferior" concepts of sacrifice. Further, the protagonist at the deepest level of the symbolism remains more emphatically linked than the quest object to the West, Protestant Christianity, rationalism, utopianism, liberalism, and revolutionism.

"Bartleby" provides a case in point. Bartleby and the lawyer are both characterized as the impaired Alien Man. Being a bachelor without friends, the lawyer, like Bartleby, is portrayed as a "solitary one." At root, it is on the basis of his shared identity with Bartleby as the Alien Man that he relates to the scrivener at all. Thus, while no true "sacred marriage" occurs between these polar opposites, each is shown to represent the "stranger," and the symbolism conveys the doctrine that identity (Unity) transcends duality as well as the soteriological and eschatological tenets of gnosticism.

Besides being depicted as mirror images, however, these characters

also are portrayed as polar opposites. The quietly subversive Bartleby, for example, is identified with meditation and the "royal" doctrine of the "sovereign spirit." This plus the designation that Bartleby is from Washington, i.e. "from" George Washington; his rejection of the status quo; and the wedding symbolism connected with him link him to esoteric Protestant Christianity (Washington was a Freemason) and to the various revolutionary movements in Western history which are associated with the gnostic impulse and the ideals of freedom, individualism, and wholeness.

The lawyer, on the other hand, is identified with an "Eastern" disregard for these ideals and with Catholic Christianity. One detail in the narrative which illustrates this claim involves the lawyer's reaction to Turkey's act of once "clapping" a ginger-cake as a seal on a legal paper. The lawyer "came within an ace of dismissing him then. But he mollified . . . [the lawyer] by making an Oriental bow," apologizing, and promising to pay for the stationery ("B," p. 474).

Further, the lawyer is vaguely related to Catholic Christianity in that he represents a hierarchical power structure that requires its members to perform "devotions," likes them to be "reverential," and elevates the celibate, such as Bartleby, into its highest offices, but is tolerant of the sins of the flesh (here one thinks of the red-faced Turkey's love of drink) ("B," pp. 470, 469, 474-75). And whereas the lawyer is identified with the "heart" side of the personality via his "gold," his capacity for compassion, his sentimental nature, and his tendency to fly "into sudden spasmodic passions," Bartleby, with his cool aloofness and his absolutism, is linked to the "head" and a narrow rationalism ("B," p. 454).

Melville's habit of identifying not only the protagonist but also

the quest object of this figure with the gnostic symbolic term the Alien Life or its variants, such as the "stranger" or the "solitary one" continues to apply to the world of the San Dominick, the Fidele, and The Bellipotent. In "Benito Cereno," for example, the vessel of the Spirit, the San Dominick, is likened to "a strange house with strange inmates in a strange land" ("BC," p. 5). The most succinct description of the Confidence-Man's quest object as "the stranger" occurs in the second chapter of the novel, "Showing That Many Men Have Many Minds." Here one reads:

Though her voyage of twelve hundred miles extends from apple to orange, from clime to clime, yet, like any small ferry-boat, to right and left, at every landing, the huge Fidele still receives additional passengers in exchange for those that disembark; so that, 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 water, but never with the same strange particles in every part. (C-M, p. 5)

It is especially due to the emphasis on the gnostic symbolic term "the stranger" in this passage that one knows that the quest object of the Confidence-Man, like the Confidence-Man himself, represents the Alien Man of gnostic speculation: opposites are identical (A=B).

The world of the Bellipotent, like that represented by the lawyer, the San Dominick, and the Fidele, is identified as the Alien Light. Besides the old Dansker, Claggart and Vere are portrayed with it in mind. As readers learn, Claggart's "aspect and manner" set him apart from the crew. His "complexion, singularly contrasting with the red or deeply bronzed visages of the sailors, and in part the result of his official seclusion from the sunlight," and the evidence in his speech that he is not an "Englishman . . . by birth" but of some unknown, foreign origin are some of the details of his characterization that identify him

as the Alien Light ("BB," pp. 64-65). Moreover, the word alien is applied to him. During the act of accusing Billy Budd of plotting mutiny, Claggart's eyes undergo a transformation. They begin to resemble "the alien eyes of certain uncatalogued creatures of the deep" ("BB," p. 98).

Like Billy Budd and Claggart, Vere, too, is described as the Alien Light. Vere, readers recall, is identified as one who likes solitude, and he is a bachelor. Thus the gnostic metaphor of the "solitary one" comes to mind in connection with him. He and Claggart are portrayed as the impaired Alien Light in similar senses. For example, Vere is linked to the idea of foreignness. In his case, readers are told that his ancestors are German. Neither Claggart nor he is liked by his associates, which fact contributes to their depictions as the "solitary one." And both Claggart and Vere are described as having above-average intelligence.

Further, the word alien is used to characterize him as well as Claggart. Referring to Vere's pedantry, which problem of communication constitutes another point of identity between him, Claggart, and Billy Budd, the omniscient, intrusive narrator reveals that this aspect of Vere's behavior especially makes him an "alien" to his associates ("BB," p. 63). By means such as these, Vere, whose nickname, Starry, also links him with light, is especially paralleled with one of his symbolic sons, Claggart. Nonetheless, while this technique corroborates the other symbolic means by which Melville identifies the world of the Bellipotent as the impaired Alien Light, his depiction of the luminous "jewel" Billy Budd as "one of those aliens" leaves no doubt that the three are essentially One ("BB," pp. 130, 46).

Details of the complex of features which are used in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick to distinguish the symbol of the fallen world-Soul from the potential gnostic redeemer are applied not only to the world of the lawyer but also to that of the San Dominick, the Fidele, and the Bellipotent. By making the subject of country of origin and religion an issue in "Benito Cereno," Melville emphasizes that the Westerner Delano is intended to be a symbol of white Protestant America, hence revolutionary ideals, utopia, and rationalism. Identifying the Confidence-Man with a Pauline epistle, the desire to transform the world into the heaven of a universal Christian brotherhood, and an insistence on the negative nature of evil and linking Billy Budd with the Rights-of-Man, the Athee, and an undeveloped perception of reality have the same effect.

As is the case with the quest object(s) of Tommo, Taji, Ishmael, and Bartleby, the worlds of the San Dominick, the Fidele, and the Bellipotent are identified with darkness, exoteric Christianity, paganism, barbarity, the East, myth and magic, and, on occasion, Catholicism. The pagan-Catholic vessel with cannibals on board, the San Dominick, is one case in point. The Fidele, too, manifests these features. It is a world marked by "a Tartar-like picturesqueness" and a "pagan abandonment and assurance," yet it is a Christian vessel of the Spirit, as its name, which means faithful, implies. Likened to "some Constantinople arcade or bazaar" and one of the "imperial junks" of China, the Fidele is linked to the barbaric East (C-M, pp. 6, 3, 5).

The Bellipotent, too, exhibits these same set of features in its characterization. It, too, is a Christian ship. However, its captain, who resembles a "true monk" in his dedication to his duty, claims that one's allegiance in this world belongs to "the king" rather than God.

This is one telling reason why his ship resembles "the capitol founded by Peter the Barbarian." Consequently, despite its apparent rationalism, this vessel of the Spirit is actually quite "irrational." Those like Billy Budd, whose "bonfire in his heart made luminous the rose-tan in his cheek," are more "rational" ("BB," pp. 102, 104, 103, 75, 77).

Melville's characterization of Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy Budd as the potential gnostic redeemer, and his portrayal of their quest object(s) as the fallen Thought of the Unknown God constitute major points of correspondence between his treatment of the "experienced landscape" in Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick and "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence Man, and "Billy Budd." Like Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael, Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy Budd are depicted as Narcissus-like saviors and reformers who risk (or give) their lives to "know" the fallen world-Soul. Further, just as is true of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael, names, such as the Alien Man, the "solitary one," and the "stranger," and images relating to harmony, the unknown, words, identity, origin, seeds, weddings, and hunting are part of these protagonists' characterization. By means of ascribing the terms and images which are features of the archetypal figure of the gnostic redeemer to the protagonists of "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd," Melville indicates that they represent the same symbolic and mythical entity as the central characters of Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick.

The worlds represented by the lawyer, the San Dominick, the Fidele, and the Bellipotent resemble the quest object(s) of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael in that, like the words of Typee, Mardi, and the White Whale, they are portrayed as a female-like dream or thought which is linked

with a symbolism of gold, buried treasure, and jewels. Moreover, gnostic terms and images, such as the Alien Life, the "stranger," harlots, war, darkness, and division, are related to them, and they are depicted as vessels or containers of the Spirit. Further, Melville associates these quest objects with the particular set of features (exoteric Christianity, paganism, the East, despotism, and "inferior" concepts of sacrifice), which he employs in his earlier works to differentiate by degree his protagonist from the quest object of this character. These parallels between the two groups of fiction under consideration in regard to the treatment of the protagonist and his quest object provide readers with proof that the old mythos of the potential Illuminator is the basic source of the "experienced landscape" not only in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick but also in "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd."

Given the evidence that supports this claim, if not in a positive sense than a negative one, the reader infers that any of the more important points made about the indebtedness of Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick to the gnostic myth of the potential redeemer could be demonstrated to apply to "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd." The preceding discussion does indicate that, like Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael, Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy Budd are recorded as re-enacting the fall of the Soul into Ignorance. Further, in showing that the protagonists of these later works and their quest objects represent the potential Illuminator and his estranged self (Self), some of the evidence that the same gnostic image patterns which one finds in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick, such as inverted mirror images, the "burial" of the Soul in Darkness, the "sacred marriage," the Serpent,

the hidden dynamo, and the "zigzag," also inform and structure "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and Moby-Dick, is touched on.

With references to both Charlie Noble and Francis Goodman as serpents, and the fountain of the Spirit, the Fidele, portrayed as crossing from "right and left," i.e. "zigzagging," as it makes its way "down" from St. Louis to New Orleans; Bartleby described as affecting the lawyer like "lightning"; Billy Budd's "electric" words "God Bless Captain Vere" likened to lightning as well; the principle of inversion and reversal as a cosmological metaphor alluded in these works, such as in the naval chronicle's description of the impressed Englishman Billy Budd as an "assassin . . . [who] was no Englishman, but one of those aliens admitted into the service due to the emergencies of war"; and Benito Cereno's revelation to Delano that he, Benito Cereno, had saved his savior, one feels especially secure in arriving at this conclusion (C-M, pp. 156, 113; "B," p. 496; "BB," pp. 125, 130; "BC," p. 73).

Besides these broad parallels between the "experienced landscape" in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick and that recorded in "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd," another even more general one exists. It is that by means of their working out of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer, the later works resemble their predecessors in that they, too, convey the main tenets of gnosticism and emphasize the theme of the self (Self)-salvation of the deity. The references in these later works to the fallen world-Soul as an impaired state of Being which, nonetheless, contains the jewel of gnosis in its depths, and the identification of the protagonist as the Alien Life who seeks to "know" his quest object and deliberately or inadvertantly revolutionizes it

especially indicate that "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" express the same gnostic doctrines as are conveyed by the themes and symbols in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick.

The Main Points of Difference Between the
"Experienced Landscape" in Typee, Mardi,
and Moby-Dick and That Depicted in
"Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The
Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd"

The parallels which are listed above constitute the bases on which one perceives the fundamental similarity of the "experienced landscape" in Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd." As the most important difference between these works in regard to their depiction of the myth of the potential gnostic Illuminator is set forth at the onset of this discussion, it only remains to clarify this difference and note some of the subordinate changes in "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" which the most important alteration mandates.

One point of difference between Melville's depiction of the myth of the potential redeemer in his major fiction is that 1) whereas the "experienced landscape" in Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick records the entire drama of the potential gnostic savior's spiritual history, this does not hold true for "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," and "Billy Budd," and it only applies in a qualified way in The Confidence-Man. In contrast to the plots of Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick, the sequence of events which concerns the protagonist's encounter with the world-Soul in "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," and "Billy Budd" essentially portrays only

the first half of the spiritual history of the potential Illuminator.

This is to say, the episodes which signify the end of the accounts in these narratives of the protagonist's descent into the world indicate that to some degree the protagonist's encounter with the world-Soul serves to enlighten it; it indicates that he achieves a degree of or makes progress toward enlightenment; and to some extent it conveys a promise of salvation or alludes to reincarnation and rebirth. But, stated absolutely, these episodes depict Bartleby, Delano, and Billy Budd as saviors in need of salvation. In The Confidence-Man, one is given to know that the potential redeemer and his consort unite in "death," thereby enacting a "sacred marriage" with the result that a "new age" is born. Nonetheless, the symbolism indicates that the new gnostic redeemer will re-enact the drama of the fall. Thus there is a sense in which The Confidence-Man, too, portrays the potential redeemer as continuing to exist as the savior in need of salvation, for the symbolism indicates the nature of his future quest.

One of the means by which Melville conveys the promise of salvation and a gnostic concept of reincarnation in the depiction of Bartleby's death concerns his use of the term "sleeping" as a metaphor for death ("B," p. 511). But numerous details in the imagery associated with this event combine to express these views. Further, the depiction of the image pattern of the "zigzag" in this story helps cause the term sleep to convey special gnostic metaphysical and soteriological implications. The "zigzag" symbolism is highlighted by the lawyer's indication that he plays his twin and opposite scribes Nippers and Turkey off one another ("B," p. 473). Used on a larger scale, this image pattern is given a qualifiedly ironic portrayal in relation to the idea expressed in the

story and by it that the fallen Soul saves the savior even as partly enlightened gnostic redeemer serves to enlighten the fallen Soul. Because this imagery establishes the concept of a dialectical interplay of opposites as a structural and thematic metaphor, when Bartleby is imaged as a "seed," described as "sleeping" in death, and depicted as laying in a fetal position, one infers that the "sleeping" Bartleby is in a condition of Being from which he periodically will awaken ("B," p. 511).

The reference to Bartleby as the bride awaiting her mystical marriage with the Unknown God, and the allusions to alienness, origin, and unknown parents or home operate with the metaphor of sleep to define death as a state in which one remains "alive" and potent. This complex of symbols further suggests the gnostic doctrine of reincarnation and conveys a promise of salvation.

Other details in the symbolism involved with the portrayal of Bartleby's death reinforce these ideas. One in particular, draws attention to the redemptive nature of Bartleby's assimilation into the depths of the lower "Nature." It is that the dead Bartleby in the courtyard of the Tombs is said to resemble a "seed" which by "some strange magic," metaphorically speaking, penetrates "through the clefts" of the pyramid-like Tombs ("B," p. 511). The allusion here is to the idea, to quote Jonas, that the "transmundane penetrates the enclosure of the world and makes itself heard therein as a call." A "breach" must be made by "the godhead," says Jonas, to bring the Light into Darkness and to allow enlightened souls to return to the Upper World after death. "By the mere fact of his descent the Messenger prepares the way for the ascending souls."¹⁵

Relating to Bartleby's function as "letter" or a "call" from trans-mundane deity to its distorted and estranged image, the metaphor of Bartleby passing from the Unknown into the power system of the cosmos like a "seed" mysteriously passes through cracks in a pyramid to grow there within it conveys the gnostic message of salvation. "The simple naming" of the symbolism which expresses "the call," Jonas notes, "implicitly includes the whole speculate framework" of the way of "knowledge."¹⁶ Thus readers perceive the elliptical ways in which the doctrines of gnosticism are conveyed in the text.

As the terms and images which are employed in connection with recording Bartleby's death imply, Bartleby in a qualified way does make some progress toward fulfilling his soteriological mission during his assimilation into the world. Certainly this symbolism indicates that Melville's major fiction contains polemical elements regarding Christian gnostic beliefs about salvation. Nonetheless, the implication of the action pattern, which is a working out of the idea that the way "down" is the way "out," and details, such as the specification that when the lawyer discovers that he is dead, Bartleby's eyes are "open" but "dim," indicate that this Alien Man does not represent a fully authoritative Illuminator at the conclusion of the account of his spiritual history.

Melville's depiction of Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy Budd as the gnostic savior who himself is in need of salvation from Ignorance at the conclusion of the account of his assimilation into or encounter with the world-Soul do differ. The chief difference is that Delano is the only one of these protagonists who is not portrayed as actually dying, and he is not clearly imaged as becoming a hidden dynamo. Rather, after Delano is portrayed as shocked by the idea that

Benito Cereno, to quote Delano, actually "saved [his] life, . . . more than [he saved Benito Cereno's]; saved it, too, against [his] knowledge and will," and then is even "more astonished and pained" by Benito Cereno's revelation that he intends to die, "silence" ensues concerning Delano, and he is not mentioned again in the story.

Delano's shocked reaction to Benito Cereno's revelations to him suggest that a dent is made in the armor of his immature world view. During this encounter between Delano and Benito Cereno on their "honeymoon" trip to Lima, however, they do not relate to one another on the basis of their shared identity as two forms of the Alien Light. In fact, just as is the case with Delano's and Benito Cereno's reaction to Babo, they fail to relate to one another on this basis: each perceives the other's view of reality to be utterly alien to him, and neither relates to the Alien Man Babo. This withdrawal indicates that a mutual failure to enlighten one another occurs. Thus one perceives that at the conclusion of the story of his effort to redeem the Alien Man, the potential redeemer Delano is in the condition of the self-divided, "ignorant" Soul whom he is sent to redeem. Nonetheless, while "Benito Cereno" represents Melville's most ironic and bitter depiction of the myth of the potential redeemer, inherent in the symbolism of the Alien Man is the gnostic promise of salvation to those who "hear" the "call," and some degree of progress toward destroying "ignorance" is implied to occur.

This implication is conveyed in the portion of the narrative that provides an account of Babo's and Benito Cereno's fate. Here it is revealed that the members of the Spanish tribunal who record the deposition are so loath to believe that blacks not only cannibalized Aranda's

body but also that they have the intelligence and the will to revolt and then carry out an elaborate plan to capture another ship that "the tribunal inclined to the opinion that the deponent [Benito Cereno], not undisturbed in his mind by recent events, raved of some things which could never have happened" ("BC," pp. 61-62). Here the reference to Benito Cereno as "mad" suggests the gnostic symbol of the Serpent in its aspect of the Illuminator. Even though Benito Cereno, lacking a wholeness of vision, is unenlightened, his testimony represents the "serpent's bite" which is suggested to aid in destroying "ignorance." Other aspects of the symbolism, however, such as the motif of a lack of forgiveness and a lack of remorse, stress the weariness and tragedy of the time aspect of the salvation of the fallen man (Man).

The portrayals of the death of the Confidence-Man and Billy Budd are essentially quite similar to Melville's treatment of Bartleby's death, but there are some differences between them as well. As in the case with Bartleby, both the Confidence-Man and Billy Budd are imaged as the "drowned" Man at the conclusion of the account of their descent into the world-Soul. Thus, one is confirmed in the view that they are depicted as saviors in need of salvation. However, both also are treated as hidden dynamos of energy who "in-spirit" the world-Soul. For example, after the wreck of the Fidele is implied to occur, the barber, William Cream, is inspired by the remembrance of the Confidence-Man to tell the story of his extraordinary encounter with him (C-M, p. 204). After his death, Billy Budd, too, who inspires a ballad, lives on in words.

The chief difference between the Confidence-Man and Billy Budd is that the former is implied to attain illumination and to transform into

a new potential gnostic redeemer. The fact that the Confidence-Man does indicate that he "knows" his own identity and that he transforms into the cosmopolitan spirit of the fallen Soul are two features of his characterization with support this claim. Further, the metaphors of rejection and "gathering in" which accompany the experience of illumination are found in this novel, and the Confidence-Man "drowns" with his consort, the old man. The strongest proof of this view, however, is the evidence that he is reborn in the symbol of the "strange boy."

That the Confidence-Man is reborn by means of a "mystical marriage" with his consort is to be known especially by the symbolism connected with the "strange boy," who appears in the gentlemen's cabin before the cosmopolitan and the old man "go down in the dark" together (C-M, p. 216). This "strange boy" is the new potential gnostic redeemer. He is identified with the Confidence-Man by means of his activity of selling "wisdom" and via references to him as a wise fool, a lunatic, and a simple one--terms and images which are applied to the deaf mute. The boy with eyes that "sparkle" like "lustrous sparks of fresh coal," however, is more self-aware and balanced than the Confidence-Man (C-M, pp. 210-13). He is a combination of world-Soul in its aspect of the paganism, sensuality, and self-reliance and the Confidence-Man in regard to his identification with the revolutionism and reform.

The "strange boy" is an inverse mirror image of the Confidence-Man in that he sells a purer form of gnostic vision of reality. He promotes a doctrine which makes salvation an affair of individual psychology. It is based on becoming the "solitary one" of gnostic mythos, and it involves a theory of reincarnation. The threshold symbol which he carries, his statement that he sells "rattles" to "old bachelors," and his

identification as the guide of travelers to the mysteries and to the underworld all contribute to associating him with the figure of Hermes and the legendary author of the Hermetic Corpus. The symbol of the rattle links him with the wise Serpent of gnosis and with the mystery cult of Isis. The rattle is a symbol connected with Isis. But due to his association with the "serpent-like" Son of Sirach, the new potential savior also conveys Christian gnostic connotations. That he is dressed in the clothes of a victim of the Inquisition connects him with heresy.

The Confidence-Man differs from the other works in Melville's major fiction in that it does portray the protagonist as a highly symbolical and mythical redeemer figure and indicates that although this figure attains illumination, he will re-enact the drama of the fall. With references to the world-Soul as a fountain of continuously circulating energy and a protagonist who represents an abstraction of the divine substance as well as the soteriological aspect of the deity, one infers this view. Further, William Cream's story to his friends about his encounter with the Confidence-Man indicates that in the "new age," the potential gnostic redeemer's quest will involve the effort to correct the view man is the only God. The last event in the plot, the story that William Cream tells conveys the impression to his friends that he rather than the Confidence-Man has a greater claim to being considered "quite an original" (C-M, p. 204). The implication of this symbolism is that man is claiming to be the only God.

Because Melville portrays the protagonists of his later works as compared with his earlier ones as more abstract entities who do not achieve a permanently transformed consciousness during their encounter with the world-Soul, subordinate differences exist between the "experi-

enced landscape" of Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick and the later works in Melville's major fiction. For example, whereas Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael are portrayed as enthusiastically accepting the challenge to "know" the All and as unequivocally rejecting the fallen world in which they find themselves prior to their descent into the fallen world which is their quest object, this does not hold true for Bartleby, Delano, or Billy Budd. In contrast to Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael, these protagonists are more or less "placed" in the impaired world which is presented as their quest object, and/or they are not portrayed as indicating that they themselves rejected as deficient the world with which they are identified before their encounters with their quest object. Melville's treatment of these protagonists in this regard is one indication that they will not obtain full illumination during the phase of their spiritual history which is recorded in the narrative.

Another difference between the way in which Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael is depicted sets them apart from Bartleby, Delano, and Billy Budd and acts as a foreshadowing device in respect to the more or less qualifiedly negative or qualifiedly optimistic outcome of these protagonists' effort to obtain the higher consciousness. It concerns the image pattern of emanation. Whereas Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael reject the world with which they are first identified and emanate with a character who represents their consort, this is not true for Bartleby, Delano, or Billy Budd. They enter the world which is their quest object unaccompanied by a consort from the world from which they depart.

The allusion in this detail is to the idea that in the pre-cosmic drama of the fall, the Wisdom of God "conceives" an inferior thought of the deity because, acting out of hubris as well as well as compelled to

seek to "know" the ineffable Absolute, she tries to imitate the highest god-head and to create in singleness rather than with her male aspect. This act leads to her transformation into and entrapment in the lower "Nature." The portrayals of the potential saviors Bartleby, Delano, and Billy Budd as entering the fallen world unattended by characters from the world with which they are originally identified represents an allusion to the guilty or weak Soul who tries to create in singleness. Thus the symbolism of emanation in these narratives does not auger well for these protagonists' effort to redeem and be redeemed by the world to meet with the highest degree of success. Whereas the Confidence-Man enters the world of the Fidele unaccompanied, he, in effect, emanates to a new state of Being with a consort from the world with which he has become identified. Thus, despite the indication that the new Confidence-Man will continue to re-enact the drama of the fall, this is a positive sign for the future. It indicates that the new age will be more balanced and humane.

NOTES

¹ Berthoff supplies the chronology of dates for the publication of Melville's short stories between 1853 and 1856. Further, he lists the magazine in which they were printed and tells whether they were published in installments (p. 138).

² Jonas, p. 288.

³ Jonas, p. 119.

⁴ From Ptolemy's Letter to Flora as quoted and paraphrased by Jonas, p. 192.

⁵ Saurat, p. 88.

⁶ Jonas, p. 53.

⁷ Grant, p. 86.

⁸ See Chapter IV, pp. 174, 183-84; Chapter VI, p. 243.

⁹ Pagels, p. 152.

¹⁰ Campbell, III, 259.

¹¹ Jonas, p. 193.

¹² Jonas, p. 193.

¹³ Pagels, p. 151.

¹⁴ Teachings of Silvanus, as quoted by Pagels, p. 159.

¹⁵ Jonas, pp. 74, 78.

¹⁶ Jonas, p. 81.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A THEORY REGARDING THE MELVILLE STORYTELLER AS THE ILLUMINATOR

In the course of the preceding discussion, a number of points concerning Melville's spiritual idiom and fictional themes are set forth. Calling to mind the gist of this discussion helps readers evaluate the merits of the claims advanced in it and permits speculation about the implications of these claims in regard to future research into the subject of the ways in which and degree to which Melville's major fiction bears witness to his adherence to a Christian gnostic world view and his indebtedness to the gnostic mythos of the ancient world.

After acknowledging the inevitable effect on a work of art that a writer's understanding of reality exerts, noting the chronic argument among Melville scholars about the nature of his world view and the themes of his literature, and dismissing the claim that Melville's thematic concerns are unstable and irresolute, this study sets forth the theory that the real cause of the involuted status of Melville scholarship is the widespread confusion about gnosticism. The controversial nature of the subject of gnosticism is acknowledged, the similarities and differences between neoplatonism and gnosticism are touched on, and the point is made that these two forms of the harmonial religious impulse are the most basic sources of the literary expressions of romanticism.

This information orients readers to the subject of gnosticism and creates the proper climate in which to review the works of the seven critics who with varying degrees of resolve, clarity, and emphasis maintain that consistently or for some period of time Melville expressed the philosophical ideas of gnosticism. Two broad purposes are served in considering the findings of Matthiesson, Thompson, Vargish, Zweig, Senior, Bigelow, and Sachs. One of these concerns providing readers with tangible evidence of the confusion about gnosticism and the unfortunate results of approaching Melville's fiction without a good grasp of this subject. The other involves acknowledging the indebtedness of this work to this group of critics and building onto their findings.

Stated more specifically, these studies have a twofold effect on this discussion. They not only point to the need for a definition of gnosticism which takes advantage of the most recent research, but also they provide the stimulus for and establish the direction of this discussion. In particular, Matthiesson's opinions about the Christian gnostic nature of Melville's philosophy of life and his suggestion that Melville was a student of the oldest gnostic literature are qualified, clarified, and built on. The effort to come to terms with Christian gnosticism begins with a comparison of it with orthodox Christianity.

In answer to the need for a broad yet detailed knowledge of gnosticism as a prerequisite to gaining new insights into Melville's world view and fiction, this discussion sets forth a definition of this expression of the harmonial religious impulse which deals with its nature, history, and implications. Also providing readers with the opportunity to gain a sense of how Melville's gnostic-informed art fits into a broad, historical context, this study spends some time familiarizing

readers with gnosticism. Then, keeping the discussion on an abstract level, a comparison of Melville's beliefs about the personal, social, and cosmic levels of existence with those typical of the higher levels of gnosticism is undertaken.

To lend more weight to the theory regarding the gnostic nature of Melville's spiritual idiom and fictional themes and to acknowledge the role that Melville's most esteemed critics play in shaping this discussion, the weight of the opinions of this second group of scholars, which is comprised of Chase, Thompson (again), Stern, Bowen, Miller, Brodtkorb, Berthoff, and Seeyle, is shown to provide evidence that Melville's beliefs and art reflect his adherence to the higher levels of gnostic religiosity. The strongest proof of this claim, however, lies in Melville's fiction.

Limiting the analysis of Melville's literature to his most significant novels and short stories, this study shows that new insights into the themes of Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" and into Melville's spiritual idiom do result from approaching these works with a good grasp of the myths, doctrines, and symbols of gnosticism in hand. For example, the "experienced landscape" recorded in Melville's major fiction is demonstrated to represent Melville's interpretation of the myth of the potential gnostic redeemer. Proving this point chiefly involves considering the symbolic implications in these stories of the characterization of the protagonist and his quest object and those of the major image patterns in relation to the plot. To be more exact, providing evidence about the gnostic nature of the myth underlying the plots of Melville's most significant fiction entails showing that Melville goes to great lengths to depict

the central characters in these works--Tommo, Taji, Ishmael, Bartleby, Delano, the Confidence-Man, and Billy Budd--as the gnostic savior who must be enlightened before he with full authority can perform his mission of leading the fallen Soul to the recovery of its true, harmonious, balanced nature.

Proof that the quest objects of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael are quite knowingly portrayed as the gnostic symbolic and mythical entity, the impaired Thought of the Unknown God, follows on the discussion of these central characters' metaphysical status. Further, readers are provided with evidence that the gnostic image patterns of the generation of the Monad by twin and opposite energies, inverted mirrors, the Serpent, the "captivity" of the Soul in Darkness, the hidden dynamo, the fall of the "One" into the "Many," the "zigzag," and the "sacred marriage" all operate in these novels. A consideration of the second part of the spiritual biographies of Tommo, Taji, and Ishmael shows the way that several of the image patterns operate in the climax and resolution to record these characters' attainment of the "gold" of gnosis.

Having separated "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" out from Typee, Mardi, and Moby-Dick on the basis of their portrayal of the protagonist as a more abstract figure than Tommo, Taji, or Ishmael and as not attaining a permanently transformed consciousness in course of his encounter with the world, the discussion next proceeds to demonstrate that despite the alteration in the treatment of the protagonist, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd," at the level of the "experienced landscape," are interpretations of myth of the potential Illuminator.

With the analysis of Melville's major works, the essential appro-

priateness of claim regarding the gnostic nature of Melville's world view and themes is strengthened. The view that Melville's understanding of reality did not change much during his literary career also is substantially bolstered in the course of this study. Discussing the "remarkable consistency" of Melville's first six novels, Timmons quite accurately observes that the stability of his thematic concerns is "something critics are fond of mentioning but reluctant to prove."¹ Using a more significant sampling of Melville's works than Timmons does and ones which cover his entire literary career, this study has shown that they are all variations on one mythic monoplots. Besides lending support to and building onto the theory regarding the constancy of Melville's vision, this discussion advances the critical theory about Melville's indebtedness to the oldest strata of gnostic thought and the Christian gnostic nature of his vision.

Certainly one of the implications of the myths and themes of Melville's major works is that Melville was a gnostic scholar and that the gnostic myths, terms, and images of the Graeco-Roman period were his area of specialization. Another clear implication of the themes and symbols of Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd" is that Melville considered himself a Christian gnostic. Because Melville repeatedly interprets and updates the myth of the potential gnostic savior, and he takes special pains to identify his savior figure with gnosticism and the world that this savior figure is to enlighten and be enlightened by with Christianity, despite the risk involved in assuming that the views which are expressed by a writer in his or her fiction are those of the writer, one has no recourse but to conclude that with this symbolism Melville is advocating

the marriage of Christianity and gnosticism which results in the endorsement of Christian gnosticism and that he is expressing beliefs which he himself held.

The cryptic style and polemical implications of the themes and symbols of Melville's major fiction contribute to the endorsement in this discussion of the claim that Melville's spiritual idiom is best understood as a Christian gnostic form of religious psychology. For example, why bother with an elaborate mechanism of secrecy if one is not seeking with it to communicate some valuable information to the "few" whom it will reach and to pique the curiosity of all of one's readers, thereby leading them to reflect on the intended meaning. Moreover, would an author express the view that Christian gnosticism offers the best "way" to approach truth if he himself did not hold this view? No. Such a theory is unreasonable. Therefore, this study does maintain that according to the symbolic implications of Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd," Melville counted himself as one of the "psychologic theologians" whom Vere dismisses and as a link in the chain of the "Secret Tradition" ("BB," p. 108).

Having set forth the aforementioned new insights into Melville's most prized literature, the question which arises next concerns the implications of these findings in relation to the "recollected landscape" in Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd." Were considerations of time not a factor, this discussion would pursue the theory that with one exception the storytellers of all of Melville's crucially important and noteworthy fiction represent the fully illuminated gnostic redeemer.

There are many reasons to take this theory seriously. Outstanding among them, however, are the implications of the symbolism of the "experienced landscape" in relation to the gnostic literature of the ancient world, and the fact that critics' generalized description of the Melville storyteller is comprised of the features which define an abstraction of the gnostic Illuminator. An explanation of the reason why the "experienced landscape" in Melville's most valued literature implies that the storyteller represents the fully enlightened gnostic revealer follows.

According to Jonas and Pagels, the authors of the old mythos of the gnostic savior wrote from the perspective of one who had come to "know" that he was a fully authoritative Word of Wisdom,² and, as this study demonstrates, the mythos of the gnostic savior is the basic source of the monoplots in Melville's major works. Melville's proven familiarity with this literature assures one of his awareness of the symbolic and mythical identity of the authors of this literature. Thus, if one grants that he imitates and interprets the imaginative religious literature of these authors, one perceives the logic of the view that he was identifying closely with the authors, and one is compelled to take seriously the idea that, with the exception of the lawyer who narrates "Bartleby," the storytellers of Melville's major fiction are treated in such a way so as to symbolize the Illuminator.

Other aspects of critics' discussions of the stories written by the illuminated gnostics of the late classical era do lend support to this view, for their remarks are easily seen to apply to six of the seven works which are the focus of concern in this study. According to Jonas' research on the ancient gnostic literature of salvation, the cryptic, symbolical, mythical, allegorical, and polemical works which constitute

its greater part take the form of historical narratives which operate on two levels. To apply Dryden's terms to their works, they include an "experienced landscape" and a "recollected landscape." Or, as Jonas would have it, these mythic narratives represent "the redeemer's account of his own mission and descent to this world." One surmises from his findings that the illuminated author's technique of relating his story as an act of remembering involves the soteriological theme of "gathering in" or "re-collecting" the dispersed fragments of the Self.³ While a majority of these works represent a particular individual's interpretation of the myth of the potential redeemer, Jonas observes that some are a working out of the myth of the Illuminator. But regardless of whether the central character does or does not re-enact the drama of the Fall, the storyteller symbolizes the fully enlightened teacher of Wisdom.⁴

From his discussion, one infers that in some instances the storyteller does not portray himself as the protagonist of his own narrative, but, to quote from several texts, "He stands at the outer rim of the worlds" and sends his "Call" or "Messenger" into it. The gnostic savior who serves as the "Call," Jonas says, is almost always depicted as a "'saved savior.'" From Jonas' observations, information about gnostic initiation rituals, and Pagels' remarks about the gnostic habit of regarding writing imaginative literature as a means to prove one's spiritual maturity, one gathers that the works in which the protagonist is not portrayed as identical with a "transcendent" author signify that these storytellers represent the individual who attains the highest degree of illumination and resembles the Unknown God most closely.⁵

The views of these critics find numerous parallels in Melville's major fiction. For example, all of these works are cryptic, symbolical,

mythical, allegorical, and polemical; all take the form of a historical narrative which consists of an "experienced landscape" and a "recollected landscape"; and all of these works at the level of the "experienced landscape" represent interpretations of the myth of the potential redeemer which express the dominant theme of the gnostic literature of redemption: the self (Self)-salvation of the deity. Further, whereas in three of the works--the earliest of them, and those which are taken as closely autobiographical--the storyteller relies chiefly on a first person point of view and portrays himself as the potential Illuminator, in the remaining later works, the storyteller, who now (with the exception of the lawyer in "Bartleby") is an omniscient, intrusive narrator, gives an account of the experiences in the world of the "Messenger" whom he has sent into it to achieve and effect salvation.

While a detailed study of the devices of fiction which, besides the story narrated, pertain the most to the "recollected landscape" of these narratives would be necessary to establish beyond any reasonable doubt that all of these storytellers except the former Master of the Chancery are intended by Melville to represent the Illuminator, the correspondences between the old gnostic mythos of the savior in terms of basic features concerning their authors and the stories that they created and Melville's authors and the stories that they relate are striking enough to assure one that a good case can be made for recognizing the illuminated status of the typical Melville storyteller.

Some additional promise of the benefits of researching the question of the indebtedness of the "recollected landscape" of Melville's major works to the gnostic mythos of the Illuminator can be glimpsed by pointing out that a casual survey of the Melville bibliography in regard to

critical speculation about Melville's storytellers indicates that there is support for the view that a typical Melville narrator exists and that the burden of scholarly opinion characterizes this entity as an unknown yet known, transcendent yet immanent god-figure who resembles a magician, a puzzle-maker, a riddle-solver, and a trickster. Considered collectively, the views of Chase, Berthoff, Seelye, and Dryden regarding Melville's storytellers give rise to this abstract portrait of the Melville narrator. As readers may recall, all of these features are traditionally ascribed to the fully illuminated son of the Unknown God. Therefore, the fact these scholars' views present a composite sketch of the typical Melville narrator in terms of these features is worthy of notice.

Chase characterizes this literary entity as a shape-shifting, paradoxical God-figure who resembles a magician, puzzlemaker, and trickster. The final unknowability of storyteller also is commented on by Chase, who maintains that the "masked Ishmael confronts us in all Melville's novels."⁶ Seelye makes virtually the same points as Chase via a comparison of the Melville storyteller with Shakespeare. He claims that the Melville storyteller is modeled after the Schlegel brothers' and Coleridge's interpretation of Shakespeare as "a puzzlemaker, a magician of many faces and voices who fashioned mysteries," and an artist who does not reveal himself in the world that he creates but keeps his own "true identity" a secret.⁷

Both Berthoff and Dryden characterize the storytellers Tommo, Typee, Taji, Redburn, White-Jacket, and Ishmael in essentially the same terms as those which Chase and Seelye apply to an abstraction of this entity which is based on all of his fiction. Whereas both Berthoff and Dryden stress the idea that the Melville narrator-protagonist is a

riddle-solver, and both relate these figures' act of narrating the story of their experiences in the world to making a whole out of dispersed fragments of a jigsaw puzzle, unlike Berthoff, Dryden discounts but mentions the implications of transcendence and immanence of this technique.

Narrating his story as an act of remembering, the puzzle-solving Melville narrator-hero, Dryden says, becomes "both creature and creator." Moreover, in Dryden's view, the technique makes Melville's narrator-heroes the "embodiment of . . . [a] magical creative power." Berthoff sees a psychological and cultural rather than any metaphysical significance in this technique but notes that it implies that the world has the nature of a dream as well as a riddle and puzzle. Since, according to Jonas, it is "the task" of the gnostic author to convey his "knowledge" in a cryptic, elliptical way and at the same time to "explain . . . [the] riddle "of reality--" to lift the vision of reality into the light of gnosis"--Berthoff's and Dryden's findings appear to lend more weight to the theory regarding the Melville storyteller as the Illuminator.⁸

The implications of the symbolism of the "experienced landscape" in Typee, Mardi, Moby-Dick, "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," The Confidence-Man, and "Billy Budd", the findings of Jonas and Pagels about the gnostic literature of the late classical period and its authors, and the views which Chase, Seeyle, Berthoff, and Dryden offer about the typical Melville narrator encourage one to pursue the theory that this figure symbolizes the fully authoritative gnostic redeemer. While a conclusive demonstration of this theory will involve a close examination of Melville's treatment of point of view, tone, and aspects of style in his major works, a great deal of evidence already exists that, like the

gnostic Jesus who is portrayed in the Apocryphon of John, the Melville storyteller challenges his readers to "know the Word, the inwardness, the meaning," which can only be conveyed "in a riddle," and in attaining the self-knowledge that is God-knowledge, raise up the fallen Spirit and perceive "the harmony that is Wisdom" and "the wisdom of harmony."⁹

NOTES

- ¹ Timmons, p. 196.
- ² Jonas, p. 81; Pagels, pp. 22-23, 161.
- ³ Jonas, pp. 48, 91-92, 101-02, 178-79; Dryden, p. 34; Jonas, pp. 81, 59.
- ⁴ Jonas, pp. 49-50, 74-81 ff.
- ⁵ Jonas, pp. 74-86, 79; Pagels, pp. 22-23.
- ⁶ Chase, pp. 67, 206, 278-79.
- ⁷ Seeyle, p. 2.
- ⁸ Dryden, pp. 27, 34-37, Berthoff, pp. 135, 143-48; Jonas, p. 101.
- ⁹ The Apocryphon of John, in Campbell, III, 375.

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VITA 2

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Doctor of Philosophy

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HERMAN MELVILLE

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