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Melville's Economy of Language

Paul Royster

No other novel of the nineteenth century is so concerned with the actions and relations of the workplace or so committed to describing the processes of production as *Moby-Dick* (1851). Yet *Moby-Dick* is no ordinary industrial novel, because of its conscious attention to the task of constructing itself as language. The interaction of these two processes—industrial production and literary construction—produces a work rich in the metaphorical interplay of language and labor. In *Pierre; or, the Ambiguities* (1852), the novel that followed, Melville abandoned this sense of language's connection to the world and the multiple assurances that natural signs and economic symbols had formerly provided. In these two novels Melville traveled from one extreme to the other: from endorsing language as the world's perfect counterpart to exposing it as a shadow without corresponding substance. In the same process, Melville also moved from a deep commitment to the capitalist economy to an outright condemnation of it, both as a means of life and as a mode of representation.

Ishmael as a Spokesman for the Whaling Industry

Moby-Dick is an exuberant paean to labor, an elaborate celebration of the human energy and industry of nineteenth-century America. Yet what it converts to metaphor is a particular set of economic relations: whaling is a capitalist enterprise, and industry that produces commodities for a market and employs labor to return a profit on investment. Ishmael's advocacy of "the honor and glory of whaling" does not separate labor from capital, as being distinct parts of the industry. He is as proud of the number, size, and efficiency of the American whaling fleet as of the skill, productivity, and dedication of its seamen. Both the labor and the physical means of production emerge from Ishmael's account in favorable colors. Meanwhile, he invests the process of producing whale oil with additional symbolic meanings, which make it an extended metaphor for various social and metaphysical referents. Ishmael is never so happy as when he is finding in some dull, arduous, or onerous task an allegory of universal truth. Work takes on extra value when Ishmael

can interpret it symbolically, when it assumes the pattern of some larger structure or condition of human life.

With Ishmael, this rhetoric of labor is in part a defensive strategy, an ideology that allows him to cope with the embarrassments or unpleasantness of his working-class position. For example, he dexterously explains away the kick administered by Captain Peleg as a sample of “the universal thump,” passed the whole world round and imaginatively linking the entire race of men in the vast circuit of taking one’s lumps. Ishmael’s rhetoric transforms this striking example of class relations (owner/employee) into an illustration of higher democracy. Of course, the incident need not have been mentioned at all, and Ishmael’s explication of it is noticeably ironic. Nonetheless, it supports his construction of whaling as an occupation representative of the universal human condition, even if this blurs the distinction between industrial discipline and human equality.

In general, Ishmael’s rhetoric of labor does not dwell on such relations of production or on the social structure of the workplace. Most often it finds in some feature of the job at hand analogies for the universe of absolutes. In the chapter “The Mat-Maker,” the job of weaving mats figures as an explanation of metaphysics: “It seemed as if this were the Loom of Time, and I myself were a shuttle mechanically weaving and weaving away at the Fates.”¹ Ishmael analogizes the fixed threads of the warp as necessity or fate, the threads of the woof that he weaves with his own hand as free will, and the wooden sword with which Queequeg drives home the yarns as chance:

The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate course—its every alternating vibration, indeed, only tending to that; free will still free to ply her shuttle between given threads; and chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of necessity, and sideways in its motions directed by free will, though thus prescribed to by both, chance by turn rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events. (pp. 1021–22)

Necessity, free will, and chance—Ishmael’s labor contains these elements even as it represents them: weaving mats participates in the structure of metaphysics that it signifies. This works out very neatly: Ishmael’s understanding of his task illuminates the larger process of events—the parameters of human history brought together on the Loom of Time. The metaphor rests not on the product (the mat) but on the process, the labor, the weaving, the act of production. Ishmael’s labor partakes of the historical process it represents, as Ishmael’s labor both produces the

symbol and is produced in turn by the things it signifies—necessity, free will, and chance.

In a later chapter, "The Monkey-Rope," Ishmael again introduces labor as a symbolic reproduction; this time when he finds in the work of "cutting-in" (or stripping the layers of blubber from the dead whale) an emblem of the social networks of human interdependence. The "monkey-rope," tied around the waists of Queequeg on the slippery back of the whale and Ishmael on the ship's deck, forces Ishmael to realize "that my own individuality was now merged in a joint stock company of two: that my free will had received a mortal wound; and that another's mistake or misfortune might plunge innocent me into unmerited disaster and death" (p. 1135). In this case, the rope serves as the figure, representing the ties among men because it *is* one—an outward and visible sign of the mutual dependence and linked fates of men. The monkey-rope is a material example of what it represents; it simply conforms (in a remarkable degree) to the pattern of other social relations. Its bond is an economic relation, dictated by the process of production. The structure of interdependence it stands for is also a set of economic relations: Ishmael suggests that the failure of one's banker or apothecary would be as disastrous as if Queequeg should slip and fall off the whale. Here again the figure represents by synecdoche rather than pure metaphor; the rope's extended meaning is produced by universalizing it, by identifying one particular economic relation with the total structure of relations in society. At bottom, Ishmael insists, his situation is no different from any other: "I saw that this situation of mine was the precise situation of every mortal that breathes; only, in most cases, he, one way or other, has this Siamese connexion with a plurality of other mortals" (p. 1135). In Ishmael's case, his connections are concentrated and made symbolically manifest through the act of production.

On another occasion, in the chapter "A Bower in the Arsacides," Ishmael employs industrial labor as a metaphor for the natural world, comparing the growth and intermixture of living things in a tropical glade to a vast textile factory, so that he represents nature as the ongoing production of an industrious weaver-god:

The wood was green as the mosses of the Icy Glen; the trees stood high and haughty, feeling their living sap; the industrious earth beneath was as a weaver's loom, with a gorgeous carpet on it, whereof the ground-vine tendrils formed the warp and woof, and the living flowers the figures. All the trees, with all their laden branches; all the shrubs, and ferns, and grasses; the message-carrying air; all these unceasingly were active. Through the lacings of

the leaves, the great sun seemed a flying shuttle weaving the unwearied verdure. Oh, busy weaver! unseem weaver!—pause!—one word!—whither flows the fabric? what palace may it deck? wherefore all these ceaseless toilings? Speak, weaver!—stay thy hand!—but one single word with thee! Nay—the shuttle flies—the figures float from forth the loom; the freshet-rushing carpet for ever slides away. The weaver-god, he weaves; and by that weaving is he deafened, that he hears no mortal voice; and by that humming, we, too, who look on the loom are deafened; and only when we escape it shall we hear the thousand voices that speak through it. For even so it is in all material factories. The spoken words that are inaudible among the flying spindles; those same words are plainly heard without the walls, bursting from the opened casements. (pp. 1272–73)

Ishmael constructs this trope on a different model from the two preceding ones: the two halves of the figure (textile factory and tropical nature) are not conflatable; they stand in the relation of analogy. The natural world in certain features resembles a carpet factory; but this simile is built on another, prior level of signification. If the weaver-god is busy weaving living figures into his vast carpet that is the world, then one of those figures must be this same one of the weaver-god at his loom. The figure describes its own genesis or origin, and it recalls the system of correspondences and meanings already woven into nature, which makes Ishmael's system of references possible. The figure of the weaver-god is represented as being woven by the weaver-god himself, and Ishmael shows us a symbol hard at work on its own production.

The Doubloon as Symbolic Center

In *Moby-Dick*, labor represents and becomes part of nature; whereas the other side of economy—money—represents and becomes part of language. Ishmael repairs this division in economy (and in semantics) by unfolding correspondences that reinstate the symbolic unity of the experienced world and authorize language *and* money as representatives of a single integrated whole, consisting of man and nature. Money and language become authentic signs by virtue of their multivocalness and their ability to mediate between a singular objective world and a diversity of imaginative ones. In a central chapter that dramatizes this theory of signs, all the various characters confront a talismanic object and read themselves in a piece of money—"The Doubloon"—the Spanish-American gold piece that Ahab nails to the mast as the reward for the first to

sight the white whale. All the major characters (except Ishmael) attempt to interpret the doubloon's significance, and this progression of imaginative encounters centralizes the issues of perception and motivation that so concern the novel. The chapter arrays a multiplicity of meanings around a central sign or text, and the pattern of the different readings illuminates the differences among the observers and suggests the semi-magical properties that adhere to the sign of money.

The coin described by Ishmael is an eight escudo gold piece (or doubloon) actually minted in Ecuador from 1838 through 1843.² The obverse, showing a "Liberty" head, is nailed toward the mast, so that it is never seen. But the reverse, showing a sun flanked by the zodiac over three mountains, capped by a tower, fowl, and volcanic cloud, proves a fertile text. Ahab, Starbuck, Stubb, Flask, the Manxman, Queequeg, Fedallah, and Pip, each sees his own portrait on the coin and constructs his own particular relation to the value it represents. To Ahab the coin is a mirror of Ahab himself; for Starbuck it is a reflection of his own religious faith and doubt, cast in lights and shadows, heights and depths; to Stubb it represents the biography of man in one round chapter, the sequence of events that define the cycles of life and death; for Flask it stands for 960 cigars, or his own particular form of desire, and an incentive to forward Ahab's design; to the Manxman it is a prophecy, a link to a future event; for Queequeg it refers to his own body, perhaps especially to its sexual functions; to Fedallah it is a sign or icon or idol—he "makes a sign to the sign"—worshipping not the coin but the fire it represents; and finally, to Pip the doubloon "means" its series of onlookers, all illuminated by the one central symbol. The doubloon's manifold uses as a figure derive from its doubleness, or reflective function, its separation of individualized meanings, so that no one reading excludes or impinges upon another, and its accumulation of significance from the procession of observers. The coin multiplies the fetish quality of money by making many different systems of value reside in a single material object.

The doubloon is ultimately a fit symbol of symbols—its worth proves its significance, while its value is defined through its symbolic meanings. The coin is not involved in any transaction; it is not the product of labor, nor part of the system of capital that commissioned the ship. Of "purest virgin gold . . . untouchable and immaculate to any foulness," the *Pequod's* doubloon "was set apart and sanctified to one awe-striking end: . . . the mariners revered it as the white whale's talisman." Through various tropes (synecdoche, metonymy, typology, symbolism) the doubloon's system of representation expands to include the entire world: from Ahab to Moby Dick, from the trinity to the zodiac, from

cigars to signs and wonders, from the life of man to the language of interpretation. As money and as symbol the doubloon serves as a pledge of Ahab's will; it represents the debt he owes Moby Dick. The coin also seals Ahab's unholy bargain with the crew; it represents the abrogation of the social contract expressed in the ship's articles; it is the token of the diabolical covenant to hunt the white whale.

The doubloon presents a reflective surface to each observer. Ahab declares: "This round gold is but an 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." Queequeg's perspective (like Stubb's and Starbuck's) is much the same: he sees his identity with the coin—its value is representative of himself; the coin is his own reflective double. Perhaps this is why Melville chose the "doubloon" as his figure, for its doubling effect is its most characteristic function. The coin is a figure that both divides and reunites, bifurcating the world and reintegrating it by reflective correspondences. Pip, the last speaker, must recognize something of this, for his jingle implies that reality resides not in the coin but in the progression of its observers: "I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look." Not the thing that is seen, but the ways of seeing it and the connections among the observers determine for Pip the doubloon's value or significance. "I, you, he, we, ye, they" imply a range of human relations, relations, moreover, that are mediated by language. Pip's conjugation of looking brings together the different readings just as the coin itself does, except that Pip's emphasis is on the human subjects and not, like the coin's, on the reflective world of signs. Pip looks, so to speak, on the other side of the coin, the obverse side, which is never seen, and from that perspective he announces the identity of all the observers.

The different values that Pip, Ahab, Starbuck, and the others place on the doubloon become in some sense equivalent, being mutually represented by the same thing. The chorus of readings locates the doubloon's meaning not in the coin but in the different observers; the doubloon's abundance of signs accommodates all interpretations and offers a language to each understanding. But even though the coin eventually conflates all these meanings, it does not work, as currency should, to mediate the relations among its human observers. None of the interpreters speaks to another. Each has a separate encounter with the substance of value and a different reading of its nature. Stubb, who overhears them all musing aloud, narrates the episodes and allows each reader to take away his own proper meaning without impinging on the meanings attributed by the others. As Stubb says, "There's another rendering now: but still one text. All sorts of men in one kind of world, you see." Eight ways

of looking at a gold coin (nine if we count Ishmael's, ten if we count the crew's) do not upset its reality; no one questions the coin's value or authenticity. The doubloon remains a substantial and definite object; its multiplicity, although ambiguous, is cumulative and reassuring; its value is not neutralized by contradictory appraisals. The meanings that are concentrated in the coin can coexist without conflict because the doubloon itself is fixed and static, never becoming part of the system of exchanges or a token of men's economic relations. The coin's elaborate dual structure of supply and demand, of desire and object, of man and his reflections, refers each observer in turn to an alternate version of himself. The value of the coin is achieved in each case only by way of an imaginative exchange or symbolic transaction.

"A Squeeze of the Hand": Labor as "Species-Being"

Moby-Dick grounds its entire system of metaphor in economy: money initiates a chain of representation that binds men to their natural, social, and metaphysical states; labor provides images of nature, Providence, and society. Melville's symbolic economy usually suggests the *structure* of the visible or invisible world. His extended figures invoke elaborate analogies between economic "facts" and formal organizations that might properly be called ideological. The doubloon, for example, recalls the organization of the ship, of human society, of the stars, of the body, and of language. Significantly, labor also shares this same representative system, illustrating by turns social structure, universal laws, and moral bonds and conditions. Yet Melville at times employs a different mode of symbolism for labor, one that presents it as ritual rather than analogy. In this mode, labor expresses substance rather than structure; it incorporates the material process of life's production and reproduction, rather than merely referring to its form or organization. This happens particularly in the chapter "A Squeeze of the Hand," where the labor of squeezing sperm-ceti represents neither a structure external to itself nor even its own redoubled reflection as activity or as figure. Where labor had elsewhere been illustrative, this now becomes transformative. Ishmael's work dissolves him into his most generalized human identity, reconstitutes or recreates him, and then relocates him in the world of men. Labor's value here exceeds its productive and representative qualities; it evolves into an expression of the universal life of the species "Man":

Squeeze! squeeze! squeeze! all the morning long; I squeezed that sperm till I myself almost melted into it; I squeezed that sperm till a strange sort of insanity came over me; and I found myself unwit-

tingly squeezing my co-laborers' hands in it, mistaking their hands for all the gentle globules. Such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling did this avocation beget; that at last I was continually squeezing their hands, and looking up into their eyes sentimentally; as much as to say,—Oh! my dear fellow beings, why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill-humor or envy! Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness.

Such a universal communion of labor is what Marx would have called "species-being"—the "conscious life-activity" of the living for the production of the species itself. Ishmael's work, it is true, banishes his alienation and wipes away all memory of social divisions, acerbities, petulance, ill will, ill humor, and envy. Its summons to the climactic vast human union and dissolution of laborers—"let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness"—appeals to an undifferentiated and unstructured nature of the human "kind."

This episode of "A Squeeze of the Hand" expresses what the anthropologist Victor Turner has called "anti-structure." Turner describes a phase in rituals of acculturation or rites of passage, known as "liminality," during which initiates are symbolically separated from the ordinary roles and norms of social life. This period or phase enforces a mystical solidarity or *communitas* and is marked by the initiates' abstraction from their cultural milieu, by the rejection of settled definitions of relations, and by the implantation of ultimate standards of reference in some version of universal, pan-human values. In effect, this phase of the ritual process strips away all partial and particular definitions of identity, leveling the initiates to the stark and fundamental equality of the essentially human. On this level the sole authoritative group that remains is the species itself. The experience of liminality, of being or feeling totally outside social ties, and the experience of *communitas*, the shared identity of the initiates, make up what Turner calls "anti-structure." Subsequently, as the initiates are ritually resocialized to assume new roles and relations, the social world is reconstituted for them *ab ovo*, symbolically rebuilt out of a generatively central experience.³

Ishmael's account of squeezing sperm follows a parallel process. His vision of unbounded human kindness must be reintegrated into the structured roles of the social world, while he retains the mystical affirmation of human identity as an absolute but irrecoverable value:

Would that I could keep squeezing that sperm for ever! For now,

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

Ishmael's ritualized process of labor, however, contradicts its own context. Although set within the specifically capitalist process of production, squeezing sperm suggests not structure but the breakdown of structure. Labor here expresses liminality and *communitas*, anti-structure rather than social structure. Labor in this ritual mode also induces an absolute identification with its product, and through this identification Ishmael's work emerges as a universal communion of human laborers. What Ishmael experiences might even be described as a loss of difference—a loss of selfhood or subjectivity, a condition of unmediated union and unbounded creation. And yet (to recall), Ishmael is confined within a specific economic structure. He is subject to the relations of labor and capital and to the specific hierarchy of power these entail. Nonetheless, the production process accommodates Ishmael's universal self through these gaps or inversions in the power structure that allow (mythically) for the continuing flow of essential human forces. Couching this mystical affirmation of humankindness within an activity engineered for the production of capital separates labor from the system of wealth and identifies work with the essential nature of the species—"man." Ishmael recognizes labor as the objective form of his common, human life. His moment of species-identity (symbolically reinforced by all the sexual references of "sperm") occurs within the whaleship's manufacturing process, but is not represented as part of the economic structure. The mystical quality of the sperm allows Ishmael to transcend the relations of production. His labor is conceived not as an exchange of value, involving some commodity-form of capital, but as an elaboration or manipulation of the vital fluid or essence of humanity. Ishmael knows no alienation from his product, his labor, or his fellow workers; his is a labor of unbounded potential, an evocation of the largest unity of humankind.

The crucial thing about this universalizing ritual of labor is that it is in no sense an indictment of the system of economic relations. Indictments there are in *Moby-Dick*, to be sure. One follows this passage almost immediately, as Ishmael gives an account of the Inferno-like blub-

ber room, where men's alienation from themselves is graphically figured by their cutting off their own toes. Yet the criticisms of America, of industrialism, commercial society, or the system of capital never obscure Ishmael's ideological loyalties. In fact, the rhetoric of these values—equality, productivity, individualism—actually provides the language for Ishmael's objections to the economic order. Although he often takes an ironic tone in describing the economic system, Ishmael is never ironic about the value of labor or production. In the case of squeezing sperm in particular, the accommodation of a mystical species-unity within the basically non-human system of capitalist production redeems (albeit symbolically) that organization of labor.

Representation and Capitalism in *Moby-Dick*

Viewing *Moby-Dick* as a less than radical critique of American capitalism coincides with one of the plot's central features: Ahab's rebellion against God, economy, and nature. Ahab has no respect for the commercial purposes of the *Pequod*'s voyage, yet the form of his opposition to the system of economic relations serves ultimately to reinforce the values of the bourgeois order. Ahab's madness, his usurpation of power, and his rigid authoritarianism all deflect criticism away from the economic system that launched the *Pequod*. Ahab is more dangerous than the ship's owners; and although he is also more sympathetic and even admirable in his grand self-reliance, it is a self-reliance run amok. Ahab sets up a false opposition—between his own wild romanticism and the commercial values of Starbuck and the owners. These emerge as the two formal choices; while Ishmael, who, if anyone, would seem to represent an alternative to this dichotomy of capitalism straight or capitalism perverted, declines to choose, and so serves the ends of both sides. Ahab radiates the grandeur of the heroic individual; Starbuck, the conventional values of business, family, and home. Ahab, with his demonic power and enormous attractiveness, is represented as a demagogue who usurps the system of production for his own private mission of vengeance. His revolt against the system of profit diverts Ishmael's criticism away from the whaling industry itself, which in its pristine form regularly sacrifices human life to the production of capital.

Ishmael's ideology of labor offers no effective antithesis to the system of production; the novel is balanced rather than dialectical. Ishmael's ideology combines comic resignation with democratic rhetoric; his perspective on events is emphatically not subversive of whaling as a capitalist industry. Ishmael often has his reveries and epiphanies—not only squeezing sperm, but also at the masthead, or floating serenely among

schools of whales. But while each of these occurs in a social context—that is, during some form of labor—the content of Ishmael's meditations is distinctly asocial, concerning not the relations among men but those imaginary relations between the individual mind and the universe at large. The rhetoric of labor and the types and figures through which production corresponds to its universal referents make Ishmael's work inseparable from what it represents. The relations of production are sanctioned by their symbolic qualities. Ishmael is reminded of nature, Providence, time, society, and human life-processes because they are both symbolized *and* literalized in his labor. This redoubling or inner reflection characterizes all his tropes: each illuminates itself and effectively eliminates the distance between the sign (labor) and whatever it signifies.

Melville remained enthusiastic about his practice of representation in *Moby-Dick*, even though he was fast becoming aware of its potential limitations. His representations are generally achieved at the price of stasis, by abstraction from process, by the suspension of time or history. Squeezing sperm is set apart from the system of capital and the economic process of labor, just as the doubloon is separated from the active commerce of the world. Both are symbolic structures that somehow evade the category of history—the coin by becoming eternally fixed, labor by self-generation or self-reflection, by carrying out its own origin. In this fashion, representation manages to comprise both repetition and difference: the symbol encompasses the nonsymbolic to which it refers; it includes its own outside. Meaning is organized in terms of signs—naturally occurring figures whose structures suggest an overall design—rather than as a product of motivated human actions. By pondering the different possible meanings of the coin, the whale, or the labor, Melville emphasizes the man-made or artificial quality of his signs. Yet the central symbol always predates any of its interpretations, each of which is incomplete and inferior insofar as it is partial or personal. The signs themselves remain seemingly unmotivated, though displayed within a structure of motivated meanings. There is clearly a sense in which Ahab invents Moby Dick, even though, significantly, Moby Dick is already there, ubiquitous in space and time. In much the same way, Ishmael does not merely invent any of the labor he finds so meaningful. It awaits his discovery, and its independence from himself lends additional authority to his symbolic readings. This is also true more generally of Ishmael's relation to language (his other means of production); for he is ever protesting that he has found, and not originated, such arcane whaling terms as "squilgee," "specksynder," "white-horse," "plum-pudding," or "slobgollion." The things and the words for them are always there, but signification awaits

the conception that links the object or person to its name, a situation emphasized from the novel's very beginning—"Call me Ishmael."—where the symbol ("Ishmael") applies to the self ("me") in a relation produced by an act of language. The ambiguity of symbols such as money and labor revolves around this question of whether signs are discovered or invented, whether economy is natural or artificial. Ishmael's discovery of chains of analogies throughout the economic process must always be balanced against competing interpretations. The signs themselves, however, are solid, definite, unmistakable, and authoritative in their own right. Upon this literal level of economic fact Ishmael rests with confidence, doubting neither the material world nor its connection to other worlds beyond. Similarly, Ishmael's philosophy, his irony, and his vision of human and cosmic nature depend on the values of a certain way of life—American democratic free enterprise. This ideology gives substance to Ishmael's language, and he benefits from going with, rather than against, the grain of his rhetoric.

***Pierre*: From Whaling Tropes to Writing Tropes**

After *Moby-Dick*, Melville's methods of economic symbolism became more complicated. His rhetoric of labor acquired an ironic edge, and his disaffection with the system of economic relations became more conscious and more explicit. In his later works Melville showed an increasing tendency to distrust language, to undercut and conflate systems of representation, and to highlight the separation of words or signs from what they purport to represent. *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* is the turning point in this development, a deconstruction of the elaborate system of natural analogies. It presents a negative version of the symbolic language of correspondences among man, nature, and the invisible world that makes *Moby-Dick* so rich in meaningful detail. The symbolic language of *Pierre* distorts the rhetoric of economy to expose its contradictions, inconsistencies, and ideological motives. The novel is as critical of language, society, and economy as *Moby-Dick* is celebratory. To account for Melville's startling reversal of method, let me suggest that in *Moby-Dick* he pushed a rhetoric to its limits, and in *Pierre*, for personal, political, and intellectual reasons, he took one further step, moved beyond that rhetoric, and turned it upside down and inside out. Here, as in *Moby-Dick*, mythological connections between men and things provide structures for meaning that resonate on various levels (economic, natural, social, or metaphysical), but *Pierre* offers us a look on the other side of the coin. Language has now lost its affinity to experience; the correspondence between the inner world of feeling and the outer world of nature no longer obtains. The rich significance that *Moby-Dick* had

placed in words is inverted in *Pierre* to alienate the work of literature from what it presumes to represent. As *Pierre* describes the imaginative labor of literary production, it also explores the imaginary relations of production that are represented by ideology. These imaginary relations—of Pierre to his book, his audience, his critics, his publishers, and to himself—form the backdrop against which Pierre's economic and social conflicts are played.

Writing, not whaling, is the industry that provides metaphors in *Pierre*. Literature here describes its own production and confronts its own status as commodity, so that writing fashions a new relation to its subject and reference, stamping a particular interest, bias, or hidden motivation on its field of possible meanings. In *Moby-Dick*, Melville had not been constrained to establish a direct agreement between the described labor of whaling and his own literary product. Certainly, he made occasional gestures in this direction: the division of whales into categories of folio, octavo, and duodecimo, for example; or, more generally, Ishmael's penchant for reading the world as hieroglyphic, in which the reader of the novel is urged to participate. But in *Pierre* the hero of the novel is himself a writer—first a juvenile author of popular verse and devotee of classical literature (Dante, Shakespeare), and then, fully and explicitly in the novel's second half, a professional author—a would-be creator of a book of world-shaking import. Literature exists in *Pierre* both as sign and as product; literature is the figure or image of whatever is to be represented by metaphor and also the record or repetition of that representation. Writing, having become in this sense self-reflexive, must now sustain its own authority and elaborate its own significance in order to survive as an adequate model of all that whaling had stood for in *Moby-Dick*—time, nature, society, Providence, the eternal verities. This is a ponderous responsibility to rest on any rhetoric of labor, even one as highly developed as that of writing. Yet Pierre clearly intends to meet such expectations: "I will gospelize the world anew," he cries, "and show them deeper secrets than the Apocalypse!—I will write it, I will write it."⁴

Pierre and the Alienation of Labor

In *Pierre*, Melville's economic rhetoric shifts from the notion of labor as a source of value (economic or universal) toward a conception of labor as a system of constraints or a settled structure of power relations. Work becomes a form of self-denial—not merely in the sense of diligence and industry, but as an actual self-immolation and a sacrifice of common humankindness. Pierre's work isolates him from community, family, and

even the women with whom he lives. It becomes effectually a labor that entails not the production of value but the negation of human life. *Pierre* does not rely on writing in quite the same way that *Moby-Dick* relies on whaling; it addresses the production of literature in only five of the novel's twenty-six chapters.⁵ But for Pierre, authorship represents an alternative to the class-structured society he formally renounces; although he finally discovers that literature serves as an alternate version of that very same social system. Writing appears as Pierre's way out; and he stakes everything on his literary career only to find his writing constrained by the same forces he had planned to escape. In *Pierre*, Melville's critique of the work of writing applies as well to political economy in general, and is dramatized by the transition of his author-hero from a practitioner of this seemingly most free of all free enterprises into a forlorn, oppressed "states-prisoner of letters" (p. 340).

The novel begins in the summer of Pierre's twenty-first year, when he is on the verge of marrying his fiancée, Lucy Tartan, and inheriting the family estate, Saddle Meadows, from his widowed and domineering mother. But the discovery of an illegitimate half-sister, Isabel, the supposed child of his father's wayward youth, intervenes between Pierre and the happy enjoyment of his inheritance. The complex developments that set Pierre at odds with the world he has known have been described as psychological, philosophical, metaphysical, aesthetic, or religious—and they are all these things. But Pierre's problem also concerns social structure: Isabel's illegitimacy excludes her from her proper place in Saddle Meadows. Pierre is rich and she is poor; he is the heir, she is the orphan. There is no way they could share their common father's estate. Class boundaries are rigidly fixed, and reinforced by a rural economy of landlords and tenants. Saddle Meadows is a static culture, stratified, repressive, and (as Melville repeatedly underscores) thriving in the bosom of American democracy. To rescue Isabel from her false position at Saddle Meadows, Pierre pretends to marry her, and they elope to New York City, passing by stagecoach from their pseudo-Arcadia to the Jacksonian commercial metropolis.

Isabel's violation of family, social, and symbolic boundaries is formally indicated in the text by names (Isabel *Banford*), chapter titles ("He Crosses the Rubicon"), and a predilection for certain physical sites (doors, thresholds, gates, crossroads, and windows) where separate spaces meet and merge. Isabel causes Pierre to reject his patrimony and adopt literature as a profession. Dislocated within the structured society at Saddle Meadows, she opens up for Pierre a vaster and more mysterious world of the passions and the unconscious. Pierre transfers his ideal

of virtue to that alternate inner world, a world subversive of the conventional definitions of family and culture, and antinomian world that values feeling and intuition over experience and law.

Pierre attempts to describe this inner world in literature. He intends his writing to behold the truths of the heart through introspection and then to project them into the world of culture and forms against which the self is strategically set. Pierre envisions his labor as an emanation of value from a divine inner source, which the text compares to a mine, or well, or fountain. Pierre's relations of literary production consistently reflect his relations with Isabel. She is (he believes) his half-sister, both the same as and different from himself, his own image and his own perfect opposite. Pierre's book occupies the same kind of polar relation to him, and his alternating identification with and alienation from the product of his labor suggests a violation of the crucial boundary between the "me" and the "not-me":

Two books are being writ; of which the world shall only see one, and that the bungled one. The larger book, and the infinitely better, is for Pierre's own private shelf. That it is, whose unfathomable cravings drink his blood; the other only demands his ink. But circumstances have so decreed, that the one can not be composed on the paper, but only as the other is writ down in his soul. And the one of the soul is elephantinely sluggish, and will not budge at a breath. (p. 304)

This redoubled production isolates Pierre from the product of his labor, from his activity of producing, and from his common humanity. It is an example of alienation in its classic Marxian form. Pierre is intent first of all on the production of a commodity—of "such matters as publishers would pay something for in the way of a mere business transaction which they thought would prove profitable" (p. 260). He is induced by the success of his juvenile attempts at literature to equate writing with money, and to invest "the dollars derived from his ditties," like Flask, in Havana cigars. When Pierre takes up writing as a profession, he approaches his labor with what will prove to be contradictory motives:

Pierre was now engaged in a comprehensive compacted work, to whose speedy completion two tremendous motives unitedly impelled;—the burning desire to deliver what he thought to be new, or at least miserably neglected Truth to the world; and the prospective menace of being absolutely penniless, unless by the sale of his book, he could realize money. (p. 283)

Pierre's divided enterprise can create no product to satisfy both desires. Labor cannot transform his soul's experience into a marketable commodity. Any salable product will necessarily be some exterior thing, something renounced, cast off, and alienable, a commodity separate from himself. Nonetheless, Pierre's persistent identification with his book reveals his contradictory notions of labor: he so closely associates his outward product's reception with the inner experience of writing that his book's failure to represent value in the marketplace convinces him of his own failure to represent himself. The public abuse of his book proves it (and himself) to be counterfeit:

“Now, then, where is this swindler's, this coiner's book? Here, on this vile counter [his desk], over which the coiner thought to pass it to the world, here will I nail it fast, for a detected cheat!” (p. 357)

Pierre experiences the otherness of his book to such an extent that it eventually confronts him as a hostile thing. The final worthlessness of his product in the literary market forces Pierre to abandon writing entirely, and so removes his potential threat to the existing order of literature. But even before this, the self-negation involved in his writing carries over into the actual labor itself, so that Pierre at work cannot even identify himself as the person actively writing what he writes: “Sometimes he blindly wrote with his eyes turned away from the paper;—thus unconsciously symbolizing the hostile necessity and distaste, the former whereof made of him this most unwilling states-prisoner of letters” (p. 340). This “hostile necessity” represents a need that Pierre attempts to fill through language. In identifying himself by language, he finds that the symbolic relations it imposes are not his to command absolutely. His writing remains alien from him, constraining him by codes and symbolic forms that implicitly deny his unique and anomalous desires. The otherness of language extends even to Pierre's unconscious, to his actions in an “unwilling” state. Suppressing his consciousness of labor, Pierre had hoped to open up a channel through which an unconscious genius would flow. The genius of the unconscious, however, is simply a ready-made rhetoric: Pierre's automatic writing only shows that his unconscious is coded by ideology in much the same way that his language is.

Pierre's alienating labor even isolates him from his own species. He walks the crowded streets of Manhattan, “that so, the utter isolation of his soul, might feel itself the more intensely from the incessant joggings of his body against the bodies of the hurrying thousands” (p. 340). Pierre later wanders New York's deserted back streets and alleys, until

one desolate evening he is seized by a fit of vertigo, so that "he did not have any ordinary life-feeling at all." This rebellion of "the very blood in his body," and the subsequent treason of his eyes, which "absolutely refused to look on paper," warn him of the alienation of his own physical humanity. Pierre, however, persists in his writing at the expense of his mortal life.

Enceladus and the Nature of Ideology

The climax of Pierre's labor comes when he is no longer able to work, when a trance or "state of semi-unconsciousness" steals upon him while he attempts to write; so that his actual labor gives way to a remarkable oneiric labor that reconstitutes the process of his work in a symbolic or mythological form. This dream unfolds as an image of Pierre's literary labor, and for the scene of writing it substitutes a scene from nature: "The actual artificial objects around him slid from him, and were replaced by a baseless yet most imposing spectacle of natural scenery" (p. 342). Pierre's dream transposes the site of labor onto a scene of nature—a landscape of violence and destruction, which becomes the symbol of a "natural" state of war. The symbol itself (Nature), so conceived, has two poles around which meanings cluster: one physiological (or orectic), suggesting the parts and functions of the body; the other ideological (or normative), suggesting the patterns of social organization.⁶

Pierre dreams of the Mount of Titans, "a singular height standing quite detached in a wide solitude not far from the grand range of dark blue hills encircling his ancestral manor" (p. 342). Formerly called (after Bunyan) the "Delectable Mountain," it owed its more Romantic name to the moody fancy of a wandering, disappointed poet. The lower parts of this mountain consist of sloping terraces or hillside pastures, belonging to the manor of Saddle Meadows, and rented out to tenants in exchange for a portion of their dairy products. Now these hillside pastures had become covered with a small white flower, the amaranth, which, being distasteful to the cattle, greatly diminished the productivity of the fields and caused economic hardships among the tenants. The first action in Pierre's dream is the appeal of these tenants to the lady of the manor "for some abatement in their annual tribute":

"The small white flower, it is our bane!" the imploring tenants cried. "The aspiring amaranth, every year it climbs and adds new terraces to its sway! The immortal amaranth, it will not die, but last year's flowers survive to this! The terraced pastures grow glit-

tering white, and in warm June still show like banks of snow:—fit token of the sterileness the amaranth begets! Then free us from the amaranth, good lady, or be pleased to abate our rent!” (p. 343)

This part of Pierre’s vision renders very clearly the social structure of the manor at Saddle Meadows. Pierre’s mother—the “good lady”—sits atop a stratified system of land tenure, controlling her tenants, as she does her son, by the exercise of economic power. Two points of interest emerge from this part of the dream. First, the narrator allegorizes the dream, converting its class confrontation into a moral illustration or “family romance”; and second, he subsequently disguises its economic structure or its conflict of social forces as a competition of natural powers. The amaranth is no ordinary weed or wildflower; it is named for the amaranth of mythology, a white flower that blooms perpetually. It also, in its whiteness, is associated with milk (the dairy product), with the “good lady,” and with a sterile, cold, and heavenly purity.

All symbols in *Pierre* represent contradictory things—the amaranth represents purity and incest, sterility and immortality. Turner has shown that symbols in ritual contexts do this regularly—that they concentrate, make palpable, and charge with emotion the various conflicts and tensions that animate the social structure. The symbolic readings of the amaranth change on each level: economically it represents oppression (of the tenants); in a personal sense, it means dependence (Pierre’s); on a religious level, it refers to purity and immortality; and for the human race as a biological species, it omens sterility and extinction. Of the earth, the amaranth is a heavenly flower; a perpetual celestial bloom, it is rooted in the desolation of the domestic hearth.⁷

In Pierre’s vision, the tenants’ appeal for rent relief receives no answer. Instead the dream moves on to the precipice of cliffs surrounding the summit of the mountain, returning several paragraphs later to brood over the ruined foundations of abandoned cottages still marked by the remnants of patches of the domestic herb catnip, planted by the departed tenants and slowly giving way before the incessant inroads of the aspiring amaranth: “For every spring the amaranthine and celestial flower gained on the mortal household herb; for every autumn the catnip dies, but never an autumn made the amaranth to wane. The catnip and the amaranth!—man’s earthly household peace, and the ever-encroaching appetite for God” (pp. 344–45). “Appetite” is surely significant, reinforcing the associations of the amaranth in a symbolic cluster that brings together a variety of different and irreconcilable images—God, mother, milk, flower, heaven, and earth. Tenants and lady give way to the catnip and the amaranth and to the conflict of domestic peace and heavenly

appetite. What begins as an illustration of economic relations concludes in the vegetable world as an eternal, metaphysical dualism.⁸

The amaranth and rent question may be termed the first part of Pierre's dream. The second part displaces the revolt of the tenants with the revolt of the Titans, chief among them one called Enceladus, an armless stone giant who rises out of the earth, shakes off the soil that holds him imprisoned, and leads the other recumbent rocks and boulders in an assault against the precipitous wall of the mountain's summit. These giant stones, long since fallen from the mountain's heights, are transformed into an army of Titans, who now seek to recapture their original lofty position atop the mountain, only to be violently repulsed and cast down again. The Titans' impotent offensive represents Pierre's own labor and desire; and Enceladus is explicitly revealed as the personal double of Pierre (whose name, of course, means "stone"):

Foremost among them all, he saw a moss-turbaned, armless giant, who despairing of any other mode of wreaking his immitigable hate, turned his vast trunk into a battering-ram, and hurled his own arched-out ribs again and yet again against the invulnerable steep.

"Enceladus! it is Enceladus!"—Pierre cried out in his sleep. That moment the phantom faced him; and Pierre saw Enceladus no more; but on the Titan's armless trunk, his own duplicate face and features magnifiedly gleamed upon him with prophetic discomfiture and woe. With trembling frame he started from his chair, and woke from that ideal horror to all his actual grief.

Pierre becomes Sisyphus and the rock rolled into one. His vision imitates his own baffled desires—his hopeless and unceasing efforts to reclaim something originally lost: father, sister, birthright, mother, or Lucy. Pierre's reading of the dream sees truth and virtue frustrated by their natural earthly ties and ignored by an impassive, idealized heaven. Pierre treats the dream as prophecy, but the narrator, in an alternate reading, understands it as myth. This second interpretation is more hopeful because its incestuous cosmogony places Pierre's condition in a universal or cosmic context:

Old Titan's self was the son of incestuous Coelus and Terra, the son of incestuous Heaven and Earth. And Titan married his mother Terra, another and accumulatively incestuous match. And thereof Enceladus was one issue. So Enceladus was both the son and grandson of an incest; and even thus, there had been born from the organic blended heavenliness and earthliness of

Pierre, another mixed, uncertain, heaven-aspiring, but still not wholly earth-emancipated mood; which again, by its terrestrial taint held down to its terrestrial mother, generated there the present doubly incestuous Enceladus within him; so that the present mood of Pierre—that reckless sky-assaulting mood of his, was nevertheless on one side the grandson of the sky. For it is according to eternal fitness, that the precipitated Titan should still seek to regain his paternal birthright even by fierce esca-
lade. Wherefore whoso storms the sky gives best proof he came from thither! But whatso crawls contented in the moat before that crystal fort, shows it was born within that slime, and there forever will abide.

Melville's narrator completes the movement of deferral in the interpretation of the dream from social and psychological conflicts to the opposition of natural forces. What began with the tenants as an economic structure of class relations becomes in this last analysis an illustration of cosmic structure, a myth of eternal oppositions—natural, elemental, and static. By tracing them back to the origin of nature, the narrator can speak of the "eternal fitness" of Pierre's agonies, which serve as proof of his noble lineage. He neither attributes fault nor offers any possible solution, because Pierre's problems inhere in the cosmic order of things. His mythological reading, moreover, suppresses the first part of Pierre's dream, obscuring the parallelism between the Titans and the tenants, a similarity that apparently escapes Pierre as well. What is elided, of course, is the political dimension of Pierre's vision—what I would call its mythically disguised social landscape. Unlike the meeker tenants, the Titans are social climbers, not content with their lowly position, and convinced that the summit of success belongs to them by right. Their upward struggle represents a middle-class image of the social process: individuals rise and fall, but the social hierarchy is immutable. Ambition is, as it were, deified; and success is seen strictly in terms of personal struggle. Enceladus (or Pierre) is held back by his earthly origins and impelled forward by his celestial lineage. Pierre does not finally achieve the status of the self-reliant hero because he cannot accomplish the necessary union of opposites in himself: he cannot wed the contradictions of "high" and "low" in a way that would make the self representative of the whole society. In some sense, Pierre's dream is a distorted version of the class struggle: Enceladus reflects the anxieties inherent in the "natural" ambition of the bourgeoisie. The myths that infect Pierre's dream represent social conflicts as emblems of natural order; they render his personal failure into universal terms.⁹

This conceit of the Mount of Titans may well have been inspired by Shakespeare, in a passage marked by Melville in his copy of *Timon of Athens*.¹⁰ In the first scene of the play, a poet and a painter are discussing the aesthetic conceits they have brought (as commodities) to offer the rich and noble Timon:

Poet: Sir, I have upon a high and pleasant hill
Feign'd Fortune to be throned: the base o' the mount
Is rank'd with all deserts, all kind of natures,
That labour on the bosom of this sphere
To propagat their states: amongst them all,
Whose eyes are on this sovereign lady fix'd,
One do I personate of Lord Timon's frame,
Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her;
Whose present grace to present slaves and servants
Translates his rivals.

Painter: 'Tis conceived to scope.
This throne, this Fortune, and this hill, methinks,
With one man beckon'd from the rest below,
Bowling his head against the sleepy mount
To climb his happiness, would be well express'd
In our condition.

These sycophantic vendors of conceits have translated Lord Timon into the emblem of success, making him a caricature and exaggeration of Fortune's darling. The high and pleasant hill where Fortune sits enthroned represents the social world of Elizabethan England, with the lower orders ranged around its base and a select class designated to attain its eminence. Some differences from Melville's Mount of Titans are obvious: Fortune's hill is transparently allegorical, while the Mount of Titans is apparently natural; Fortune is a notoriously changeable lady, always rotating her wheel of favor, while the summit of the Mount of Titans seems to promise security; Timon and his rivals for Fortune's favor are recognized as men, while those who would climb Melville's mountain are romanticized into Titans. These symbolic features suggest some critical ideological differences between the Elizabethan and the nineteenth-century American notions of success. Melville's debt here to Shakespeare (which is minor at most) is less interesting than the imprint of ideology on these two complementary visions of the social landscape.

As an example of ideology, Pierre's dream is an alternative version of his alienated labor. The dream-text reflects Pierre's labor of writing; but it inverts, in the process of this reflection, the relations of men to their

social conditions. Pierre's labor commits him to a deterministic universe: his work is not creative, but merely reproductive. Pierre's literary work generates a world of constraints and necessities, rather than one of open possibilities. The ideology of romantic literature is hostile to his experience, and the task of converting his life into that standard coin becomes eventually a process of denying himself. Pierre's labor produces a negative form of identity, an estrangement of the product, activity, and common interest of literature. The vision of Enceladus "naturalizes" and masks this alienation. The dream and its interpretations trace Pierre's problems back to the original constitution of the world. Enceladus is an *exemplum* of ideology: he expresses Pierre's imaginary relationship to his real conditions of existence. For, in fact, the Mount of Titans is not "natural" at all; it only represents the unnatural "nature" of the bourgeois ideology.¹¹

Melville and Ideology

In *Moby-Dick*, ideologies are Ishmael's playthings; each lends an added set of meanings to a world rich in analogies of its own natural order. Those significances are not necessarily in ideological conflict (with the one exception of Ahab's truncated argument with Starbuck, in which the system of capital emerges as the humane side of the debate). Industrialism, capitalism, and many sorts of economic chicanery come under Ishmael's critical fire; but the work ethic, the democratic dignity of labor, and the common production of life represented by work remain Ishmael's ideological base. *Pierre*, on the other hand, is a bitter invective against literary, economic, and social ambition. Pierre is essentially committed to the middle-class terms of success. Robbed of his birthright, he looks to his labor to regain his heritage, seeking to make it on his own by individual and inward struggle. Separated from its active, productive functions, labor is represented as an upward climb, a myth of ascent. When Pierre sees himself as Enceladus, the social universe of the novel is distorted to represent the order of nature. This sort of distortion is not unique to *Pierre*; indeed, in American literature generally, the word "nature" often serves as a more or less innocent disguise for the values of the middle class. Melville, however, offers a startling variation on the theme. His nature is a battlefield of cosmic forces; its universal order is exposed as a form of oppression and alienation. This image of nature makes it an unflattering figure of the middle class, even though the narrator employs it to sanction the social order. In this sense, many of the symbols in *Pierre* are self-effacing: they are terms borrowed from ideology that render meanings "outside" that ideology incomprehensible

or ineffable. *Pierre* is unusual in the extent to which this normally unconscious borrowing is made explicit and problematic. Pierre believes that all signs refer to him; as he discovers their ambiguity, and as they decompose under his critical scrutiny, he is carried along in their disintegration. Melville's critique in *Pierre* centers on the extent to which a dominant ideology controls the lives not only of those who believe in it, but also of those, like Pierre, who stand in opposition.

Melville's discomfort with the dominant ideology arose from being simultaneously its adherent and its opponent. The middle-class mythology of Jacksonian America furnished him with an inventory of signs and a supply of symbolic language that he was constrained to use and mistrust at the same time. Melville never completely escaped this mythology or its concurrent rhetoric of economy, but in the inverted and alienated language of *Pierre* he immobilized its symbols, nullified its system or representation, and made explicit its subtle and pervasive hegemony.

Notes

- 1 Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (New York: The Library of America, 1983), p. 1021. Subsequent references are to this edition, which is based on the forthcoming Northwestern-Newberry text.
- 2 A subsequent article by Stephen Grimsley describes the coin, its specifications, and current (1999) values, and discusses its role in *Moby-Dick*: "Ecuador's 8 Escudos Coin in Moby Dick," <http://business.fortunecity.com/crown/841/numisphily/mobydick/mobydick.html>
- 3 Victor Turner, *Drama, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 273.
- 4 *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. 273. Subsequent references are to this edition.
- 5 Herschel Parker has argued that the attention to writing was added by Melville in the later stages of the novel's composition, largely in reaction to the critical reception of *Moby-Dick*. Parker divides the novel roughly into halves: the first a parody of romantic pastoral, the second a vituperative attack on American letters. See his "Historical Note" in *Pierre* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971) and "Why *Pierre* Went Wrong," *Studies in the Novel* 8 (1976): 7-23.
- 6 The terms are Victor Turner's; see *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 54.
- 7 The amaranth is a mythical immortal flower described by Pliny; it is also a

genus (*Amaranthus*) of annual herbs (including pigweed) found worldwide. Interestingly, the amaranth is mentioned in the title-page motto of James Fenimore Cooper's Littlepage trilogy, as an image of the perpetuity of families and their estates ("The only amaranthine flower on earth / is virtue: the only treasure, truth.'—SPENSER") These three novels—*Satanstoe* (1845), *The Chainbearer* (1845), and *The Redskins* (1846)—narrate the lineage and fortunes of the Littlepage family from the settlement of their Hudson River manor through the anti-rent uprising of their tenants in the 1840s. Although Cooper attributes the lines to Spenser, they are, in fact, from William Cowper's *The Task*, Book III. See also Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iii, 353: "Immortal amarant, a flower which once / In paradise, fast by the tree of life, / Began to bloom . . ."

- 8 Some commentators do not admit the episode of the lady and tenants as part of the dream *per se*, confining this last to the scene of the rocks assaulting the mountain. This does not necessarily argue against my reading, which emphasizes (as Melville does) the loss of distinction between dream and consciousness.
- 9 I rely here on Roland Barthes's assessment of the bourgeois ideology as a form of myth—as a system of "depoliticized speech" (*Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers [New York: Hill & Wang, 1972], pp. 109–59).
- 10 Wilson Walker Cowan, "Melville's Marginalia" (Diss., Harvard University, 1965), volume 9, p. 277. Curiously, *Timon of Athens* was also one of Karl Marx's favorite plays.
- 11 "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence." Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), p. 162.