A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY
IN THE NARRATIVE MAELSTROM:
A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH
TO ISHMAEL IN MOBY-DICK

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A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN THE NARRATIVE MAELSTROM: A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH TO ISHMAEL IN MOBY-DICK

A

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Abstract

"Call me Ishmael."

This opening line has confronted many a wary student first opening Moby-Dick. This thesis also confronts this line, by way of the enigma that is the narrator of the novel. Critics have long noted the fragmented nature of Moby-Dick, especially its oddly varying points of view. The book opens with a homodiegetic narrator telling a sea-adventure tale, but by the end is dominated by a heterodiegetic narrator telling the story of Ahab's tragedy. Using classic Freudian psychology and some Lacanian theory, this thesis makes a case for the complexity and importance of Ishmael in the structure and theme of the novel. Dividing the book into separate narratives representing Ishmael's ego, super-ego, and id, this thesis argues that Ishmael develops from a naïve, green sailor into an experienced whaleman with a healthier coherent personality. It is in the telling of the story that he is finally able to manifest this healthier personality.

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". . .and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago."

- Herman Melville, Moby-Dick

Introduction

"Call me Ishmael."

These three words have taken me on journeys that I never imagined possible. From the moment I began reading the novel Moby-Dick, they have always fascinated me. I couldn't manage to shake the feeling that there was something more to them. And the more I analyzed the story with these three words in mind, the more questions came up, but I believe that I have finally developed a satisfactory interpretation of this vast, complex novel in terms of the character that tells the story.

Obviously, many critics have approached this book from a wide variety of interpretative frameworks, from early approaches focused on the novel's Romanticism and religious themes (such as Luther Mansfield's essay "Symbolism and Biblical Allusion in Moby-Dick" and Lawrence Thompson's Melville's Quarrel With God) to more recent multicultural approaches (such as Theresa Kanoza's "The Golden Carp and Moby Dick: Rudolfo Anaya's Multiculturalism" and Carolyn Karcher's Shadow Over the Promised Land).[1]

There have also of course been many psychological investigations of the novel, but mostly focused either on Ahab or on Melville himself.[2] In many cases, psychological criticism has provoked dialogue about what the book is saying to a modern audience. Critics utilizing this approach claim that the book is a window into the soul of the man behind the novel and that through understanding Melville, they can understand the book. These interpretations are useful for finding the historical Melville, but I am more interested in using psychoanalysis as a tool for understanding the character of Ishmael. The psychological approach I utilize in this thesis is not new, but it does focus in some new ways on the character of Ishmael and his relationship to the varied uses of point of view in the novel. By utilizing Freud's models of personality development coupled with Jacques Lacan's interpretations of these models, I believe I can show how the character of Ishmael comes together with differing modes of narration to produce a coherent voice that is responsible for much of the strength of the novel.

Through the use of Freud's model for personality development, I have broken the novel into three distinct narratives: the sea-adventure narrative corresponds to the ego, the tragic tale dominated by Ahab to the id, and the encyclopedic narrative to the super-ego. Separating the narrative into different sections is not a new idea. Many juvenile and digest versions of the novel, for instance, simply cut all the cetology chapters in favor of the adventure. Christopher Sten divides the novel along the stages of a whale hunt:

> (1) preparations for the hunt (chapters 1-23); (2) presentation of the lore of the whaling industry (chapters 24-47); (3) the pursuit of the whale (chapters 48-76); (4) capturing the whale (chapters 77-105); and (5) the trial in the whale's "belly" (chapters 106-35). (138)

Critics have also pointed out that the narrative changed direction radically after Melville read Shakespeare and Hawthorne, and the traces of that shift are still present in the differing forms of narration. Hayford and Parker explain how the book changed from a sea adventure to

something more ambitious without Melville discarding some early aspects of the original plan. In the summer of 1850, Melville

> was "half way in the work," and by the end of June he offered it to his English publisher, saying it would be ready by "the latter part of the coming autumn." [. . .] in August [he] was profoundly affected by meeting Hawthorne and reading his Mosses. (Hayford and Parker 471)

After meeting Hawthorne, Melville spent until the fall of 1851 finishing his novel. In that time, he made many changes, some of which were purposeful. His editors made other more minor changes but the outcome was the novel we have been reading since its rediscovery in the 1920's.

I have chosen to divide the book into three sections according to the dominant narrative voice and method of narration in each of the sections, because they reflect different aspects of the personality of Ishmael and the experiences that radically change him. By some time after the chronological end of the novel, he has become a whole, mature individual rather than the naïve, self-centered

Ishmael he was at the beginning. In the process of maturing, he manages to avoid becoming either the obsessed Ahab of the tragedy or the over-zealous cataloguer of the encyclopedic narrative. He shows that he is a little of all of these personalities and consequently is a more balanced and mature individual.

In Moby-Dick Melville broke away from the successful storytelling mode he had developed in earlier novels such as Typee, Omoo, Redburn, and White-Jacket. These tales were told with the purpose of providing an entertaining story to a mass audience about his own time spent as a sailor. His one attempt to be more ambitious was the critical and popular disaster of Mardi. But part way through writing Moby-Dick, Melville read hundreds of pages of Hawthorne, Shakespeare, and the Bible, which inspired him to move onto more complex ground. He wanted his novels to reflect his new maturity. Although Melville obviously predates Freud, I believe both men used some of the same archetypal patterns for character formation. This would not be tremendously surprising, since both men were educated in the same Western tradition, studying the

classical canon. I do not mean to suggest that Melville developed Freud's theory of personality development first, merely that Melville and Freud intuited some of the same truths about human nature.

From the opening lines, there is an immediate sense of two versions of Ishmael: one is a young schoolteacher with some experience at sea, who occasionally finds himself unable to deal with the frustrations of life; the other is a more worldly man unfolding a tale of his youth with rueful irony. This fact is a key to my interpretation of the novel. Ishmael the narrator has survived a great tragic adventure. He has come back from the threshold of death and has gone through a process of interpreting and analyzing his experiences. The telling of the novel itself is both a crucial stage in and the best evidence we have of Ishmael's maturity. Moreover, Melville retrospectively reconstructs Ishmael in this way so as to allow the audience an active part in his creation.

The person who says "Call me Ishmael" understands himself fairly well and uses self-deprecating humor appealingly. His younger self has become depressed and has

only one solution: "whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet [...] then I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can" (3). The more mature narrating Ishmael realizes that his youthful restlessness was not unusual: "almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish nearly the same feeling towards the ocean with me" (3). The youthful Ishmael stumbles into a Black church, mistakenly believing it to be an inn; repeatedly sets himself up to be the butt of Peter Coffin's jokes; almost finds himself with a "very long lay" if it were not for Queequeg's intervention; gets abused by Peleg and Bildad for his ignorance of whaling; and in many other ways proves himself to be a "greenhorn," and highly susceptible to the influence of stronger personalities. The narrator, on the other hand, is "something of a salt" but never looks to go to sea as "a Commodore, or a Captain, or a Cook" (5). He makes fun of his younger self, and sarcastically rationalizes his inexperience as a chance to be among the crew as an anonymous individual, rather than being in charge of the ship, men or food.

Overlaying the two Ishmaels like this, Melville's purpose in showing us an older man looking back at his younger self suggests that an important aspect of the novel will be spiritual growth. This is the aspect that has so fascinated me in my repeated readings of the book, and also seems to me to provide a key to understanding some of its other structural aspects. Somehow the sailor/teacher Ishmael who was depressed and obsessed with finding some new adventure has become a mentally healthier man who is able to learn something (and teach us something) from his unexpectedly dramatic adventure.

The fractured narrative of the novel reflects the process of one Ishmael becoming the other. In the early chapters the reader gets to know the naïve Ishmael, while in the cetology and tragedy sections we meet other Ishmaels, one dominated by the super-ego and one by the id. It is by fracturing the narrative that Ishmael can relate to the audience a true account of how he felt toward what he was seeking, who he now is and what he experienced on board the Pequod. Reading the book, the audience can see that Ishmael isn't the egomaniacal Ahab in a quest for the

Whale. This character, the exact opposite of the Ishmael that originally goes aboard the Pequod, is someone who only sees one aspect of the world and feels that he must conquer it or die trying. Neither is he the cataloguer that Ishmael becomes in the encyclopedic narrative. This personality seeks control of the world, to be the namer and definer of everything. In this aspect, Ishmael would never be satisfied with the world. He would continually seek to define and construct his surroundings to something more easily understood rather than allowing the wonders of the world to be his to ponder and understand. He becomes, by book's end and the beginning of the book (after Ishmael's return), the combination of all of these character qualities. This is how I connect the novel with Freud's personality model. Through the sea-adventure, encyclopedic and tragic portions of the narrative, Ishmael learns what it is to be a part of the world, to be at home in the world and to be able to live with both its horrors and its delights, succumbing to neither, not an outcast or a castaway, but a storyteller.

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It's obvious from the first pages of the book that we will be dealing with a fractured narrative. The "Etymology" and "Extracts" sections suggest a process of searching, almost research, towards the goal of understanding. I believe that the reader is intended to undertake a similar search for the character of Ishmael. Point of view, structure, plot, and character are all obviously interrelated in a successful novel, as Susan Lanser points out:

> If we understand point of view to concern the relations between narrating subjects and the literary system that is the text-in-context, then we confront a complex network of interactions between author, narrator(s), characters, and audiences both real and implied. (13)

This interactive definition of point of view brings the reading audience into the equation in determining the relationship of the different aspects of the book. Melville's construction of the novel and of Ishmael becomes an ongoing process for the reader's interpretation.

Ishmael and the Ego: His Hand Against Every Man.

The first section I analyze is the ego of the story because these are the first chapters that are given to the readers. The narrator Ishmael allows the reader to enter the world with his younger self. The ego is the personality element that the outside world knows best about any individual they meet. Through the ego a person interacts with the world, and through the sea-adventure the reader is first introduced to the younger Ishmael.

Within this narrative, Ishmael portrays himself as both the sidekick and the green whaleman. He stumbles into folly throughout the opening chapters of the novel, seemingly enraptured with the ideas of glory and adventure that confront him in his seeking to go on board the ship, but also sometimes repulsed by other ideas associated with the same dream. In "The Chapel," Ishmael reads the tombstones of the dead whalemen who were buried at sea. Ishmael's state of mind before he takes to the sea is reflected in his reminiscing about the time before he boarded the Pequod. He faithfully renders for the reader that he was suffering from anxiety and depression, but the

younger Ishmael quickly puts aside the contemplations of death and cheers himself with the thought of promotion and riches. After revealing that he chose to think of a brighter future, the mature narrator goes on and says:

> Yes, there is death in this business of whaling - a speechlessly quick chaotic bundling of a man into Eternity. But what then? Methinks we have hugely mistaken this matter of Life and Death. Methinks that what they call my shadow on earth is my true substance [. . .] 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. (42)

Through his experiences aboard the Pequod, the mature Ishmael gained a more mature perspective on life and death. He sees that death usually comes quickly to men in the whaling business, but also it is not a horrible thing. The narrator believes that his soul is greater than his earthly form and that death is merely another stage to be confronted as it comes. The younger Ishmael has

contemplated suicide because he was afraid, both of what was on land and what was at sea. He says at the start that

> . . .whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off-then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. (3)

As he moves from his discussion about himself and why he goes to sea and to the wharves surrounding "Manhatoes," he observes men down on the wharves going about their daily lives on land and says that they ". . .are all landsmen; of week days pent up in lath and plaster-tied to counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks. How then is this? Are the green fields gone? What do they here?"(4). For

the younger Ishmael, the land represented the humdrum, the boring and stifling, while the sea represented danger, adventure and potential growth. In either case, both are equally dangerous for him. These lines seem to indicate he was trying to talk himself into the adventure. The narrator Ishmael gives the reader this information about himself, partly because he is trying to tell the story as precisely as he can, but also to show his growth. At this point his growth is not obvious because he has to come through the adventure and show it, but even here the reader realizes he has the potential for growth. Ishmael's lines while contemplating the whalemen's memorials are a foreshadowing of this growth. The narrator has moved from thinking of his death as an escape to thinking of it as a potential extension of his adventure.

The specific words used on the first page of the story are important in determining where the reader enters into interaction with the text. The use of the imperative sentence, "Call me Ishmael," is a forceful beginning, perhaps the most famous opening line in the English language. This line not only tells us who will be telling

the story, but also influences how we will interact with him. The name Melville gives his protagonist is important. Ishmael figures heavily in the book of Genesis. He is the eldest son of Abraham and Hagar, a slave woman. Sarah, Abraham's wife, asked him to sleep with Hagar because she believed herself to be barren. Once Hagar was discovered with child, Sarah cast her out. When Hagar asked for deliverance, God answered and Abraham took her back. But the Lord also warned Hagar that she and her son would eventually be turned away. She went back to Abraham and Sarah, and for a time Ishmael had a place of honor as being the only son of Abraham. However, when Isaac was born, Ishmael is exiled from his father. The word "Ishmael" is from Hebrew, meaning "God hears." Melville, in naming his narrator Ishmael, imbues him with the qualities of the outcast, and since he is the narrator, the entire text takes on this quality of being outcast. The quality most important in this comparison is separation and the anxiety it creates in the mind. But there also is an element of hope because there is the idea that someone (in this case, God) will hear what our Ishmael is saying and will respond.

Ishmael's status as an outcast is not a permanent situation; the reader is intended to hear him and acknowledge the growth that he goes through the course of the story.

When considering the need to be heard, the qualities of the ego become all the more important. The younger Ishmael is reacting to a world where he believes that he is an outcast. To reconcile himself with the world, he embarks on a journey to sea, providing a physical separation for himself and enabling him to gain a broader perspective on this world that he interprets as hating him. Ishmael does this because of his specific interpretation of himself in the world and the separation that he believes is between him and the world he perceives. Ishmael wants to react angrily to this world and in doing so, potentially define himself in a different setting. The need to act out in dangerously self-absorbed ways is narcissistic and can only lead him to more dangerous activities. As Joseph Adamson writes:

> In the opening pages of Moby-Dick, Ishmael displays all the signs of a dangerously

> precarious narcissistic disequilibrium, a state of shame that expresses itself as the shyness and depression of withdrawal and self-attack, or alternately a sudden impulse to attack others in anger. (51)

Ishmael calls his state of mind the "drizzly November of my soul" and he finds it necessary to "drive off the spleen" (3). Generally speaking, this paragraph indicates someone who has become absorbed into his own world. Ishmael, realizing this state of mind, seeks to remedy it by going to sea. He also is showing the reader how he has since matured, that he was immature when he was younger and he has returned to land as a more balanced man. We are able to differentiate between the mature voice of the narrator and the often times funny mistakes the younger Ishmael makes as he tries to secure a place on board a ship. The younger Ishmael calls it "driving off the spleen"; in Freudian terms this could be interpreted as the ego's reaction to interference from the super-ego. The super-ego, working to inhibit the destructive and antisocial impulses derived from the id, makes itself felt by creating the feeling of

anxiety due to morals that were ingrained at an early age. Ishmael reflects that "it requires strong moral principle" to stop his actions, and upon realizing the antisocial nature of his problems, he takes to the sea. By doing this, he not only preserves his life and sanity, but also counteracts his self-destructive impulses and redirects this libidinous energy into a creative endeavor.

The course of his thoughts becomes even clearer in Chapter Four, "The Counterpane," which reveals part of the separation that Ishmael's ego felt in the world. Ishmael relates how, as a child, he decided to climb into the chimney, "as I had seen a little sweep do a few days previous" (28). When his stepmother catches him in the act and drags him out of the chimney, she sends him to bed without supper. As he lies in bed during the broad daylight of afternoon, he contemplates his punishment and imprisonment. Eventually falling asleep, he awakens to find "a supernatural hand placed in [his]" (29). While his hand lies over the counterpane that covers him, he is unable to move the hand for fear that he will disturb the supernatural nature of the event that he is experiencing.

The supernatural experience becomes his way of trying to deal with the separation that is part of his punishment. His mother engrains this separation in Ishmael's growing personality because of the guilt he feels at being caught in a forbidden act. The fact that she cast him aside is a powerful psychic memory that Ishmael, as an adult, still feels. Only some sort of maternal, friendly connection back to the world can overcome his guilt.

Freud calls attention to childhood as the time when neuroses are developed, most generally from traumatic events of some duration:

> No individual is spared such traumatic experiences; none escapes the repressions to which they give rise. These questionable reactions on the part of the ego may perhaps be indispensable for the attainment of another aim which is set for the same period of life: in the space of a few years the little primitive creature must turn into a civilized human being. [. . .] it can almost never be achieved without the additional help of upbringing, of parental

> influence, which, as a precursor of the super-ego, restricts the ego's activity by prohibitions and punishments, and encourages or compels the setting up of repressions. (Outline 42)

Ishmael recalls the primal scene while he lies in bed with Queequeg. As Ishmael finds himself being held "in the most loving and affectionate manner. You had almost thought I had been his wife" (28), Queequeg bridges the separation. Andrew Delblanco describes this scene as the point where Ishmael discovers the "otherness of his body and the world it craved" (xviii). Queequeg's open and affectionate manner brings together the two episodes, and as an adult with a formed super-ego, Ishmael is able to make the connection he needs to be a part of society and the world: "I began to be sensible of strange feelings. I felt a melting in me. No more my splintered heart and maddened hand were turned against the wolfish world. This soothing savage had redeemed it" (57).

This passage also directly alludes to Scripture, "his hand against every man and every man's hand against him" (Gen. 16:12), and, according to Adamson, is used to

emphasize "the reversal that takes place: Ishmael may not ever leave the wilderness, but at this point the wilderness leaves him" (51). As an adult able to realize the fantasy of his childhood, he is tapping into the primal scene of his youth, a symbolic returning to the womb (or, literally, the chimney from which his mother pulls him), to find a type of closure for this neurosis. Without fear of castration and the ability to enjoy the pleasure of being held, the "scar" that he obtained after the chimney incident is reduced and allows him freer access to the world.

Another aspect to be considered in this situation is how the mature Ishmael is looking back on this episode and remembering the intensity of the feelings he felt in the embrace of Queequeg and the strong inexplicable bond that he gained that day in bed. While he is in this immature state, he seeks the affection and acceptance of his peers and the world he inhabits. While he stays on land, he has not been able to find such acceptance. Even when he first enters the world of the Pequod, he does not find acceptance. But because this tale is told in retrospect,

there is something of a memorial in the terms he uses to describe the relationship he had with Queequeg. No longer can Ishmael claim that every hand is against him; at least one took hold. The young Ishmael is beginning to see potential acceptance in the world and his ego is beginning to heal. He is not totally healed, far from it, but he is beginning to make his way towards a more coherent personality. He now must find balance between the other parts of his personality: the super-ego and the id.

Ishmael and the Super-Ego: An Apology for the Encylopedic Narrative

Many new readers encountering the encyclopedic narrative in Moby-Dick find that these are the hardest chapters to read and comprehend. They are often omitted from abridged versions of the novel, and not merely for young readers. When I first encountered them, I too was stymied by the text. It is only after careful consideration that the encyclopedic narrative, or, as most critics refer to them, the cetology sections, become a vital part of the novel. It is within these chapters that Ishmael is given full authority to examine the world and to describe what he was seeing aboard the ship. "The Advocate," "Monstrous Pictures of Whales," "Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales," "The Honor and Glory of Whaling," are just a few of the cetology chapters, but I believe that overall, these chapters represent the complex super-ego of Ishmael's personality. They represent what he has learned of the world and how he has grown from his childhood and the scared child being pulled out of a chimney, to a man willing to face the ocean and explore the world without

fear of reprisal and no more than a healthy normal fear of death. The chapters that may be boring to some readers are, in fact, the most telling of how Ishmael manages to keep his sanity and come to grips with the world.

An example of the authoritative tone that he takes in the encyclopedic narrative can be found within the "Cetology" chapter. Within this chapter, Ishmael sets out to define the whales of the world and to order them in some sort of classification system.

> Now the various species of whales need some sort of popular comprehensive classification, if only an easy outline of one for the present, hereafter to be filled in all its departments by subsequent laborers. As no better man advance to take this matter in hand, I hereupon offer my own poor endeavors. I promise nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that very reason infallibly be faulty. I shall not pretend to a minute anatomical description of the various species, or-in this place at least-to much of any description. My

> object here is simply to project the draught of a systematization of cetology. I am the architect, not the builder. (147)

This paragraph shows how, even though the younger Ishmael is aware of his lack of knowledge, he will give a classification of whales that can be used. If critics of the work wish to add to it, this is fine by him. In his telling the audience his shortcomings, he builds on the trust he has started with the sea-adventure. He is not claiming to be perfect, but he is going to do his humble best. At the same time, he wants the reader to be aware of his knowledge and to show he is smart enough to make a system of classification. He is asserting himself into the world of whaling wholeheartedly and hoping to leave some sort of lasting mark that future generations will see is his.

Within the story, the classifications associated with Ishmael's super-ego are not secluded to the cetology chapters. Occasionally the mature Ishmael brings some of the immature Ishmael's observations out during the course of other narratives to point out certain things that are

lacking in other characters to show what potentially could have been Ishmael if things had gone differently. Ishmael's observations about the incident involving Pip the cabin boy are very important in understanding Ishmael and his growing maturity.

The sea adventure chapters fade out by Chapter 22, "Merry Christmas," and the Pequod's shipping out. With the departure from land, Ishmael focuses on becoming a part of the crew. He believes he has found companionship with Queequeg, but he begins to lose himself in becoming a mere crewmember and not asserting himself as an individual. Ishmael does not immediately come to this awareness. He first has to deal with his symbolic "wilderness." This is one of the focal points of the book. Ishmael, though more firmly attached to the world by his relationship to Queequeg and by extension to whaling and the crew of the Pequod still finds himself wandering in a psychological wilderness. The mature Ishmael knows that the self-hatred he felt on land is destructive, but there was still separation about which he feels great anxiety. This is where the super-ego within his personality begins to push

forward and define the world. Ishmael allows his super-ego more control over his impulses as he tries to classify the separation he feels in his mind. If he doesn't allow this freedom and continues to repress his super-ego, he stays the same self-destructive person he was on land. What could occur to him is reflected in his telling of the story of Pip, the young cabin boy.

When one of Stubb's oarsmen gets hurt in the pursuit of the whale, Pip is recruited to take over on one of the oars. His first lowering for a whale is uneventful. On the second lowering, the boat harpoons a whale and it surfaces right next to Pip. In a panic, Pip jumps overboard and becomes entangled in the line. Stubb orders that the line be cut and the whale lost. Stubb and the crew yell at him for the cowardice, and Stubb warns him, "Stick to the boat, Pip, or by the Lord, I won't pick you up if you jump; mind that" (452).

This warning serves as another primal scene within the story. Pip has done something that in the whaling world is tantamount to masturbation; he has done something self-serving that does not benefit the crew. When Stubb's boat

lowers a third time, harpoons a whale and again Pip jumps, Stubb is as good as his word. He leaves Pip to fend for himself in the ocean alone. All of the other whaleboats, busy chasing other whales, fail to see Pip and they too leave him. It isn't until the Pequod herself comes and picks up the castaway that he is rescued. However, the person they pull aboard is no longer Pip: ". . . from that hour the little Negro went about the deck an idiot; such, at least, they said he was. The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul" (453). Pip loses his mind and Ishmael indicates that he has lost the "infinite of his soul." Because Pip was so young, and because he had very little parenting and influence in the direction of the shaping of morals, his mind has no super-ego to buffer this punishment, and he cannot come to grips with the paternal punishment that had been handed down by Stubb. By leaving Pip behind, Stubb has created an unbridgeable gap in Pip between the ego, that which perceives and interacts with the world, and the primal forces of the id. Because the id, which Pip inherits from his parent, and his ego, which he has formed and will

continue to form through his life, have become irrevocably separated, no super-ego will form and thus Pip will remain a fractured personality. The maternal Pequod cannot reconcile the separation that Pip feels when he is cast away from Stubb, the father figure; he is psychically castrated and the parts are left in the sea.

Ishmael's super-ego can be seen to be influencing this narrative. Ishmael the narrator who survived the sinking of the Pequod concentrates on the qualities he saw lacking within the poor Pip. By his concentration on what becomes missing in Pip, Ishmael is able to show the reader how far his younger self was able to progress: from the green whaleman to a cataloguer and observer in the world. But as the encyclopedic narrative progresses, faults begin to surface that Ishmael, as the narrator of the story, brings up to show how being a cataloguer and observer can also be as destructive as the school teacher who has self-destructive impulses on land. Chapter Twenty-Four, "The Advocate," begins

> As Queequeg and I are now fairly embarked in this business of whaling; and as this business of

> whaling has somehow come to be regarded among landsmen as rather unpoetical and disreputable pursuit; therefore, I am all anxiety to convince ye, ye landsmen, of the injustice hereby done to us hunters of whales. (118)

This paragraph reflects a change in Ishmael as he leaves the land behind and embarks on the ocean. He has found something to "interest" him and to engage his mind. Too quickly he moves from his morose ponderings of the whalemen's memorials and now is ready to be the expert in all things concerning whaling. The fact that he so quickly takes up the role of advocate reflects how relatively immature he was. He all but forgets the fears he had on land about the dangers he would be facing at sea, and wholeheartedly becomes a whaleman. He takes it upon himself to be the expert voice and to describe for the readers, "ye landsmen," what he perceives to be the poetic life of a whaling ship. His melancholy has lifted and he has found a purpose. Along with this purpose, Ishmael is also "anxious" to speak, to show his mind to the reader.

This anxiety, which is connected to his feelings of separation, also shows his attempts to connect again to humanity. However, his separation, while less than it was, still is present. The encyclopedic narrative then can be seen as part super-ego working to order and structure the world for Ishmael, and part compulsion, something that he uses to compensate for other insecurities that he felt about himself. Freud notes that people who exhibit signs of compulsion know that they are acting against the grain of the rest of society; they readily admit it. Another person observing these habits can point them out, but the person exhibiting the signs will only alter them to some other form of compulsion:

> Only one thing is open to him - he can displace and exchange; instead of one silly idea he can adopt another of a slightly milder character from one precaution or prohibition he can proceed to another, instead of one ceremonial rite he can perform another. He can displace his sense of compulsion, but he cannot dispel it. This capacity for displacing all the symptoms,

> involving radical alteration of their original forms, is a main characteristic of the disease. (General Intro 230)

Ishmael, in taking to sea, has substituted the compulsions he feels to walk with funeral processions and knock off men's hats with the compulsion to classify and advocate/educate. Going one step further, the reader can see that these are similar types of compulsions. In his reaching out through the encyclopedic narrative, he also is creating bridges among his audience, the reader, and his world. In his role as the narrator and using the story as a way of showing readers his stability, Ishmael relates his compulsive need to categorize and theorize the events of the story. But in his stable state of mind as the narrator, Ishmael acknowledges once again that there is an audience who is reading the text and discerning meaning from it. Before he embarked on his journey, Ishmael had no such audience, and now that he does, he can relate the complexities that he sees in the world of ships and the people he encounters on land in a more reasonable way. It isn't a self-obsessed view of the world but rather that of

some one who wishes to share and be acknowledged for what he has seen and done, especially because he sees whalemen as isolated from the world and relatively unappreciated. He writes:

> If a stranger were introduced into miscellaneous metropolitan society, it would but slightly advance the general opinion of his merits, were he presented to the company as a harpooner, say; and if in emulation of the naval officers he should append the initials S.W.F. (Sperm Whale Fishery) to his visiting card, such a procedure would be deemed pre-eminently presuming and ridiculous. (118)

Ishmael saw the crew with him in the isolation he took on himself. He over-identifies with the group that he has chosen to be a part of so he can avoid total isolation from society. In the process, though, he forgets to assert himself as an individual. It is only when he is writing these cetological chapters that he gives himself a voice and that is only after he has returned to land and had time to think of his role and realize the isolation he forced

upon himself. In writing this encyclopedic narrative, he shows how, as a younger person, he had the compulsion to organize, define and separate the world, but at the same time he struggled to bring part of the world he saw himself separated from with him, in essence to help fill the void he created through his own separation anxiety.

One aspect of this compulsion must be emphasized. Freud notes that the mind of a compulsive person gravitates towards doubt to such an extent that the person begins to question even things that they had held for certain. Most of these things are seen in Ishmael as the book progresses:

> All these [doubts] combine to bring about an ever-increasing indecisiveness, loss of energy, and curtailment of freedom; and that although the obsessional neurotic is originally always a person of a very energetic disposition, often highly opinionated, and as a rule intellectually gifted above the average. He has usually attained to an agreeably high standard of ethical development, is over-conscientious, and more than usually correct. (General Introduction 230)

Ishmael's correctness is reflected, again, in his efforts in the encyclopedic narrative. In "Cetology," Ishmael takes a moment as the Pequod departs from New Bedsford and, facing the open sea and the dangers ahead, he begins a classification of whales. The narrator Ishmael does this for three reasons. On the surface, he is acknowledging the reader, and telling a world aware of whales but not familiar with them what whales the men hunt and what he encountered while he was at sea. Below the surface the narrator is showing a way that he found of grounding himself in intellectual pursuits rather than facing the sea openly. Finally at both levels, it gives him the opportunity to be right. As he tells the reader in previous chapters, he is constantly reminded of his duty on board the ship and must continually play "catch-up" to the other, more experienced sailors on board. But in the cetology chapters, he is allowed to create something new and, in his mind, wholly his own, and no one on board (or on land for the course of the story) can correct him. Above all, he is taking the opportunity to work through his experience.

Ishmael, Ahab and the Id Part One: The Id's Power Over Ishmael

An aspect in the overall structure of the novel and the id that must be considered are the "dramatic" chapters, written as acts in a play within the story. Within each of these chapters, there is no narration, only parts for actors to play as if upon a stage. These chapters are the least Ishmael-like in the entire novel. However, these sections contain elements of all three of the personality components. On the surface, it would seem that these sections would be more closely related to the super-ego due to their controlling nature. But the psychoanalytic personality component they best represent is the powerful id. What happens within the dramatic sections is the subversion of Ishmael and the domination of Ahab. Ishmael submerges himself through these sections into the powerful temptation to surrender to Ahab's quest and become one with the crew. Within the tragic narrative, Ishmael relates the story from just below the surface, managing to give human perspective to the quest of Ahab. The sea-adventure reveals the all-too-human nature of the younger Ishmael and

the encyclopedic narrative shows what happens when a personality tries to control every aspect and classification of the world. In this dramatic sub-section, rather than allowing the action to unfold in a natural manner, there is an omniscient director controlling the action, placing stage directions at the head of the chapters and assigning names to the actors. As the narrator of the novel, the reader is aware that Ishmael is the director, but this dramatic section has nothing in it to remind the reader that he is present. These chapters represent the younger Ishmael being swayed by Ahab and becoming a mere observer within his own story.

In "Midnight, Forecastle" (Chapter 40), the first lines of the chapter are stage directions given as if for a dramatic production:

Harpooneers and Sailors.

(Foresail rises and discovers the watch standing, lounging,
leaning, and lying in various attitudes, all singing in chorus.)

Farewell and adieu to you, Spanish ladies!

Farewell and adieu to you, ladies of Spain!

Our captain's commanded-

1st NANTUCKET SAILOR.

Oh, boys, don't be sentimental; it's bad for the digestion! Take a tonic, follow me!

(Sings, and all follow.)

Our captain stood upon the desk,

A spy-glass in his hand,

A viewing of those gallant whales

That blew at every strand.

Oh, your tubs in your boats, my boys,

And by your braces stand,

And we'll have one of those fine whales,

Hand, boys, over hand!

So, be cheery, my lads! may your hearts never fail!

While the bold harponeer is striking the whale!

(187)

These lines set the stage. The next lines are cast with characters comprised of the sailors of the Pequod. Finally, the lines are also written in iambic pentameter,

setting this chapter and like chapters apart from the rest of the novel. As the characters sing their song and the action is choreographed by the unseen and unmentioned Ishmael, the setting of the novel feels much less like a boat and more like a theater on land. In this sub-section, Ishmael the character is one with the crew, not even mentioning himself as separate. As he retells the stories of the sailors and their life, he purposefully casts himself outside of their activities. Within the younger Ishmael, the super-ego is still trying to maintain some separation. He is unable to wholly break away from the purpose and power of Ahab: instead, he observes the actions of the mesmerized crew and this narrative is the product. Ishmael allows himself to sink into obscurity within the drama to represent his feeling of fragmentation, moving further away from a coherent personality and seemingly lost within his own tale.

This is evident when Ishmael reports the speeches of Ahab. Rather than casting them within his own narrative, Ishmael gives Ahab full control as an independent actor.

In "Sunset," Ahab is sitting alone in his cabin and speaking to himself:

> I leave a white and turbid wake; pale waters, paler cheeks, where'er I sail. The envious billows sidelong swell to whelm my track; let them; but first I pass.
>
> Yonder, by the ever-brimming goblet's rim, the warm wanes blush like wine. The gold brow plumbs the blue. The diver sun-slow dived from noon,-goes down; my soul mounts up! she wearies with her endless hill. Is, then, the crown too heavy that I wear? (182)

In these two paragraphs, there is no sign of Ishmael or his views. This is wholly Ahab and his reflections on the world around him. The words themselves are very beautiful and sad, something that the younger Ishmael would hear and understand because of his own feelings of separation. Combine the beauty and the identification that Ishmael feels and the two become powerful elements of persuasion that Ishmael must deal with in order to grow into the mature Ishmael that narrates the novel. By structuring some

of Ahab's soliloquies in this way, the mature narrator Ishmael is showing that even though he survived, he still feels the power of Ahab's words.

The bits and pieces of this drama resurface throughout the last third of the novel. The place where it is most notable is in the end of the novel as the tragic conclusion becomes evident. As the events begin to unfold and the hunt for Moby Dick speeds up, Ishmael feels Ahab's mania pushing him further and further away from the person he was on the land. As this happens, Ishmael fades into the background, and in his place the voice of the stage director takes over. It isn't until the end of the book that Ishmael finally resurfaces as he begins to struggle for his own personality separate from Ahab, the Pequod, and the crew.

Ishmael, Ahab and the Id Part Two: Desire, Seduction and Awareness

The id is obviously the sexiest part of the personality, and the last third of Moby-Dick, dominated by Ahab's passion, is in some ways the most compelling part of the novel. Protagonist-Ishmael's comedy and narrator-Ishmael's cetology are replaced by Ahab's tragic drama, and in fact the character of Ishmael disappears offstage for chapters at a time, only to reappear as the lone survivor of the long hunt. These chapters represent the strongest temptation Ishmael faces in his sea-adventure: that of surrendering his will entirely to Ahab's will, as people often feel the urge to surrender to the demands of the id. With the death of Ahab the book comes full circle, and the reader can at last see how the narcissistic youth of the opening chapters and the subsumed crewman of the middle chapters has grown into the mature narrator who can tell his story with humor and wisdom.

Through the encyclopedic narrative, Ishmael's super-ego is allowed the room to classify and create systems of hierarchy that he can confidently say are his own and that

no one can challenge because they are right for him. The only person that can impede this classification and upset the construct is Ahab, for above all others on the Pequod he has authority over interpretation of the world. Ahab, as captain, has authority to determine what is important, what is to be considered and what isn't. This is why Ahab is the id of Ishmael's personality. The power to create or destroy is centered within the id. Through the power he has as captain of the boat, Ahab is able to control all aspects of life on the ship. If Ahab wants something built, he tells the carpenter and the blacksmith to build it. If he wishes to only pursue Moby Dick, then he has the power to make it happen and nobody can stop him. Ahab's power resides in his ability to bend everyone to his will, to act as an intoxicant for the crewmen he sways. The crewmen believe that by allowing themselves to be dominated, they will share in Ahab's power, but this is something that they cannot obtain. This is what Ishmael realizes, but only after he has returned to land and still feels the pull of Ahab's power even from beyond the grave.

Through the first twenty-seven chapters, Ahab is only alluded to, never showing his face aboard the ship. He remains a presence, not seen or even really acknowledged, but every one of the crewmembers and the reader as well knows that he is on board and that he is the one directing the action of the boat.

Ahab comes onto the stage in chapter 29, "Enter Ahab; to him, Stubb." The chapter title shows the gravity of his appearance. With his appearance, Ahab pulls the weakest of his lieutenants to him. Before Ahab's entrance, Stubb is described as "happy-go-lucky; neither craven nor valiant; taking perils as they came with an indifferent air" (128). But as Ahab comes up onto the deck of the ship and paces the deck at night, Stubb suggests to Ahab "there might be some way of muffling the noise [of the ivory peg-leg]" (138). Ahab, at his innocent remark, lets him know who the captain is:

> Am I a cannon-ball, Stubb," said Ahab, "that thou wouldst wad me in that fashion? But go thy ways; I had forgot. Below to thy nightly grave; where such as ye sleep between shrouds, to use ye

to the filling one at last. - Down, dog, and kennel!"

Starting at the unforeseen concluding exclamation of the so suddenly scornful old man, Stubb was speechless a moment; then said excitedly, "I am not used to be spoken to that way, sir; I do but less than half like it, sir."

"Avast!" gritted Ahab between set teeth and violently moving away, as if to avoid some passionate temptation.

No, sir; not yet," said Stubb, emboldened, "I will not tamely be called a dog, sir."

"Then be called ten times a donkey, and a mule, and an ass, and begone, or I'll clear the world of thee!"

As he said this, Ahab advanced upon him with such overbearing terrors in his aspect, that Stubb involuntarily retreated. (138-139)

From this point forward Stubb comes under the power of Ahab. His backing down from the insult and from the captain breaks the jolly Stubb. Stubb becomes of the same

mind as Ahab, disturbed by the power the pursuit of the whale has over him, but unable to pull away from it. Where the pursuit consumes Ahab, Stubb still maintains a part of what was originally his, but only barely.

The speech, much like the speeches of the dramatic sub-sections, reflects Shakespeare's heavy influence on Melville. By purposefully crafting Ahab's speech in the lofty, eloquent, Shakespearean language, Ahab becomes even more separated from his men, but at the same time, the men are drawn to the power that he commands within his speech. This confrontation between Stubb and Ahab is the beginning of the "play" that later subsumes Ishmael. Like Stubb, Ishmael is swayed by the powerful speeches. The simple Stubb, a jovial sailor who is more concerned with what his next meal will be is no match for the charisma of Ahab.

Stubb is the first to fall under the power of Ahab, but not the last. "The Quarter Deck" brings the rest of the crew under the powerful control of Ahab's mind. Ahab brings the crew together to enfold them in his pursuit of the whale. At first, the speech is innocent enough: a Captain calling together his crew to remind them of the

business they have embarked upon and what they need to do in case of sighting a whale. But the speech becomes more than the words; the crew becomes conscious of Ahab and cannot draw their gaze away from him.

> More and more strangely and fiercely glad and approving, grew the countenance of the old man at every shout; while the mariners began to gaze curiously at each other, as if marveling how it was that they themselves became so excited at such seemingly poseless questions. (175)

The gaze has been most commonly explored by critics in connection with film, but is also useful at looking at with narrative. The gaze, also known as scopophilia in Freudian psychology, is

> [the engagement] of the viewer's interest [using] narrative (the logical progression of events and actions featuring a central protagonist) and spectacle (the interruption of narrative progress for the sake of visual show). (def. 1)

The gaze has been most often studied in connection with males gazing at females, objectifying the woman and placing

her upon a pedestal as an object of sexual desire. In the case of the crew's gaze at Ahab, it is the power that draws them to him: "[Ahab] exemplifies the ability to overawe others through a sort of shameless and often hideous self - exposure. Indeed, he seems to be able to exercise this intimidating power, which breaks down all resistance. . ." (Adamson 278). The way Ahab captures the men's gaze is seemingly the reverse of the definition. But in the technical definition of scopophilia lies the answer: "The gaze can provide satisfactions independent of physical, tactile pleasure" (def. 1). The definition goes on to say that "the gaze is an intermediary stage along the path to sexual fulfillment," and in the case of the crew gazing upon Ahab, a fantasy of wish-fulfillment; they are aroused and excited by the potential power they can have by following the commands of their leader. In essence, Ahab holds power over his crew by allowing himself to be exposed. Ishmael, in being a part of the crew, sees Ahab and is drawn to his power. As narrator, Ishmael pulls the reader to Ahab as he was pulled, and allows us to see how much he too wanted to be one with Ahab. Ishmael, who we

have already seen being swayed by the power of finding camaraderie with Queequeg, falls easily under Ahab's power. After the speech when Ahab again disappears into his cabin, Ishmael writes:

> I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest; my oath had been welded with theirs; and stronger I shouted, and more did I hammer and clinch my oath, because of the dread in my soul. (194)

Even though Ishmael feels one with Ahab and the crew in the quest of Moby Dick, he still feels misgivings. What was manifesting within Ishmael (and this only becomes evident when he returns from the voyage and is recounting the story) was his super-ego placing constraints on his behavior. When a child acquires essential pieces of the super-ego, he feels modesty at his appearance and therefore shuns being in the spotlight. Ishmael is subconsciously aware of this, but Ahab seeks it because of the power it holds over his crew.

Another factor in Ahab being the object of the male gaze is in his injuries suffered at the hands of Moby Dick.

For 75 years, some critics have assumed that Moby Dick effectively castrated Ahab. The language that Melville employs to describe the injury is that he was, "demasted." This can describe both his obvious lack of a leg and also his emasculation. Ishmael concentrates his story on the awe that Ahab is able to create in the crew, but this is in stark contrast to what happens to the cabin boy Pip. Ahab has charisma and power, while Pip is seen as simple and mad. When Pip is left in the sea as punishment after jumping from Stubb's boat, Pip's separation anxiety overwhelms his young ego. His super-ego being underdeveloped and unable to buffer the anxiety he feels, a gap occurs between the ego and id, essentially leaving him as a child unable to grow further, leaving him emasculated. Ahab, because he is older when his castration happens, has a well formed super-ego. But due to the fact that there is no outlet for his libidinous urges, he turns towards - thanatos, that is, the destructive impulse of the id. Pip is completely separated from both the creative and destructive impulse of his id while Ahab is completely overtaken by the destructive impulses of his id. Pip's

madness manifests itself as reverting back to a more childlike state while Ahab's manifests itself in the obsessive need to destroy Moby Dick. Because of the subsequent castration (Pip's psychic castration and Ahab's physical and psychic) of both of these characters, they gravitate towards one another, being kindred spirits on board the ship. Ahab and Pip become two halves of one whole, one being all will and the other being will-less.

In the narration of Ahab's speech to the crew, Ishmael also recalls the chimney incident with his stepmother and associates it with Ahab. Ishmael places himself in the center of attention, imagining himself as Ahab and feeling the gaze of the men fall upon him and the power that he holds over the men while he is within their gaze: "A wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling was in me; Ahab's quenchless feud was mine" (194). In this section of the text in which Ahab is the center of the reader's focus, Ishmael is not present within the text. Because of the power of Ahab and the influence of his own desire to be Ahab, Ishmael retells the events from an outside perspective to separate himself from the feelings he had.

But instead of this facilitating a separation, it enfolds him into the crew more closely; he becomes a member of the crew rather than an outside observer commenting on the action. His id's needs are being satisfied in the mental desire of power that he feels in connection to Ahab.

Conclusion

Ahab in his role as the captain of the Pequod and symbolic role as Ishmael's id play important parts in the determination of Ishmael as a character, but there also needs to be a subsequent balancing of the three personality parts. Ishmael brings them together through the style of narration found throughout the book. For a great part of the opening chapters, a homodiegetic[3] narrator is present; Ishmael relates the sea-adventure narrative and gives the reader the story through his eyes. Later, a heterodiegetic narrator becomes the dominant voice, and Ahab comes to the forefront as the main character. Ishmael periodically resurfaces in the encyclopedic narrative, but generally he again becomes an outcast, this time from his own narrative. Melville creates this separation through the narration for a specific point: to show Ahab's fixation on objects outside his sphere of influence and Ishmael's connection to the world. The Ishmael who first boards the Pequod begins the journey in much the same state of mind as Ahab when he meets Moby Dick: focusing on the separation he feels from the world. Jacques Lacan writes that neurosis is triggered

by a symbolic pact; that is, somehow the person being analyzed has created a pact with the outside person/thing to compensate for the narcissism that the subject feels. Ahab has made a pact with Moby Dick. Lacan writes that,

> For the [subject], for whom the technical term "acting out" takes on its literal meaning since he is acting outside himself, you have to get him to recognize where his action is situated. For the obsessional neurotic, you have to get him to recognize [the analyst] in the spectator, invisible from the stage, to whom he is united by the mediation of death. (Lacan 68)

Ishmael sees that Ahab's world is the Pequod, the hunt for Moby Dick. The ultimate fulfillment of this quest is the destruction of the whale and inevitably the destruction of Ahab's world. Ahab is unable to escape from his own narcissism and takes most of the crew into his mad quest and to their subsequent deaths. Ishmael is almost lost in his own pact with the devil, but finally survives to acknowledge an outside audience and relate to them his world. Through the bond he establishes with Queequeg, he

feels a connection to the world that Ahab may have once felt, but feels no more. Also, in his recognition of an audience reading the world of the text, Ishmael creates a bond with the invisible spectator (the reader). This bond is Ishmael's acknowledgement of the world, and his hope is in the reader's understanding of what he had done in the course of the story; he was not pulled into the maelstrom caused by Ahab in the pursuit of the whale and he remained whole.

In Chapter 46, "Surmises," Ishmael says this about Ahab and his purpose: "Ahab, in all of his thoughts and actions, ever had in view the ultimate capture of Moby Dick; though he seemed ready to sacrifice all mortal interest to that one passion. . ." (230). Ahab's world is limited, and therefore it is difficult for other characters to completely understand Ahab's point of view. Other characters have a larger perspective on the world - including, for instances, that they are whalers and that in order for them to make any money on this expedition, they must kill whales and someday return to land and rejoin family and friends and take part in the society on land.

The best example of the wide variety of perspectives is in chapter 99 "The Doubloon." The narrator Ishmael sets up the chapter by describing the doubloon that Ahab nailed to the main mast. Ishmael, unobserved (and not even within the description of the crew members who come to look at it), watches as each of the crewmen come forward to study the coin. Rather than tell it from his own perspective, the narrator Ishmael allows Stubb to critique each person as they come forward. Stubb says, ". . .All sorts of men in one kind of world, you see" (474). The mature Ishmael offers this chapter to illustrate that even though the crew was under the power of Ahab, they still were able to see something in the world and have their own interpretation. By placing this chapter in the midst of the tragedy, it shows how Ishmael was continuing to work on separating himself from the quest of Ahab.

To further this separation, it is worth noting how the Ahab and Ishmael view the impending conclusion to the novel in "The Chase-Third Day." As Ahab goes forth, he knows of his doom. In descending to his boat, he looks up to Starbuck and says,

> Some ships sail from their ports, and ever afterwards are missing, Starbuck!
>
> Truth, sir: saddest truth.
>
> Some men die at ebb tide; some at low water; some at the full of the flood; - and I feel now like a billow that's all one crested comb, Starbuck. I am old; - shake hands with me, man. (616)

Ahab's vengeance has narrowed his perspective on the world and he sees no other way to fill the dull vacancy in his soul. The destructive urges of his id overwhelm any other part of his personality. He doesn't see that there are other alternatives; he cannot veer from the course he has chosen; he is only able to acknowledge the base need of revenge for the injuries he suffered from the brute whale.

The last chapters are consumed with Ahab's final chase, his unsuccessful attempt at revenge, and the subsequent death of himself and all of the crewmembers of the Pequod. All but Ishmael. Ishmael, having taken the Parsee's place in the bow of Ahab's boat, says nothing within the narrative about himself through the last

chapters of the book; the reader could almost forget Ishmael's existence until the "Epilogue" where he says that he had been in the boat and was the one that was thrown clear of the White Whale's rampage. Ishmael being saved is a pseudo-coincidence, but what he does after his salvation is the important point. Instead of walking away and saying, "Whew, I'm glad I got out of that!" he mourns the loss of his crew and his world. In effect, he is no longer an outcast, but becomes a castaway, two very similar terms with very different meanings. Ishmael starts out the novel creating a separation from the rest of humanity through his own interpretation of the world, thus making himself an outcast. He finally is able to gain a foothold in the world where he feels that he is a part of the brotherhood of man. This is due to the friendship and companionship of Queequeg. But in the epilogue he finds himself forcibly removed from this companionship, not by men, but by one man, Ahab, and the destructive forces of his id. Ishmael is forced to retreat in upon himself, to seek his inner consciousness to keep himself afloat from the debris of the fast-sinking world that was the Pequod. He is made a

castaway from the world he carefully catalogued and observed, to be left "on the margin of the ensuing scene" (625), but as he is cast away from the Pequod and her crew, he remains afloat, using Queequeg's coffin as a lifebuoy. Again it is the connection to Queequeg that helps Ishmael to say afloat amidst the turmoil enveloping him. As he floats for two days, sharks and carrion birds leave him be. But on the second day, Ishmael spots the sails of the Rachel, who "in her retracing search after her missing children, only found another orphan" (625).

The novel represents the complete mind of one Ishmael, once an outcast, now a castaway, and finally a coherent whole person able to tell the tale. Ishmael is able to cling to his coffin lifebuoy and retain his sanity because by the time he is stranded by the destruction of the Pequod, he has developed enough of the coherent personality that will eventually be the final, adult Ishmael who is able to laugh at his younger self, but also to appreciate and to dramatize his dilemma such that we experience his growth along with him in reading the novel. Pip, the cabin-boy who was left adrift after he jumped from the

whaleboat against the orders of Stubb, loses his mind in the vast expanse of the sea because he was not given the opportunity to fully develop his personality; in effect, he was never given the chance to make his mistakes in the world and create a super-ego to help balance his ego and id. Ishmael has a functioning super-ego, and for a brief time after his return to land, he continues to hunt the whale because a part of him, the part still under the sway of Ahab, had to try and conclude the hunt. Beyond killing Moby Dick, Ishmael's super-ego needed to define and pinpoint what he experienced. He starts this therapy by becoming the sub sub librarian, again cataloging and shaping what has already been said about whales in literature. But this just continues the hunt. What he finally realizes is that he is his own person and while he was on the ship, he became something more. He just has to have somebody witness the transformation for the healing to be completed. Thus he sets the story down for us. Through telling the story, he carefully considers what had happened and examines each part of his adventure on its own merits. By doing this, he is able to see the larger picture, that

each part of the adventure reflects parts of his own immaturity. To deal with this, he writes them out into a story and through the story he is able to understand himself and what happened. He knows who he is and is asking that we too acknowledge him.

As Ishmael figuratively ends the novel Moby-Dick with the beginning of the book, we too have to return into the text to reevaluate what has been written. Ishmael as the narrator of the story always acknowledges that there is a reading audience. Ishmael knows of the world on land and at sea, and he works to bring the audience in for a closer look at it. Ahab, unlike Ishmael, cannot see beyond his own needs, seeing all visible objects as "pasteboard masks" (178). Ahab sometimes realizes that there is more to the world, but he cannot acknowledge it, because that would mean acknowledging the problems and fears that he has in the world. In essence, he is unable to bridge the void that he feels between himself and the world. Because he is unable to bridge this gap, his compulsion becomes the need to destroy what he feels created it: Moby Dick. While Ahab avoids his problems, Ishmael confronts the problems that

lead him into the adventure in the first place: self-inflicted separation from society. Ishmael lays his world at our feet, acknowledging us, and asking that we too enter into the hunt for the whale, not to capture or define it or even destroy it, but as a way to understand him and the problems he has as a man. He is working through his problems by connecting to the society represented by the reading audience.

From Ishmael's experience on board the Pequod, he has grown and gained something, but he is still not sure of what he has gained. As I said in the beginning, this novel is Ishmael's therapy, his way of managing the events on board the Pequod. Readers are the final missing link for Ishmael, someone to acknowledge that he is a funny, humble passionate, and generally healthy personality. He wants to be a part of the world, and needs us to acknowledge he was not lost at sea with his crewmates. The narrator Ishmael is aware that no one may ever read the book, but because he tells his story, he knows of a world bigger than himself, and this is what creates a unified personality.

When the book is analyzed first as a fragmented text, then separated into personality components reflecting the mind of the narrator, and finally brought together as a whole, the reader is able to better engage this novel and to appreciate the complexity that Melville purposefully built into it. The first statement of the book, rather than an introduction, then becomes a request. Ishmael wants someone to call to him, to call him by his name and identify that he is truly connected to the world. When the reader fully engages the novel, reads it as a story of the growth of Ishmael, he or she gains a more thorough understanding of what Melville was trying to accomplish. Melville was striving for complexity within his writing and he wanted the reading public to move with him into it. Through Ishmael, Melville was able to achieve this complexity and allow the reader an opportunity to evaluate the character he created.

Notes

[1] These are just a few of the many, many criticisms about this novel. A helpful bibliography that can illuminate the vast array of critical approaches to this novel was put together by Donna M. Campbell of Gonzaga University and can be viewed at <http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/index.html>.

[2] Two psychoanalytic approaches that I believe are most interesting and revealing about Melville and his writing are: "Melville and Dismemberment: Obsession or Metaphor," by Douglas B. Price, and Melville, Shame and the Evil Eye: A Psychoanalytic Reading by Joseph Adamson. I cite Adamson within this paper in a few places, but his criticisms analyze in-depth many of Melville's works and is worth the perusal.

[3] According to James Phelan, author of Narrative as Rhetoric: Techniques, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology, a heterodiegetic narrator "exists at a different level of (fictional) existence from the characters. Omniscient third-person narration, for example, is heterodiegetic" (217). A homodiegetic narrator, unlike the heterodiegetic

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narrator, "exists at the same level of existence as the characters" (217).

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