

**“I’d Strike the Son if He Insulted Me:
Milton’s and Melville’s Flawed Revolutionaries”**

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Introduction: The Flawed Revolutionary

John Milton (1608-1674) and Herman Melville (1819-1891) loom large over their respective national literatures; Milton's writing dominates the English poetic landscape while Melville's magnum opus makes its case as "the great American novel," a title that recognizes the national and political nature of textual works. In both *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Moby Dick* (1851), a distinctly political vein can be detected, and these works contain incredibly similar characters, Satan and Ahab, who, in their kinship, seem to point to a consistent philosophy of political progression between these two texts that lines up with the ideologies of Milton's and Melville's other writings.

John Milton was an outspoken critic of the English monarchy during the English Civil War (1642-1651). He railed against tyranny and the monarchy during a polemical career that carried him into a position in the cabinet of Lord Protector Cromwell after the execution of Charles I in 1649. Milton insisted on the liberty of humanity and demanded that such liberty be reflected in the political structures of all nations, but first of all England, for the power of a government comes originally from its people. Because the people are the source of a government's power and are the body that the government must act for, his ideal form of English government was that of a parliamentary republic rather than a monarchy, the latter of which was more susceptible to authoritarian impulses and often led to tyranny.

Milton, of course, lived to see his cause fail. Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660 and the Parliamentarian revolution failed. Milton barely escaped with his life and his freedom, and only then does he write *Paradise Lost*, a poem echoing violent earthly revolutions and a legacy of human failure that began with the original sin of Adam and Eve. Satan stands at the

center of the poem and can be seen as the prime revolutionary in the universe as well as the source of humanity's suffering; he occupies a contentious space within the writing of Milton wherein the war in heaven against the monarchy of God has the potential to be built upon a Miltonic foundation of liberty and rationality, but this specific instance of revolution also begets the suffering of humanity from Adam on down and is led by Satan, who believes in neither universal liberty nor rational discourse despite the potential justice of his actions. He fights what he sees as a tyrannical system that exists in heaven that has dealt with him unequally, attempting to assert his own power and equality to the Father and the Son, but he does not attempt to protect the rest of the fallen angels against injustice nor does he win their support to his personal cause through reasonable arguments and persuasion.

Herman Melville, on the other hand, does not emerge from a civil war to write *Moby Dick*, but instead seems to be bracing for the looming American Civil War (1861-1865). Melville lacked the political pamphleteering expertise of Milton, but his passion for the American democratic experiment was equal to Milton's own political drive. In his letters, Melville makes his allegiance to the idea of equality and democracy explicitly clear (and his belief that democracy is the most appropriate form of government to ensure the equal treatment of all humanity), principles that exist in varying degrees on the *Pequod*, the setting of the novel and the . narrative analog for the world at large.

His rebellious Captain Ahab is, in many ways, a literary descendant of Milton's Satan. Their goals are the same, and the rebellions of both occupy a similarly ambiguous moral space thanks to the disparity between the actions of their cause and their actual intentions and execution of the rebellions. But Ahab does stand apart from the fallen angel in crucial ways, the

most obvious being that he is the inheritor of the suffering piled on to humanity from Adam on down rather than the generator of that suffering. He is a mortal man who feels that he is the victim of a cosmic malice and injustice that he can only fight with relentless rage. The divinity that Ahab rebels against lacks the immediacy of heaven's monarch in *Paradise Lost*, who is given an actual narrative, pseudo-physical role within that poem, but its presence can be felt through the White Whale and all that stands beyond human understanding in *Moby Dick*.

This difference, though, does not lead to a different conclusion; while Ahab insists on his equal existence with the rest of the universe, his individualism becomes so radical that it alienates him from the rest of humanity. I use the term individualism to refer to both Satan's and Ahab's narcissistic concern for their own wellbeing, not the liberty and wellbeing of anyone beside themselves. Ahab becomes a tyrant at the head of the *Pequod* and an inverter of the democratic values that, in principle, underlie his hunt for the Moby Dick. He fails to expand his ideals beyond his individual self and refuses to construct any sort of more democratic society that would ensure his ideals, giving in to an isolating destructiveness that dooms his revolution to fall short just as Satan's does.

I situate these two texts in relation to each other in order to bring to the surface that informs a reading outlining how we, as revolutionaries, should move the world and individual nations forward towards more just forms of political rule and more caring treatment of the communities in which we live in and depend on. Ahab is a clear descendant of Milton's Satan, both in his cause and his fatal flaw of pride, and by examining the relationship between these two rebellions, we can see that Satan and Ahab corrupt what could potentially be a righteous cause and therefore deserve their fates, but are also given glimpses of the way forward when we

examine the survivors, as it were, of both of these texts' narratives. Though the original rebels fail, they are succeeded by those who would move forward through love rather than destruction; the Son of *Paradise Lost* and Adam and Eve close the poem with love and mercy and make the redemption of humanity and the ultimate defeat of Satan possible, while Ishmael's voyage of discovery leads him to an understanding of the truly interdependent and equal nature of all humanity through his relationship with Queequeg and his recognition of his inter-connectedness with all mankind through the physical and metaphoric monkey-rope.

The political analogs to these paths are unique to their authors; for Milton, a parliamentary government better ensures the liberty of the people and the preservation of the citizenry's humanity by protecting them from the possibility of authoritarian tyranny that would rob them of reason, freedom, and the recognition of their own individual power that comprises the collective nation. For Melville, the even more egalitarian politics of democracy are the only way to ensure such equal treatment, as democracy does away with even the parliamentary power structures that elevate individuals above the rest of humanity and devalue those not in power. For both of these texts, the only hope for humanity's survival lies in love and an understanding of our need for community, an understanding that is illustrated by the wrongful rebellions of Satan and Ahab and their potentially correct successors.

To illuminate the connection between these two characters and their fraternity as literary types, I will outline the individual rebellions of both Satan and Ahab in Chapters 1 and 2 respectively. In Chapter 1, I will establish the philosophical beliefs of John Milton in an effort to better understand the tensions that arise in reading his depiction of both Satan and heaven in *Paradise Lost*. Of particular note is his attitude towards political organization, individual liberty,

and his definitions of tyranny and an ideal nation. I will then make the case that the Father (who does not represent the entire trinity for the Arian Milton) is sufficiently tyrannical to justify a rebellion in heaven, but also that Satan fails to fulfill the anti-tyrannical promise of his rebellion, as he seeks only to elevate himself and sacrifices the potentially Miltonic principles that would have justified his rebellion. Instead of breaking out of his narrative function and away from the hierarchical worldview of the Father, he simply perpetuates this system with himself at the head in hell and exploits the irrational minds of the fallen angels, an irrationality that stems from both the Father's authoritarian rule and their willingness to go along with Satan's rebellion in the first place.

In Chapter 2, I will outline the democratic thrust of Herman Melville that exists in his letters and his fictional narratives. I will then detail the ways in which Ahab is the literary ancestor of Milton's Satan, and that Ahab's rebellion is an even stronger assertion of human rights and freedom through Melville's belief in democracy, but one that is similarly doomed to fail because of the myopic individualism of Ahab that only seeks to advocate for his own equality to the rest of the cosmos without extending the same vision of egalitarianism to the rest of humanity. I will then examine the ways in which Melville attempts to enact a more democratic novel in spite of the tyrannous nature of Ahab through formal experimentation and attempts to reach outside of traditional one-point perspectives by providing a more subjective experience filled with multiple voices.

In my conclusion, I will attempt to explain the purpose of these character types for Milton and Melville. These revolutionaries are a necessary part of historical progress, as they are able to forever destabilize the hierarchical organization of the universe, whether cosmic or earthbound,

through their violent uprisings, allowing for the entrance of more communitarian, humanistic, and nonviolent revolutionaries to succeed them in this process of democratization that is historically occurring between these two texts. In the case of *Paradise Lost*, Milton provides us with three successors to the Satanic rebellion: the Son, who takes the scepter of heaven and lays it down, completing the process that Satan started, and Adam and Eve, who represent the power of the human to transform the world and find paradise within based on love and community. This process is not resolved, however, until *Paradise Regained*, although Michael's final *proto-evangelion* showing Adam the future of humanity gestures towards the promise of redemption that emerges from Adam and Eve's decision to move forward in their lives after the fall. In *Moby Dick*, Melville provides us with the community of two that is Ishmael and Queequeg, which ensures the survival of Ishmael precisely because it recognizes the interdependence between the two characters and the necessity of freedom for all people, pagan, Christian, or otherwise, and serves as the beginning of Ishmael's covenant with all humanity where he recognizes this same interdependence with all other mortals.

Both *Paradise Lost* and *Moby Dick* sketch the failed and insufficient rebellions of their two revolutionaries. Their authors' political passions concerning bringing about a more just form of governance that treats all humanity fairly and the similarities between their depictions of rebellion (ie. causes corrupted by flawed leaders that ultimately fail, but that leave the reader with hopeful potential in alternative characters) justify connecting *Paradise Lost* and *Moby Dick* in this project. The flawed revolutionaries of these texts are operating in a very specific context; they oppose a divinity that stands above them and whose very existence above their own stands as an affront to their liberty and existence. The anti-authoritarian bent of these rebellions and

Milton's and Melville's situating of their rebels in a fight against divinity binds these two texts together in such a way that their narrative and thematic similarities give rise to an understanding of their political similarities that other texts, with more varied brands of rebellions and anti-heroes, would not; namely, that the liberty of humanity must be reflected in forms of government and that the best path forward from tyrannous states lies in more democratic forms of rule, either that of a parliament or a full-blown democracy for Milton and Melville respectively.

My discussion of these political and philosophical implications is centered on individual characters that often, although certainly not exclusively, represent modes of governance; the Father of *Paradise Lost* represents authoritarian monarchy while the Son represents a rejection of such authoritarianism. In Melville, Ahab himself becomes a similarly tyrannical authoritarian, while Ishmael enacts a more democratic discourse. As such, my use of these political terms is limited to their depiction in these specific texts. This means that when I discuss monarchy in this text, I am referring to the monarchy of the Father and the monarchy of Satan, monarchies that take a particularly tyrannical bent, according to Milton's own definition of tyranny, as I later outline. The Father's is a monarchy that perpetuates itself through military power and threats of violence rather than serving the entire population it rules over and engaging in a reasonable discourse, which, for Milton, requires the assessing of two options and being able to actually choose between the two, as he outlines in *Areopagitica*. Satan's monarchy, in its fledgling state, requires persuasion via irrational arguments and continuance of heaven's structures of power in hell. Monarchy, as an abstract concept, is more susceptible to authoritarian exploitation and tyranny than parliamentary rule for Milton, who rejects the divine appointment of kings and the

inherent superiority that comes with it, hence his support for the Parliamentarians during the English Civil War.

For Melville, I discuss democracy as the means by which Melville hopes to enact his egalitarian philosophy. Democracy, ideally, ensures the freedom and equality of all its subjects. A truly democratic government, for Melville, ensures equal treatment of all men, unlike other forms of government that depend on more hierarchical and imbalanced distributions of power and unequal treatment. When I speak of democracy, I speak of it in this spirit of equality that Melville strives for. As such, for both of these authors, individualism that does not concern itself with the betterment of all beings is contrary to the more progressive causes that these texts put forward. Those who act only to improve their own station are equivalent to tyrants who only serve their own faction and who neglect the communitarian bonds that tie all humanity together, damaging themselves and their cooperators in the process and denying the possibility of actual progress, which can only come about through a rejection of tyrannical structures and an acceptance of loving care for all people.

Chapter 1: Satan in *Paradise Lost*

Milton scholars tend to fall into two different camps regarding the character of Satan in *Paradise Lost*: they are often either pro-Satan or anti-Satan. The former are best given a voice through the poet William Blake, who said that “the reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it” (Blake, 65). This camp generally sympathizes with Satan and believes the poem is sincerely tragic, showing the fall of Satan, a complex character whose struggle exists at the center of the poem and whose “fall” comes at the hand of external forces. The centrality of Satan does not imply his correctness, of course, which is an issue further divides the pro-Satan faction. The anti-Satan camp, however, has no patience for this reading of the poem, often due to its theological implications. C.S. Lewis, a firm anti-Satanist, remarked, in his essay simply titled “Satan,” that “to admire Satan, then, is to give one’s vote not only for a world of misery, but also for a world of lies and propaganda, of wishful thinking, of incessant autobiography” (Lewis, 33-34); Lewis reads Satan as a seductive, well-sketched out figure whose utter absurdity and inability to understand anything within the poem renders him far more comic than tragic, and certainly unsympathetic, to a discerning reader, and many critics agree with Lewis in this regard.

This critical dichotomy is reductive, though, as truth rings out from both sides of the argument. If this were not the case, such a debate could hardly sustain itself for a decade, let alone centuries with every new generation of readers. The ambivalent middle ground of critics such as William Empson and Neil Forsyth is where my argument is situated; Satan is undeniably central to this poem, but Milton’s purpose in this centrality is not to venerate but rather to

explore. Satan is a tragic figure, but not because he is completely heroic, justified, and the victim of forces beyond his control, as the pro-Satan camp would argue. The Father may be an oppressive force against Satan, but Satan is also at fault due to his inability to actually overthrow the tyrannical systems that he claimed to be rebelling against and for basing his rebellion on selfish pursuits rather than rational arguments. His tragedy comes from his internal inability to understand the nature of the Father's injustice and from his betrayal of a potentially justified cause after he arrives in hell. My status in the middle ground of this critical debate is focused on the potential justice of Satan's cause, even if Satan does not fulfill this potential, and the fallibility of the Father, which lends legitimacy to the war in heaven in spite of the flaws of the rebellious Satan. Milton allows for this ambivalence; this is the man who, in arguing for the freedom of the press in *Areopagitica*, stated that:

Good and evill we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evill, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discern'd, that those confused seeds which were imposed on *Psyche* as an incessant labour to cull out and sort asunder, were not more intermixt. It was from out the rind of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evill, as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world. And perhaps this is that doom that *Adam* fell into of knowing good and evill, that is to say, of knowing good by evill. (*Major Prose Writings*, 192-3)

A text as expansive as *Paradise Lost*, written by such an outspoken and audacious man as John Milton, contains within it multitudes. I argue that just as good and evil grow up in the fallen, post-paradise world together, good and evil too go hand in hand within this poem, a poem that

has been accommodated for postlapsarian mortal ears by the Holy Spirit, Milton's muse, so that "what surmounts the reach / Of human sense, I shall delineate so, / By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms, / As may express them best, though what if Earth / Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein / Each to other like, more then on earth is thought?" (V.571-76).

Good and evil are so inextricable that to categorize even whole characters as good or evil is fallacious; the capacity for both exists within every individual, for that is where Milton's conception of liberty derives. Satan has within himself the potential for both good and evil; he does not simply exist as a foil for the goodness of heaven, for he was once a constituent member of the angelic host. Milton's depiction of a monarchical heaven highlights the potential righteousness underpinning Satan's initial rebellion in heaven, a rebellion that might align closely with the political and philosophical beliefs of Milton himself if it were not for Satan's actual execution of the rebellion and his failure to actually rebel against tyranny. Instead, he simply installs himself upon the throne of hell, becoming that which he rebelled against and being consumed by his destructive will, thereby corrupting the potentially righteous cause of doing away with the authoritarian rule of the Father in favor of a fairer political system that recognizes the humanity of its subjects. Satan is a poor leader for a revolution, but the war in heaven points to the need for a change in the organization of the universe, a change that will come about through the actions of the Son and Adam and Eve.

The Monarchical Father and the Regicidal Milton:

In order for Satan to exist as more than the dark foil to the lightness of heaven, the Father must be unjustified in some way in order to legitimize a heavenly revolution. There must be a just cause for Satan's rebellion in order for his betrayal of that rebellion's principles to be tragic.

There are seeds sown throughout *Paradise Lost* that indicate the veracity of Satan's claims regarding the Father's unjust rule and the "Tyranny of Heav'n," a political state that parallels the tyrannical monarchy Milton spent a large portion of his life fighting against (I.124).

The poetic narrator of the poem states in his opening invocation that he intends to "justify the ways of God to man," a decidedly unitarian view of the trinity for the Arian Milton. Milton distinguishes between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as three distinct parts of the trinity, a belief that is enacted through his sketches of each of these separate characters in *Paradise Lost*. As Forsyth writes in his biography of Milton, "we need to remember Milton's Arianism, which means that the Son is a separate, created being, not simply a manifestation of the Godhead; he is radically inferior to the Father, and so mutable...; he remains good by his own free will" (Forsyth, 203). This distinction creates room for Milton to address the issues that he might be struggling with after the failure of the English Civil War and the restoration of the monarchy by questioning the divine monarchy itself without giving himself over to heresy. Christopher Hill identifies this theodical struggle within Milton in his 1977 book *Milton and the English Revolution*:

Milton's intellect now told him that he must accept God's will, if only because the Father is omnipotent: but his submission to the events of 1655-60 was highly reluctant. Satan, the battleground for Milton's quarrel with himself, saw God as arbitrary power and nothing else. Against this he revolted: the Christian, Milton knew, must accept it. Yet how could a free and rational individual accept what God had done to his servants in England? On this reading, Milton expressed through Satan (of whom he disapproved) the

dissatisfaction that he felt with the Father (whom intellectually he accepted). (Hill, 366-67).

In *Paradise Lost*, both the Father and Satan should be read skeptically, and for the same reasons: both represent tyrannical figures who exert their influence through power and seek to dominate those around them, both through their rhetoric and their strength. As Michael Bryson states:

Paradise Lost forces its readers to stare directly into the face of a God conceived in terms of military might and kingly power, presenting a God who is obsessed with his own power and glory, manipulative, defensive, alternately rhetorically incoherent and evasive, and an arranger of political dialogues designed to mold angelic opinion; in short, Milton constructs a God who is nearly indistinguishable from Satan. (Bryson, 25).

The God that Bryson is referring to is, of course, the Father, but the God whom Milton appears to be justifying in the poem is actually the Son. To say that Satan and the Father are “nearly indistinguishable,” as Bryson does, is an overstatement, but when examining the ways in which they rule over their subjects, there is a strong connection between the two figures. The Father is able to issue commands and directives without the pretense of parliamentary performance that Satan must put on because the Father is an established monarch whose rule encompasses all of existence. We are witnessing the installation of Satan’s tyranny in hell, and the fact that we are entering into his rule during this formative stage means that the strategies of the Father and Satan must differ. The key, though, is that both undermine Milton’s principles regarding correct rule, which are founded on the goal of serving the people, not the ruler. Those who serve only themselves or their own faction are, by Milton’s definition, tyrants. The tyranny of Satan and the Father may take different shapes, but they are both tyrants nonetheless, and

therefore rebellion against the Father is justified. Satan's rebellion, however, turns back on itself and fails to truly break free of the hierarchical system that the Father has established.

Milton's attempt to "justify the ways of God to men" is an attempt to justify the ways of God the Son, not God the Father (I.26). This resolves the tension identified by Hill and the "degree of unease" that critics have sensed "between Milton's presentation of Satan as a tragically heroic figure and his duty to remain faithful to the orthodox Christian polarity of Satan (Evil) and God (Good)" (Bradford, 14). This unease is based in orthodox Christian trinitarianism, and Milton is neither orthodox nor a trinitarian. This unease stems from the monarchical and distasteful depiction of God the Father in *Paradise Lost*, a depiction that is particularly jarring considering Milton's own political beliefs.

The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates best summarizes Milton's anti-tyrannical beliefs that he expressed throughout many of his prose works, including *Eikonoklastes*, *In the Reason of Church Government*, and his [*Defences*] of the English People. Milton, of course, was a prominent member of the Parliamentary cause that briefly won the English Civil War. He was appointed as the Secretary for Foreign Tongues in Oliver Cromwell's protectorate and wrote these two texts while he held this position in order to justify the regicide that he had called for and executed with the rest of the Parliamentarians.

He published *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* in 1649, and it was here that he established his philosophy of natural freedom, saying that "no man who knows ought, can be so stupid to deny that all men naturally were borne free, being the image and resemblance of God himself." This natural freedom means that "the power of Kings and Magistrates is nothing else, but what is only derivative, transerr'd and committed to them in trust from the People, to the

Common good of them all, in whom the power yet remains fundamentally, and cannot be taken from them, without a violation of their natural birthright” (*Prose*, 249-250). Although Milton is not a democrat, he can be read as a progenitor of democratic and humanist values that will be picked up later by the writers of the Declaration of Independence over a century later, as he espouses the natural freedom that humans possess and believes that any governing body derives its power from the free choice of the people; they are the source of power that they give to their parliamentary representatives, but even this transfer does not change the fact that they are the source of this power. Because of this, “it follows lastly, that since the King or Magistrate holds his autoritie of the people, both originaly and naturally for their good in the first place, and not his own, then may the people as oft as they shall judge it for the best, either choose him or reject him, retaine him or depose him though no Tyrant, meerly by the liberty and right of free born Men, to be govern’d as seems to them best” (*Prose*, 252).

Tyranny is not even a requirement for the overthrowing of a king, but when a tyrant does hold the throne, it is the duty of a people to wrest that power from his grasp so as to protect and maintain their own freedom. “Justice don upon a Tyrant is no more but the necessary self-defence of a whole Common wealth. To Warr upon a King, that his instruments may be brought to condigne punishment... is the strangest peece of justice to be call’d Christian, and the strangest peece of reason to be call’d human, that by men of reverence and learning, as thir stile imports them, ever yet was vented” (*Prose*, 271). And what, for Milton, is a tyrant? “A Tyrant, whether by wrong or by right comming to the Crown, is he who regarding neither Law nor the common good, reigns onely for himself and his faction” (*Prose*, 254). No matter what claim the ruler may have to the throne, whether he was placed there rightfully or wrongfully, his manner of

ruling determines his quality, for the people of the country are the most important thing. This justification of regicide follows hot on the heels of Charles I's execution, but this historical context also combines with Milton's description of the proper way to rule a people to problematize the rule of the Father in *Paradise Lost*. In *The Reason of Church Government* (1642), Milton writes that "in the publishing of humane lawes... to set them forth to the people without reason or Preface, like a physicall prescript, or only with threatenings, as it were a lordly command" is not the proper way to rule. Instead, following in the footsteps of Plato, Milton believes that "persuasion certainly is a more winning, and more manlike way to keepe men in obedience then feare" (*Prose*, 63). Threats are the tools of an unwise ruler and often the tool of tyrants who rule only for themselves and their party.

Milton's argument for "promiscuous" reading and the development of rational thought in *Areopagitica* not only opens the way for an ambivalent reading of Satan, but also establishes an important component for what Milton determines to be a just political system: it must foster the mental potential of its subjects and seek to act according to their collective, rational will. Such a political system rules through persuasion rather than fear, persuasion that, in Milton's ideal nation, must reckon with a country of rational beings who are capable of discerning between good and evil. He describes his ideal England as:

A Nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discours, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to... What could a man require more from a Nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge. What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soile,

but wise and faithfull labourers, to make a knowing people, a Nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies. (*Prose*, 207)

Reason and knowledge are the human qualities that are capable of bringing about this ideal nation and this ideal humanity, and “when God gave [Adam] reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing” (*Prose*, 197). This reason is at the heart of humanity’s freedom for Milton, but it is contingent upon being well read and thought; freedom and reason require constant exercise, and the Father’s heaven in *Paradise Lost*, a kingdom that depends on forceful commands which allow no room for the development of this reason, and thereby freedom, stands far from the nation of “Prophets, Sages, and Worthies” that Milton here envisions. Persuasion is preferable to fear and, in an ideal society, persuasion will have to reckon with the discerning minds of the rational populace, who are capable of determining good from evil.

Milton’s Father of heaven in *Paradise Lost* stands in jarring contrast to these principles; he makes arbitrary commandments and rules through force in heaven and on Earth rather than persuading the angelic host or Adam and Eve to behave correctly and lawfully, even denying them the development of their rational faculties by not allowing for a choice and discernment to be made in the first place. Only after the fall does the Father begin to engage Adam’s and Eve’s reason, presenting them with the entirety of human history moving forward in an effort to show them the consequences that will follow should they choose to live and move forward with their lives. Prior to the fall, though, the Father has no interest in presenting clear options and choices to his subjects. The inciting incident of the war in heaven, when the Father promotes the Son to

rule over the rest of the heavenly host, provides a perfect distillation of the Father's tyrannical leanings.

The Father's promotion of the Son occurs in Book V and is the chronologically earliest event that occurs in the poem. The announcement itself is rhetorically abrupt and confrontational; it is a rare speech in *Paradise Lost* that I can reasonably quote in its entirety here:

Hear all ye Angels, Progenie of Light,
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Vertues, Powers,
Hear my Decree, which unrevok't shall stand.
This day I have begot whom I declare
My onely Son, and on this holy Hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand; your Head I him appoint;
And by my Self have sworn to him shall bow
All knees in Heav'n, and shall confess him Lord:
Under his great Vice-regent Reign abide
United as one individual Soule
For ever happie: him who disobeyes
Mee disobeyes, breaks union, and that day
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
Into utter darkness, deep ingulft, his place
Ordaind without redemption, without end. (V.600-615)

Fifteen lines to rearrange the entire hierarchy of heaven, an ordinance that is backed up not with reason or persuasion, but with the threat of banishment and exile to darkness unending. Even Stevie Davies, a defender of Milton's Father, admits that "the elliptical brevity of God's speech sounds despotic, however sympathetically one attempts to read it" (Davies, 148). This is a rhetoric that expects no questions or even hesitation, but rather demands unthinking and unflinching fealty enforced through external coercion and fear. Persuasion, which implies a choice, is replaced with a threatening command, and the coercive nature of this command excludes the possibility of choosing otherwise, thereby robbing the heavenly subjects of their freedom.

Heaven is a place of clearly delineated, unquestioned power. The Father and the Son rule over all, no questions asked and no justification required. This, of course, is entirely too arbitrary for so proud an angel as Lucifer, but it also appears to be a state that the other archangels are aware of and simply accept. As William Empson points out, when Satan is confronted by Gabriel in Paradise, Satan accuses Gabriel of being too weak to rebel, saying that he is attempting "what thou and thy gay Legions dare against; / Whose easier business were to serve thir Lord / High up in Heav'n, with songs to hymne his Throne, / And practis'd distances to cringe, not fight" (IV.942-45). Gabriel, instead of justifying the *status quo* of heaven, calls Satan a hypocrite: "Was this your discipline and faith ingag'd, / Your military obedience, to dissolve / Allegiance to th' acknowledg'd Power suream? / And thou sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem / Patron of liberty, who more then thou / Once fawn'd, and cring'd, and servilly ador'd / Heav'ns awful Monarch?" (IV.954-60). Gabriel justifies his servitude by pointing to the futility of attempting to overcome the power of "Heav'ns awful Monarch" and by pointing out that Satan once did the

same. This, of course, does nothing to contradict either Satan's conception of heavenly servitude (in fact worsening it with words like "fawn'd," "cring'd," and "servilly ador'd) or his reasons for rebellion. Empson also reads this conversation as a subversion of heavenly quietude: "This quotation seems to me quite enough to prove that God had already produced a very unattractive Heaven before Satan fell" (Empson, 111). Not only is this heaven unattractive, but the Father's insistence on unquestioning obedience strangles the rational faculties of his subjects, actually preventing them from even being capable of being persuaded, perpetuating the Father's ability and necessity to command them at will.

The Father shows troublesomely tyrannical inclinations elsewhere in the poem. His forbidding of the fruit is presented in a way that seems just as arbitrary and rhetorically despotic as his promotion of the Son in heaven. This ban is most explicitly stated in Book VII as Adam and Raphael continue their conversation in the garden. The sentence is given as follows:

... But of the Tree
Which tasted works knowledge of Good and Evil
Thou mai'st not; in the day thou eat'st, thou di'st;
Death is the penaltie impos'd, least sin
Surprise thee, and her black attendant Death. (VII.542-47)

Adam later quotes the Father again, saying "the day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command / Transgrest, inevitably thou shalt dye" (VIII.329-30). The entirety of the interdiction consists simply of the command and the threat. As Eve states, "God so commanded, and left that Command / Sole Daughter of his voice; the rest, we live / Law to our selves, our Reason is our Law" (IX.652-54). The only restriction that the Father gave to Adam and Eve was not to eat this

fruit, a command rooted not in reason but solely in the authority of his voice. This is a law passed down by the monarch of heaven solely as a test for Adam and Eve, a test of their unquestioning faith in him. This is contradictory to Milton's definition of a good ruler, as not only is the law completely self-serving, as there is no intrinsic danger in the eating of this specific fruit, it is also enforced solely through fear and physical threat.

The irony is that the threat carries no weight with Adam and Eve. Prior to their breaking the rule, they cannot comprehend the consequence. Eve herself, in the first paraphrase of the forbiddance, says, "not to taste that onely Tree / Of knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life, / So neer grows Death to Life, what ere Death is, / Som dreadful thing no doubt" (IV.423-26). Death itself is simply an empty sound to the ears of Adam and Eve; Paradise has never known decay, corruption, or death. The command of the Father, then, is based not in reason or fear, but solely in the speaker itself. There is an implied threat, but not one that can be understood by those living underneath the law, so the voice of God has to suffice for obedience, and this situation is one that has been cultivated by the Father through his insistence on ruling through commands rather than persuasion, the latter of which would develop the rational faculties of his subjects and make them capable of choosing, the prerequisite for persuasion and reasonable choice that Milton outlines in *Areopagitica*. But such choosing is supposedly an issue which does not concern humanity under the rule of the Father, as they are commanded to "be lowlie wise: / Think onely what concernes thee and thy being; / Dream not of other Worlds, what Creatures there / Live, in what state, condition, or degree" (VIII.172-76).

This view of knowledge and reason is required to follow the Father, but it is not a command that John Milton the poet can follow, as both the writing of *Paradise Lost* itself (no

matter how accommodated the story may be by heavenly tongues) and the principles of rationality and liberty he outlines in *Areopagitica* show, nor can his fallen ancestors Adam and Eve. And who can fault them? It is entirely contrary to Milton's earlier view of human reason and freedom; when he describes the ready and easy way to establish a free commonwealth, it "promises all its citizens a considerable degree of individual agency, the rationally structured and legally insured room to fashion their own lives, to invent aspirations and realize vocations free from the deadening weight of custom" (Stevens, 267). Milton may have changed his definitions of liberty and reason after the restoration of the monarchy in England, but an incredibly dramatic change would be required for Milton to fall in line with the dictates of the Father, and the writing of *Paradise Lost* itself, a story that reaches far beyond our world and our being, indicates that such a drastic overthrow of his beliefs did not occur. Even the style of the poem seems to indicate Milton's emphasis on free thought and the need for the exercise of reason.

Milton declares his stylistic intent in his preface to *Paradise Lost* entitled "The Verse," saying that he will refuse to rhyme because rhyme is "no necessary Adjunct or true Ornament of Poem or good Verse, in longer Works especially, but the Invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched matter and lame Meeter." The true musicality of a poem comes from its meter and its syntax; rhyme offers no additional legitimacy or truth. Milton claims that "this neglect then of Rime so little is to be taken a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar Readers, that it rather is to be esteem'd an example set, the first in *English*, of ancient liberty recover'd to Heroic Poem from the troublesom and modern bondage of Rimeing" (*PL*, 10). Milton's divorce from the bondage of rhyme is an attempt to engender a freedom of thought that will allow him to

contemplate the subjects of his heavenly epic, something that neither prose nor rhymed poetry allow.

His choice to write specifically in blank verse is a performance of his own ideals regarding human liberty through poetic form. Henry Weinfield characterizes blank verse as “situated between more formally rhymed verse and prose, and hence, as I shall be suggesting, between the ‘poetic’ and the ‘prosaic’ registers and realms of experience,” which “gives [Milton] the freedom to wander where he will without losing his way” (Weinfield, 2). Milton gains the freedom to wander by donning the artifice of poetry, which exists as a more carefully measured form, while still shedding the bondage of rhyme, and this liberation is taken even further through his frequent enjambment, which refuses to bound and limit even the individual poetic lines. John Creaser also notes the freedom that is afforded in the construct of blank verse, saying, “the artistic forms that most acknowledge order, such as Milton’s strictly disciplined verse, also enjoy the readiest freedom, for the tighter form, the more telling is any variation, the more resilient the departure and return. In highlighting the rhythms of language, poetry such as Milton’s calls upon deep responses: our joy in pattern, order, and yet freedom” (Creaser, 83). Even within what may seem like the restrictive confines of blank verse, Milton finds freedom in his lack of rhyme and in his variation on metrical forms.

Milton’s recovery of ancient liberty affords a freedom of thought that leads to twists and turns in the poetry that demand constant attention and re-evaluation from the reader. The very first line of the poem sets a Stanley Fish-esque trap for the reader: “Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit / Of that Forbidden Tree” (I.1-3). The fruit hangs on the edge of the line temptingly, but the line runs over into the decidedly damning phrase “of that Forbidden Tree.”

This is a minor example of the twists that enjambment and variation of form enable for Milton, but it is an example of what sort of “wandering” is allowed by his blank verse style; there is a contemplation of possibilities that frees the reader’s mind, but that also presents them with a clear solution, should they continue with their reading and think carefully.

This turn in thinking performed through line-turns enacts Milton’s beliefs about the pursuit of truth, as he outlines in *Areopagitica*: “Truth is compar’d in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetuall progression, they sick’n into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition” (*Prose*, 203). The constant exercise of reason is required to maintain our faculties of reason and to understand the truth, which will otherwise run through our still hands or grow stagnant in our cups. As John Creaser summarizes, “The unrhymed verse of *Paradise Lost*, with its continually modulating rhythms and divisions within the line and constant opening into new perspectives at the line-turn, makes reading ‘a perpetual progression’ and requires of the responsive reader continual acts of choice and discrimination” (Creaser, 92). Milton’s poetic style is an exercise in rational wandering and liberation for himself, but it also engages the reader’s rational faculties at the same time. All of this is to say that lowly wisdom that refuses to think beyond one’s own being lies outside the earlier explicit philosophical thought of Milton and seems contrary to the very act of writing of *Paradise Lost* itself. It is unlikely that Milton could obey Raphael’s command to Adam and Eve in order to stay within the Father’s strict confines of acceptable thought. The Father’s demand denies rational engagement with his subjects, requiring instead unquestioning acceptance of his commands.

Not only is the Father seen to be an almost belligerent, arbitrary ruler who offers no justification for his actions, he also often teeters on the edge of the destructive abyss that Satan

plunges into. In Book III, before the fall has even occurred, the Father rails against humanity: “whose fault? / Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of mee / All he could have... they themselves decreed / Their own revolt, not I” (III.96-117). After fifty lines of ranting, the Father closes with a promise of mercy, but still demands blood for the fall (that has still yet to occur), setting up an echo in Book VIII when Raphael describes the Father’s creation of Earth. Here, he has to send a full legion of angels to the gates of hell “To see that none thence issu’d forth a spie, / Or enemie, while God was in his work, / Least hee incenst at such eruption bold, / Destruction with Creation might have mixt” (VIII.233-36). The Father is capable of losing control of his own emotions and wreaking havoc and destruction merely at the sight of the rebellious angels. The Father spying Satan’s flight to Paradise is exactly what sparked his Book III rage; who can say how that speech would have ended had the Son not emphasized mercy and volunteered his own life?

The Father’s demand for death to satisfy justice in Book III is clearly a set-up for the Son, a familiar tactic that the Father used during the war in heaven to glorify his son. The Son goes along despite his lack of omniscience and saves humanity, but the demand for blood in payment for the fall of humanity is a high price to pay, and it does not even seem to be a consistent demand. Abdiel, the angel who attended Satan’s convocation before the war in heaven and opposed Satan’s arguments, is not executed upon his return from the demonic host because he repented; so too does mankind repent, and is even fallen at the corrupted by the already fallen angels rather than choosing to fall themselves.

The call for blood and the rage of the Father is not the only concerning thing about this scene, though. Its structural adjacency to Satan’s own pre-determined parliament forces the

reader to draw parallels between the heavenly and hellish hosts and their respective leaders; Satan's meeting of the devils concludes in Book II, while the Father's meeting of the angels begins 427 lines later in Book III. The Father's question of "where shall we find such love, / Which of ye will be mortal to redeem / Mans mortal crime, and just th' unjust to save, / Dwels in all Heaven charitie so deare?" is a farce of a choice, as the Father knows only the Son can rise to this occasion (III.213-16). He has set up these events in this way. Here, the Father's rhetorical strategy and manipulation is similar to Satan's in hell; neither are actually interested in the opinions of the people, but rather seek to instead serve themselves.

The rebellion of Satan against the Father is initially born from anti-tyrannical anxieties that the poetic narrator cannot even mask. The Father exercises his seemingly arbitrary will through force and threats and seems on the verge of scrapping the entire world before it even gets started in Book III. Without the theological background of the poem, a reader in a vacuum might find no worthy ruler in either the Father or Satan in *Paradise Lost*. As Bryson summarizes, "that Satan is fighting for something wrong (or against something self-evidently good) is neither obvious to a literary character without the benefit of thousands of years of mythological hindsight, nor to a literary reader who does not share the assumptions of a neo-Christian interpretive tradition. For Satan, the war against God is not an allegory of good and evil, but a real and present struggle against a tyrant" (81). This is not to say that Satan's cause is good since it is not obviously wrong. It is, however, true that neither the Father nor Satan provide us with a solution to the anxieties that the poem produces regarding authoritarian rule and the tyranny of a monarch ruling through fear and manipulation rather than persuasion.

The Fall of Satan

Satan is not a remedy for the problem of tyranny, as he assumes a similarly tyrannical and even narcissistic role in hell. The raising of Pandaemonium and the convocation of the fallen angels in hell is the beginning of the end for Satan, as it sets in motion the chain of events that results in his final fall upon resolving to corrupt Eve when he sees her in Paradise. The placement of Pandaemonium at the very beginning of the poem is no accident; Milton could have easily constructed a chronologically linear plot that began with the war in heaven and ended with the expulsion of Adam and Eve. Instead, we are introduced to Satan through this politically weighted convocation in hell, which then leads into the heavenly convocation that I have just discussed. Milton is both adhering to the *in media res* epic convention to establish the genre of the poem and initiating the final damnation of Satan while also criticizing God the Father; here in hell is where Satan begins his reign as a tyrant, forsaking the potentially justifiable principles of his rebellion against the tyranny of heaven that may win a reader over to his side when combined with his rhetorical skill and emotional complexity.

Satan's rebellion and the ensuing war destroyed the god-created angel Lucifer, creating Satan, "so call him now, his former name / Is heard no more in Heav'n" and is "thence in call'd Satan" (V.658-59 ; I.82). We are introduced to Satan in a fractured state, as a being grasping for structure, one in the very midst of recreating himself out of the shards of his former state. Neil Forsyth writes that "this first grand speech of Satan's (I.84-124)" involves Satan "[dragging] himself into consciousness, at first in a shambling uncertain syntax, and virtually [reinventing] himself after the disastrous fall from heaven" (Forsyth, 80). Satan begins speaking by questioning, offering conditional "ifs" in order to determine his state and the state of his

followers (in this case Beelzebub specifically), and thereby begins the process of reconstructing himself and taking on the new identity of Satan:

If thou beest he; But O how fall'n! how chang'd
From him, who in the happy Realms of Light
Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst out-shine
Myriads though bright: If he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the Glorious Enterprize,
Joynd with me once, now misery hath joynd
In equal ruin. (I.84-91)

Satan is scattered at first, fractured by the war in heaven; he is searching for answers and orientation within the fires of hell, attempting to discern the identities of his companions, and reckon with the failure of his rebellion. He is so shattered that he interrupts his own initial conditional phrase, unable to even pursue a single thought to completion. But these opening lines and the lines that follow represent him piecing himself together into a new form, no longer the angelic archangel Lucifer, but rather in the form of Satan, the apostate angel and adversary to God. The speech shifts towards the epic; it is “latterly full of passion, defiance, and grandeur. It is a speech that is likely to raise the spirits of Beelzebub, his second-in-command, through its (oddly) passionate stoicism” (Forsyth, 81). This heroism and grandeur is reminiscent of Aeneas’ speech to his own men at the beginning of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, as it hides Satan’s inner pain with a facade of bravery and leadership: “So spake th’ Apostate Angel, though in pain, / Vaunting aloud, but rackt with deep despare” (I.125-6).

Here is where Satan begins consciously performing the identity that he has created for himself. He has done away with Lucifer, the angel that the Father created, and now exists as Satan, self-created, standing in opposition to the Father. This is a performance that will continue throughout the poem as Satan draws ever nearer to internalizing this hateful identity, a struggle that the reader is privy to through Satan's soliloquies and his hesitance upon seeing Eve in Eden and that concludes with the Fall and the loss of Paradise. These first spoken lines serve as the beginning of his conscious construction of the Satanic identity, but the poetic narrator also provides us with a physical, imagistic reconstruction as we move from Satan lying in the pool of flame to his angelic, standing posture.

Satan has been making this initial speech "With Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes / That sparkling blaz'd, his other Parts besides / Prone on the Flood, extended long and large" (I.193-95). Roy Flannagan identifies this description of Satan as another Virgilian reference, "modeled after the sea-serpents in the *Aeneid* swimming toward Laocoon" (Flannagan, 360). He is lying in the flood, arms at his side and only his head lifted above the water. Here, then, we see Satan as a metaphoric serpent, a state which he will obviously return to by the end of the poem, but also one which he raises himself out of in order to rouse the fallen angels to his cause prior to his final fall. "Forthwith upright he rears from off the Pool / His mighty Stature" and "with expanded wings he steers his flight / Aloft, incumbent on the dusky Air / That felt unusual weight, till on dry Land / He lights" (I.221-28). Wings appear as Satan lifts himself out of the pool, then feet appear as he reaches land. He assesses hell, giving a speech to Beelzebub about the region they are now imprisoned in before Satan's great shield, "massy, large and round" is revealed, whose "broad circumference / Hung on his shoulders like the Moon" alongside "His

Spear, to equal which the tallest Pine / Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the Mast / Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand” (I.285-94). Satan possesses shoulders and arms, both biological arms and implements of war. “His form had not yet lost / All her Original brightness, nor appear’d Less then Arch Angel ruind” (I.591-93). Satan is not entirely unrecognizable and still possesses the form of an archangel, if not that of an archangel of heaven.

This form is achieved through a transformation that Satan himself drives. As Forsyth notes, “What has been happening throughout this long sequence, then, is that the reader’s experience of Satan has been transformed backwards, as it were, from an infernal serpent to a heroic angel” (Forsyth, 211). As Satan is consciously and verbally affirming his role as the adversary, he is also regaining his angelic form, raising himself up in stature again. This process of construction, both physical and mental, points to Satan’s power to create and even reverse the disintegration that he will later undergo at the hand of God from archangel to serpent. Rebecca Rush argues that, in the entirety of *Paradise Lost*, “the constellation of images and allusions associated with the universe’s boundaries and Satan’s mural breaches contribute to Milton’s justification of God by illustrating that evil punishes itself — its violation of boundaries is a violation of self that results in disintegration and discord” (Rush, 110). Rush’s argument holds for the rest of the poem, but this initial construction disrupts that pattern; Satan’s disintegration is thanks to his breaking the boundaries and morals put in place by the Father, as is evidenced in Book IX during the episode where the entirety of hell is transformed into serpents forced to clamber for ashen fruit, but Satan is a constructive force here rather than destructive. This construction serves to both empower Satan and lend his cause a degree of moral incertitude.

This is also not the only place in which Satan is allowed a degree of creative power. During the war in heaven, Michael calls Satan the “author of evil, unknown till thy revolt,” accusing him of actually bringing into Nature “Miserie, uncreated till the crime / Of thy Rebellion” (VI.262-69). According to Michael, Satan has created this abstract concept nearly out of nothing. But his creative power can also take a material form, as the unholy trinity of Sin and Death illustrates. As Sin describes it:

All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprisd thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzie swumm
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side op'ning wide,
Likest to thee in shape and count'nance bright,
Then shining heav'nly fair, a Goddess arm'd
Out of thy head I sprung. (II.752-58)

Out of the head of Satan, Sin is created. Satan may have been surprised at the shape of his creation, but it is by no accident that Sin is begotten and born at the assembly of rebellious angels solely out of the head of Satan. In this way, so too does Satan create the identity of Satan himself; he kills what was the God-created Lucifer and replaces it with a rebel, the Adversary, Satan, an identity that, through its performance during the corruption of Adam and Eve, completely replaces the inborn soul that God begot. The ethereal material of his body may still derive from God, but the identity of Satan himself is “self-begot, self-rais'd / By [his] own quick'ning power” (V.860-61) and confirmed through his material actions of rebellion when he finally names himself “Satan (for I glorie in the name, / Antagonist of Heav'ns Almightye

King),” accepting his narrative function and destroying once and for all his inner conflict between the loving soul that balks at Eve upon first seeing her and the hateful identity that he has chosen for himself in order to oppose the Father and the tyranny of heaven (X.386-7).

The poetic narrator attempts to explain the freedom and creative power that Satan is allowed in this section by saying that this was merely the Father’s way of ensuring the salvation of mankind and the final damnation of Satan:

... the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enrag’d might see
How all his malice serv’d but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shewn
On Man by him seduc’t, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance pour’d. (I.211-20)

This justification is insufficient to defend God’s purpose, as it simply illustrates the heart of the Father’s monarchical tyranny: that he rules through punishment and force rather than “to make persuasion do the work of fear” (*Paradise Regained*, 1.223). Satan’s war in heaven is spurred by the strong armed tactics of the Father, tactics which are perpetuated throughout *Paradise Lost* and only ended when the Father hands over power to the Son. This is simply one instance of what Neil Forsyth described as “an omniscient and omnipotent God [merely] toying with this

defiant devil, and Satan is fulfilling his function within the narrative, and within Christian doctrine---to be the one who opposes omnipotence” (Forsyth, 157). Forsyth’s characterization, though, lets Satan off the hook a little too easily; he is still responsible for manipulating the other fallen angels with irrational rhetoric, taking advantage of their obedient states (a state cultivated by the Father) and of installing himself on the throne of hell, perpetuating tyrannical practices. He is not simply the victim of external forces, but Forsyth’s comment does point to the powerful influence of narrative function on a character such as Satan.

This narrative function represents a meta-textual oppression that Satan fails to identify, let alone overcome. The tension in his soliloquies between his soul, which still bears some love in it, and his will to hatefully rebel, metaphorically represents his own struggle with his narrative role. When Satan views Eve in the garden and is struck dumb, “the apparent implication is that Satan's nature is still drawn to love, but that his will is what drives him to revenge. For a brief moment his evil separates off...; it is no longer his essential nature. As he stands there, he 'recollects' himself, and launches on another self directed soliloquy" (Forsyth, 261-2). Satan is caught within a hermeneutic evolution that Frank Kermode identifies in *The Genesis of Secrecy*: "a function develops into a proper name; so it becomes a character, whose life and death have a narrative; and then the function is lost in the character. In the first extant account it has already been forgotten that Judas Iscariot was Judas the Betrayer, and, before that, simply Betrayal" (Kermode, 94). This same process is embodied in the theological adversary, Ha-Satan, who becomes a fully fledged character in his own right that culminates in Milton’s fleshed out Satan. “Narrative begot character, and character begot new narrative” (Kermode, 91). The Father, who

has seen how everything ends, perhaps goads Satan into his rebellion by presenting the promotion of the Son the way he does.

The Father's foreknowledge provides the *proto-evangelion* that ends the poem and that serves as the foundation of the *felix culpa*, and this foreknowledge means that, even prior to his announcement, he is aware of Satan's rebellion. This, combined with the fact that we never see a pre-fallen Satan, implicates the Father in the authorship of Satan's narrative role, one which Satan can never escape from; "Milton gives us his Satan fully formed and fallen. Even in Book 5, which gives us the earliest glimpse of Satan, he is already Satan, and already 'his former name / Is heard no more in Heav'n' (5.658-9). It is as though on the day that the Father begets the Son, he also begets Satan" (Bryson, 95). Part of Satan's failure, then, stems from his incomplete understanding of his subjection, which exists on a physical level and on a narrative level. Against this oppression, Satan has no hope.

The speeches given by Satan and Beelzebub in Pandaeonium signify the first tyrannical move that Satan makes in order to install himself as a tyrant, and Mary Fenton outlines how these speeches' formal inversion of *The Lord's Prayer* mark the beginnings of Satan's destructively narcissistic and tyrannical path. Milton states in *De Doctrina Christiana* that "the Lord's Prayer is a pattern or model, rather than a formula to be repeated verbatim either by the apostles or by the churches today" (*Prose*, 6.670). The pattern of the prayer is the key, as it is the pattern handed down by the Son during the sermon on the mount in Matthew as a means of facilitating human conversation with the divine and later appears in a more truncated version in the gospel of Luke. Augustine identifies seven petitions within the Lord's Prayer, beginning with three petitions addressing God regarding eternal hopes and then four requesting material gifts

from God. The first three petitions hope for the hallowing of God's name, the advent of God's kingdom, and the carrying out of God's will, while the following four requests for material gifts ask that the speaker be given their daily bread, be forgiven of their trespasses, be not led into temptation, and be delivered from the evil one (*Enchiridion*, Chap. 30.115).

This is the form that Satan and Beelzebub flip during their speeches at Pandaemonium in order to give material gifts primacy rather than eternal grace and place Satan himself in the role of God as the deliverer of the demons (Fenton, 136-7). Their combined speeches begin with the denial of the material gifts that God promises his followers and ends with the establishment of a new kingdom of Satan that will be established through his individual efforts alone via the destruction of God's new creation.

Beelzebub's preface to Satan's speech begins the inversion with a denial of the physical and spiritual sustenance of God as provided through "our daily bread." Instead of a hopeful petition for the protection of God through the material gift of his bread, Beelzebub paints the forlorn state of the fallen angels, that "the King of Heav'n hath doom'd / This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat / Beyond his Potent arm." The Father is not a figure of protection, but rather a tyrant in heaven who will "with Iron Scepter rule" over the fallen angels in hell (II.316-27).

Not only will God no longer provide for them, but there is not even any hope of changing this circumstance, for:

Warr hath determin'd us, and foild with loss
Irreparable; tearms of peace yet none
Voutsaf't or sought; for what peace will be giv'n
To us enslav'd, but custody severe,

And stripes, and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
But to our power hostility and hate,
Untam'd reluctance, and revenge though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel? (II.330-40)

There can be no forgiving the trespasses of the fallen angels, and even if they could be forgiven, they would merely be reinserted into their servitude that they so despised enough to rebel in the first place, suffering under the rule of God. Moloch's proposal of war and the joint proposals of peace put forth by Belial and Mammon, although contrary to Satan's own plan, support the denial of these first two material gifts from God; their plans both rest on an assumption that they must provide for themselves in absence of God's grace and that they will likely never be fully forgiven for their trespasses. The truth of these statements is unclear, as evidence exists on both sides based on what we know about the Father's tyrannical tendencies and Satan's own rhetorical irrationality and dishonesty, but their rhetorical function serves to set up Satan's regime.

In the most ironic reversal of the Lord's Prayer, Beelzebub then attempts to persuade the litany of fallen angels to resist the temptation to attempt to regain God's grace. Mammon's advice in particular advocates for a hope and redemption that may result in a return to God's kingdom, and this return and hope is the temptation which the demons must resist. Beelzebub has already outlined the forlorn situation of the fallen armies and refuted the attempts at appeasement offered by Belial and Mammon, but he then proceeds to offer an "easier

enterprize:” the corruption or destruction of Paradise and its inhabitants (II.345). This enterprise “would surpass / Common revenge, and interrupt his joy / In our Confusion, and our joy upraise / in his disturbance,” a clearly superior option to sitting “in darkness here / Hatching vain Empires” (II.370-78). The only one capable of fulfilling such a promise, as ensured by the rhetorical set-up of this speech, is Satan.

And thus, with these anti-Christian petitions fresh on his lips, Beelzebub sets the stage for Satan to answer his perverted prayer:

But first whom shall we send

In search of this new world, whom shall we find

Sufficient?

[...]

Here he had need

All circumspection, and wee now no less

Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send,

The weight of all and our last hope relies. (II.402-16)

And of course, having “first devis’d” this speech and this inversion of the Lord’s Prayer, Satan enters to answer the calls of Beelzebub and, by extension, the host of fallen angels, inserting himself into the position of the monarchical savior who can deliver them from the tyranny of God above via a rhetorical manipulation that depends on the fallen angels’ inability to reason through the actual arguments of Beelzebub and himself (II.379).

Beelzebub has now successfully put Satan in the position to claim the role of the “Father” being petitioned in the Lord’s Prayer. “By inverting the structural pattern, he has positioned

Satan to present what are normally the first three statements of the prayer” in order to assert himself as the savior of the devils, both in their as-yet unvoiced spiritual petitions and as an answer to Beelzebub’s material petitions. He addresses Pandaemonium as his “Progeny of Heav’n,” immediately inserting himself into the patriarchal role of the Father; “our Father who art in Heaven” becomes Satan, the Father of hell, which he brought into existence as the “Author of evil, unknown till [his] revolt,” having brought misery, “uncreated till the crime of [his] Rebellion,” into existence (II.430;VI.267-69). His patriarchal position within hell is further illustrated by his creating Sin and Death later in the book, but for now, his rhetoric establishes him as the ruler of hell. He hallows his own name throughout the entirety of this speech, particularly by assuring that “the weight of all and our last hope relies” on him, the sole individual capable of carrying out the task of corrupting Paradise. Beelzebub’s transition and Satan’s opening address establish him as the Father to whom these devils must pray. This hallowing of Satan’s name is occurring simultaneously with the fallen archangel’s taking on of the name Satan in the first place; by accepting this mission, Satan is donning the mantle as the adversary of heaven, raising him above the rest of the hellish host. This process continues the formation of the Satanic identity while simultaneously raising him above rest of the fallen angels.

Satan then outlines how he will bring about his kingdom on Earth. He will “abroad / Through all the Coasts of dark destruction seek / Deliverance for us all,” a colonizer of Paradise seeking to establish a new empire for his demonic followers in the dark regions beyond chaos. He will blaze the trail toward the “new world” that Beelzebub outlines earlier in his speech:

... perhaps in view

Of those bright confines, whence with neighbouring Arms
And opportune excursion we may chance
Re-enter Heav'n; or else in some milde Zone
Dwell not unvisited of Heav'ns fair Light
Secure, and at the brightning Orient beam
Purge off this gloom. (II.394-400)

Satan will claim this new land by venturing out to corrupt it and, after it has fallen, using it as a new promised land for his followers where they can lick their wounds after the failed war in heaven. This is the kingdom to come that he offers. Not only does he take the throne of the monarch through his deception, but he immediately performs the role of the monarch by promising his subjects a kingdom beyond what they have already.

Satan then must answer only one more petition in the Lord's Prayer, that "thy will be done." Satan, however, "transmutes the carrying out of God's will as, 'My will be done' when he declares, 'this enterprize / None shall partake with me / and prevented all reply'" (Fenton, 147;II.465-67). Not only is he twisting the petition so that he the speaker is answering the call himself, but he is officially assuming the tyrannical role of the monarch that he so despised in heaven. He declares his intent and will brook no objection; none shall prevent his will from being done.

As Mary Fenton concludes in *Milton's Places of Hope*:

By deliberately reversing the prayer's narrative structure and intent, Beelzebub and Satan invert the prayer's purpose from a deferential communication with God to an egocentric

proclamation of authority; from a petition for God's beneficent protection to an assertion of Satan's self-serving hegemonic power. (Fenton, 127)

Through his rhetorical inversion of the Lord's Prayer, Satan establishes himself as the deliverer of hell, the fallen analog of the Father in heaven with a throne to match. Satan establishes himself as the tyrant of hell and thus begins his real and permanent fall.

Fenton, though, discusses this inversion purely as a corruption against the Lord's prayer and a blasphemy against the structures of heaven, which is certainly true, but it also serves to act as an imitation, however corrupt, of the hierarchies of power that do exist in heaven. Although Satan puts the material before the spiritual in this inversion, he is still placing himself in the role of the patriarchal ruler of this kingdom who will answer the petitions of his subjects. Beelzebub's description of the Father's lack of mercy for the fallen angels resonates somewhat with the Father's rhetoric and actions during the promotion of the Son and the war in heaven. This inversion of the prayer goes beyond what Fenton describes as blasphemy, as it echoes the heavenly forms it is inverting at the same time as it manipulates them for its own uses. Even as Satan falls and takes on the role of the tyrant in hell, he reproduces the structures that he has already seen in heaven. Though this version may be a counterfeit, Satan's version of the Lord's prayer and his ascension to the throne is founded on a heavenly analog.

As Michael Bryson points out:

At the point where he questions the legitimacy of monarchical fiat, Satan seems about to make a major Miltonic breakthrough... After realizing that titles and privileges are inherently worthless in a regime ruled by an absolute monarch, the critical next steps for Satan would have been to reject titles and privileges altogether, and then to cast aside the

notion of external authority, pomp, circumstance, and ceremony in favor of the notion that all are 'in freedom equal' (*Paradise Lost*, V.797). Were he a successful hero and not a tragic one, Satan *could* have understood 'freedom' in terms of the inner government of 'the inner man, the nobler part' (*Paradise Regained*, II.477), as the Son will come to realize and express a thousand years later. But Satan remains stuck in the patterns of thought he has learned all too well in the rigidly hierarchical heaven Milton presents.

(Bryson, 86-7)

Satan's rebellion loses any justification it may have started with. Instead of seeking to overthrow the monarchy in favor of a more free, equal government, Satan himself transforms it into an individual ascension and pursuit of revenge. Whatever anti-authoritarian strains that may have grounded this rebellion in Miltonic principles are forsaken as Satan simply installs himself as a new tyrant; he only ever sought to repair his injured pride and sense of merit, a narcissistic effort that corrupts the entire revolution.

The narrator's descriptions of Satan's aspect further sketch the elaborate performance that Satan is orchestrating in order to install himself as the king of hell. He, of course, sits "High on a Throne of Royal State," exalted and "by merit rais'd / To that bad eminence," but the narrator of the poem also sketches a monarchical portrait of Satan during this assembly (II.1-6). Beelzebub, his lieutenant, is described as "a Pillar of State" with "Princely counsel in his face yet shon," implying that he whom Beelzebub serves (Satan) holds the position of King over him (II.302-4). This implication is fulfilled with the rising of Satan to the occasion that he himself has created, that of the savior of the demons in hell who will corrupt Paradise. "Satan, whom now transcendent glory rais'd / Above his fellows, with Monarchal pride / Conscious of highest

worth” declares his will, then moves to the task that he has set for himself (II.427-29). “Thus saying rose / The Monarch, and prevented all reply” (II.466-7). This gambit works; “Towards him they bend / With awful reverence prone; and as a God / Extoll him equal to the highest in Heav’n” (II.477-79). He has pulled off the farce of liberty and attained the throne in hell, fulfilling his desire to reign in hell rather than serve anyone, even in heaven. He is now “Hells dread Emperour with pomp Supream, / and God-like imitated State,” thus falling short of the Miltonic breakthrough and putting the mantle of tyranny upon his own head, surrounding himself with a hellish train of seraphim and trumpets that mocks the perfumes and choirs of heaven (II.510-11). Satan begins his fall anew, accepting the structurally imposed narrative function that the Father has created for him and failing to break out of the hierarchical mindset of monarchy and tyranny, and thereby failing in his revolution. Ironically, his ability to manipulate the host of demons is engendered by the Father in the first place, as his commanding, authoritarian rule prevented the angels from ever developing their rational faculties and learning to discern good from evil. Satan exploits this through his own authoritarian manipulation and rhetoric, taking advantage of the discourses of power that the Father taught him by example in Heaven. By merely exchanging the “eternal empire” for the “infernal empire” instead of doing away with empire itself, Satan fails to free himself or anyone from the rule of God and proves his rebellion unjustified (VII.96 ; X.389).

Chapter 2: Ahab in *Moby Dick*; or, the Whale

Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* was one hundred and eighty four years, an ocean, and a democratic revolution removed from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but Ahab, the captain of the whaling ship the *Pequod*, can be seen as a direct descendant of Milton's Satan. I argue that they both exemplify the character type of the fallen revolutionary and are both employed by their respective authors as rebels whose fight and actions can be worthy, but whose actual rebellions fall short ethically and politically due to the violent and destructive means through which they are carried out and the tyrannical intentions of their leaders that defeat the principles of the rebellion in the first place.

Melville's Democratic Drive

Ahab's political function is tied up in Melville's whole-hearted belief in American democracy based on his fairly radical egalitarianism. In a letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1851, the same year that he would later finish and publish *Moby Dick*, Melville expresses his frustration with those who maintain both external aristocracies and "an aristocracy of the brain," which some people "who, while earnest in behalf of political equality, still accept the intellectual estates" (*Letters*, 126). He warns Hawthorne that he is no such person:

When you see or hear of my ruthless democracy on all sides, you may possibly feel a touch of a shrink, or something of that sort. It is but nature to be shy of a mortal who boldly declares that a thief in jail is as honorable a personage as Gen. George Washington. This is ludicrous. But Truth is the silliest thing under the sun. Try to get a living by the Truth--and go to the Soup Societies. Heavens! (*Letters*, 127)

This letter illuminates both Melville's belief in "unconditional democracy in all things" and his acknowledgment of the intellectual aristocracy, an aristocracy that can take hold in a person's art through the continuance of the "cultural hegemony of Europe." In order to escape from this aristocracy of the brain, one must rebel against the "classical and aristocratic aesthetic of the beautiful associated with Europe" (Fredricks, 8). *Moby Dick* will, through its formal experimentation and the seductive rebellion at the heart of its narrative, serve as the greatest example of Melville's war against the unequal aristocracies of the body and the brain.

In a letter to Evert A. Duyckinck, Melville affirmed his belief in the political progress that had been made so far. The American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence represent a significant step for Melville:

I would to God Shakspeare had lived later, & promenaded in Broadway. Not that I might have had the pleasure of leaving my card for him at the Astor, or made merry with him over a bowl of the fine Duyckinck punch; but that the muzzle which all men wore on their souls in the Elizebethan day, might not have intercepted Shakspers full articulations. For I hold it a verity, that even Shakspeare, was not a frank man to the uttermost. And, indeed, who in this intolerant Universe is, or can be? But the Declaration of Independence makes a difference. (*Letters*, 79-80)

This closing sentence reverberates throughout Melville's body of work; the hope that the Declaration of Independence truly marks historical progress towards unconditional democracy rings in the pages of *Moby Dick* explicitly and implicitly.

This political imperative is carried out by Melville throughout his writing. Jason Franks remarks that "Melville's collected work... offers what is arguably nineteenth-century America's

most sustained interrogation of the American political imaginary, of the narratives and norms, principles and presuppositions, that animate the American political tradition and give shape to American political identity” (Franks, 2). Unlike Milton, Melville was never a political activist and carried out his interrogations of political systems almost exclusively through fiction.

Melville never wrote a pamphlet, perhaps because of his insistence on "[reversing] the test of Lord Shaftesbury" (a test claiming that you can know a thing is true if it survives ridicule) and his aversion to the aristocracy of the brain that manifests in didactic literary forms that claim to present Truth in a straightforward, ‘serious’ way (*Letters*, 127). “Although Melville was not directly engaged in the partisan politics or reform movements of the time, he demonstrated a preoccupation with political critique across the entire span of his writing career,” seeking out Truth through increasingly democratized fiction that never shied away from the incomprehensibility and inscrutability of Truth (Frank, 2).

In order to get at the truth, one must approach it sideways. It is an inquisitive effort taken on by “men who dive... the whole corps of thought-divers, that have been diving & coming up again with bloodshot eyes since the world began,” attempting to get at evasive truth (*Letters*, 79). “For in this world of lies, Truth is forced to fly like a sacred white doe in the woodlands; and only by cunning glimpses will she reveal herself, as in Shakespeare and other masters of the great Art of Telling the Truth,---even though it be covertly, and by snatches” (*Norton*, 523). Truth cannot simply be laid out didactically; “you must have plenty of sea-room to tell the Truth in,” and Melville made his deepest dive into the largest swath of sea-room that he could manage in *Moby Dick*. This novel is Melville’s most complete attempt to establish his democratic ideals, which occurs both on a literal level with the characters of Ahab and Ishmael (two men on the

same journey with separate ends in mind) and on a formal level through his subversion of divinity and the different genres he explores in an effort to move beyond classical traditions potentially associated with the hegemonic Europe and to give voice to voices that are not elevated by these classical traditions. For Melville, it is the responsibility of an American “to carry republican progressiveness into Literature, as well as into Life,” and that process is carried out by avoiding “the imitation of foreign models” and crafting a new, American originality (*Norton*, 524-7). Through the journey of the *Pequod*, Melville attempts to carry out his democratic ideals and break free from the aristocracies artificially separating humanity.

Melville, in a letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, asks, “Shall I send you a fin of the *Whale* by way of a specimen mouthful? The tail is not yet cooked--though the hell-fire in which the whole book is broiled might not unreasonably have cooked it all ere this. This is the book's motto (the secret one), -- Ego non baptisto te in nomine -- but make out the rest yourself" (*Letters*, 133). Ahab answers Melville’s challenge himself, shouting, “ego non baptizo te in nomine patris, sed in nomine diabli!” as he forges the harpoon meant for the brow of the White Whale - I baptize thee not in the name of the Father, but in the name of the devil (*Moby Dick*, 501). The book and its central defiant rebel are steeped in the fires of hell, and a particularly Miltonic hell, at that, situating Ahab in the same moral space that Satan occupies in *Paradise Lost*; the action of rebellion against the White Whale may be justified, but his elevation of himself above his fellow crew-members and his self-serving ideals undermine any hope of actually achieving liberation from tyrannous systems and ensuring the equal treatment of all.

Ahab's Satanic Descendancy

Melville was well-versed in his Milton; he may not have held Milton up to the same level as he did Shakespeare (whom he revered wholeheartedly), but he was still thoroughly familiar with *Paradise Lost*, and especially Satan. William Braswell points out a line in Shelley's *Essays* that Melville found particularly interesting:

In Shelley's *Essays* which Melville read later in life, he marked the following passage: 'Milton's Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God, as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and torture, is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy....' These lines could apply to Ahab as well as to Milton's Satan. It is even possible that this character influenced the conception of Ahab, for Melville was quite familiar with *Paradise Lost*. (Braswell, 69)

Consciously or not, Satan (both the theological and the literary Satan) informs Ahab in the novel. Not only does this similarity highlight the political struggle that I have outlined in *Paradise Lost*, but it also places Ahab in the ambiguous moral space that Satan inhabits, as both oppose potentially unjust rulers, but do so in destructive and self-serving ways that fail to get deal with the root problems of authoritarian rule and unequal treatment of all. Ahab, even more than Satan, refuses to be categorized as either good or evil, but instead must purely be discussed through the lens of his rebellion and the veracity of his motivations in rebelling against divinity.

At the most basic level, the narrative arcs and motivations of Satan and Ahab are similar. Ahab is the "grand, ungodly, godlike man" who is "above the common" that fits the mold of the romantic tragic hero, a mold influenced heavily by Milton's Satan (*Moby Dick*, 82). From the

start, “in almost his first, oblique reference to Ahab... Ishmael leaves us in no doubt that Ahab is cast in the dimensions of the tragic hero” (Friedman, 197-98) in Chapter 16 of *Moby Dick*:

So that there are instances among them of men, who, named with Scripture names... from the audacious, daring, and boundless adventure of their subsequent lives, strangely blend with these unoutgrown peculiarities. And when these things unite in a man of greatly superior natural force, with a globular brain and a ponderous heart; who has also by the stillness and seclusion of many long night-watches in the remotest waters, and beneath constellations never seen here at the north, been led to think untraditionally and independently; receiving all nature's sweet or savage impressions fresh from her own virgin voluntary and confiding breast, and thereby chiefly, but with some help from accidental advantages, to learn a bold and nervous lofty language—that man makes one in a whole nation's census—a mighty pageant creature, formed for noble tragedies. Nor will it at all detract from him, dramatically regarded, if either by birth or other circumstances, he have what seems a half wilful overruling morbidness at the bottom of his nature. For all men tragically great are made so through a certain morbidness. (*Moby Dick*, 76-7)

Ahab, with his suffering and morbidity, exists in the line of romantic, tragic heroes that descends from an admiration of Satan by the romantics, an admiration which can be seen in Shelley's previously noted remarks about Satan's moral superiority to the Father in *Paradise Lost*. “He is a mixture of the divine and the demonic... he is to some extent in the line of Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost*,” continues Friedman, but he understates the connection between these two figures (Friedman, 178). Ahab's connection to Satan extends beyond their similar narrative trajectories,

as it is echoed in the motivations of both characters and in their attitudes towards the divine that they see as an unjust system that rules over them.

The inciting emotions of Ahab and Satan are one and the same: “in his fiery eyes of scorn and triumph, you then saw Ahab in all his fatal pride,” consumed by monomania and rage, a steadfastness of pride that recalls Satan’s own “fixt mind / And high disdain, from sence of injur’d merit” (*Moby Dick*, 533 ; *Paradise Lost*, I.97-8). Satan’s eyes reflect his psychology just as Ahab’s do: “round he throws his baleful eyes / That witness’d huge affliction and dismay / Mixt with obdurate pride and stedfast hate” (*Paradise Lost*, I.56-8). This destructive mixture of pride and hate fuels the wills of both Ahab and Satan towards their goals, driving them to take tyrannical positions over their compatriots-turned-subjects and isolating them from the rest of the universe. Both Satan and Ahab are tempted to succumb to feelings of love and cease their fight, but both persist because of the strength of their individual wills. Lewis Mumford comments on Ahab’s character arc in a summary that would require little modification to describe Satan’s fall as well:

He vanquishes in himself that which would retreat from Moby Dick and acquiesce in his insensate energies and his brutal sway. His end is tragic: evil engulfs him. But in battling against evil, with power instead of love, Ahab himself, in A.E.’s phrase, becomes the image of the thing he hates: he has lost his humanity in the very act of vindicating it... That evil Ahab seeks to strike is the sum of one’s enemies. He does not bow down to it and accept it: therein lies his heroism and virtue: but he fights it with its own weapons and therein lies his madness. (Mumford, 186-7)

Ahab can no more escape from his view of the world as a battleground for power than Satan can escape from the hierarchical organization of the world according to military power that he inherited from being the Father's subject.

The overall narratives of the two characters map fairly consistently on to each other, but the similarities go further than that; Ahab paints himself as the Biblical devil and swears himself to be of the devil's party. Nicholas Canaday highlights the Satanic echoes in Ahab's self-reflection before the final encounter with Moby Dick. Driven to musings about immortality by the noise of the carpenter working on Queequeg's coffin, Ahab describes his distance from the light of God, saying, "so far gone am I in the dark side of earth, that its other side, the theoretic bright one, seems but uncertain twilight to me" (*Moby Dick*, 542). Such musings are reminiscent of John 3:19: "And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Canaday notes this as being a "symbolic correspondence between Ahab and the 'prince of darkness' as opposed to the God of light" (Canaday, 41). This echoing of the Bible focuses on the division of light and darkness in the world, an image that is picked up throughout the novel and always places Ahab in the darkness, a darkness that Satan occupies as well. Canaday notes the theological Satan's darkness, but Milton's poetic Satan similarly exists far from the "theoretic bright [side]" of the universe as he reigns in hell with all its "darkness visible" (I.63).

"Dark Ahab's" Tyranny and Isolation

The most explicit encounter with Ahab's cosmic darkness comes through the parallel of Ahab with the dying sperm whale; in their dying moments, both Ahab, the figure of darkness, and the sperm whale, a divine symbol through its association with the White Whale, react

differently to the source of light and life that hangs over them in the sky. In “The Dying Whale,” Ahab observes the death knells of four sperm whales that have been killed, “one of them by Ahab:”

Ahab, who had sternal off from the whale, sat intently watching his final wanings from the now tranquil boat. For that strange spectacle observable in all sperm-whales dying--the turning sunwards of the head, and so expiring...

‘He turns and turns him to it - how slowly, but how steadfastly, his homage-rendering and invoking brow, with his last dying motions. He too worships fire; most faithful, broad, baronial vassal of the sun! (*Moby Dick*, 508)

The trademark turning of the body toward the sun marks the whale’s deaths and their worship of the sun and the light side of the world, an allegiance consistent with Ahab’s view of Moby Dick as either the agent or principal of the divine, monarch over these lesser sperm whales who are themselves “the [monarchs] of the sea... the great sperm whale now reigneth” having deposed all other whales (*Moby Dick*, 138). This metaphor of turning to the sun is revived in Ahab’s final moments:

I turn my body from the sun. What ho, Tashtego! let me hear thy hammer... Am I cut off from the last fond pride of meanest shipwrecked captains? Oh, lonely death on lonely life! Oh, now I feel my topmost greatness lies in my topmost grief. Ho, ho! from all your furthest bounds, pour ye now in, ye bold billows of my whole foregone life, and top this one piled comber of my death! Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. (*Moby Dick*, 587)

Ahab does not worship the sun, and his “last turning away from the sun is another symbolic act of conscious, deliberate, Satanic, Promethean defiance” (Thompson, 235). He rejects the light and embraces the dark, turning away from heavenly light and love and embracing hate, darkness, and death.

In his last defiant act, aware of his oncoming death and having already seen sinking of the *Pequod* by the White Whale, Ahab makes good on his promise to “dispute [the] unconditional, unintegral mastery in me” “to the last gasp of my earthquake life” (*Moby Dick*, 519). In this defiance of the sun and of the divine, we are given another echo of Ahab’s earlier speech in “The Quarter-Deck” regarding his place in the universe and announcing his mission:

That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. For could the sun do that, then could I do the other; since there is ever a sort of fair play herein, jealousy presiding over all creations. But not my master, man, is even that fair play. Who's over me? Truth hath no confines.
(*Moby Dick*, 168)

The faction of light is represented by that most powerful source of light, the sun, and Ahab turns his back on it in the carrying out of his defiant rebellion, striking back at the White Whale that insulted him by taking his leg, whether it be agent or principal of the divine faction.

This solar imagery has its place in *Paradise Lost* as well; Satan, before his entrance into Eden, reflects on the sun’s beams:

O thou that with surpassing Glory crown'd,
Look'st from thy sole Dominion like the God

Of this new World; at whose sight all the Starrs

Hide thir diminisht heads; to thee I call,

But with no friendly voice, and add thy name

O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams (IV.32-37)

For Satan, the sun reminds him of the brilliance of heaven, shining bright above the world under its dominion. Melville's Manichean-laced novel picks up the thread of this speech by placing Ahab wholly on the side of darkness, the enemy of the sun, which is situated as the captain of light's cause.

Ahab's pride-fueled defiance of the light side of the world and isolation from it is a product of his belief in an equal universe. As Melville comments in another letter to Hawthorne, Ahab is the man who "declares himself a sovereign nature (in himself) amid the powers of heaven, hell, and earth. He may perish; but so long as he exists he insists upon treating with all Powers upon an equal basis" (*Letters*, 124-25). These are the democratic values that provide the *substantia* upon which Ahab's rebellion is built and that Melville is attempting to carry into literature, as an responsible American author should, in his own opinion. For Melville, democracy is the most feasible path to bring about a more egalitarian world. Julian Markels compares Ahab's values to those of Edmund in Shakespeare's *King Lear*: "They are the values of individual enterprise in a world of opportunity, of power and dignity achieved by merit irrespective of birth or assignment... in hunting Moby Dick, Ahab is trying to justify in principle a cosmic order that, in Edmund's words, can make 'invention thrive' (I.ii.20)" (3).

Ahab's cause, of course, fails. His defiance and his rebellion come to naught, even though their actions may be initially justified. Ahab is perhaps the most complete narrative

fulfillment of what Michael Bryson identified as Satan's limited knowledge in his struggle against God, a struggle that doesn't have the benefit of Christian theology or omniscience to help identify its errors; these rebellions are simply struggles against the injustice of a universe and a God that have shown themselves to treat unfairly with their subjects. But that does not guarantee the continued truth of his cause.

Ahab's fall, much like Satan's, comes from his radical individualism and narcissism, which drive him, in his obsession, to destroy himself and those around him rather than attempt to lift all subjects of the tyranny of the universe above their station. He isolates himself from his fellow man and removes himself from any possibility of democratic community. Although he proclaims, "in the midst of the personified impersonal, a personality stands here," Ahab abandons that personality, instead transforming himself into a single hateful will separate from the community that can potentially save him (*Moby Dick*, 519). Bildad's identification of Ahab's conflicted nature ("stricken, blasted, if he be, Ahab [had] his humanities") is finally rendered obsolete as Ahab gives himself over completely to the pursuit of Moby Dick and hatred (83). As Friedman outlines:

Ahab more and more gives up and betrays [the personal] until he ends by utterly denying it and making himself a part of the very impersonal that he has here defied... He sacrifices the meeting of person and person through which alone he could remain a person. Ahab fights evil and becomes it, as has been remarked so often. He becomes it because he gives up the one ground on which he could fight---his real human existence as a person in actual relation to other persons. (Friedman, 188)

Ahab constructs his own destructive tyranny aboard the *Pequod* just as Satan installs himself as the tyrant of hell. They both fail to understand that the true path forward, consistent with the politics of Milton and Melville, lies in community and a freedom assured by the recognition of providence in others that is brought about through love.

Ahab's first occult ritual in the novel illustrates Ahab's initial abandonment of the potential democracy in his cause. In "the Quarter-Deck," Ahab lives up to the monarchical legacy of his name. He gathers the entire crew of the *Pequod* together near the close of day in order to reveal his true mission in a scene that depicts Ahab's near Satanic manipulation of this convocation. There is no formal parallel to Satan's inversion of the Lord's Prayer during the Book I and II meeting in Pandaemonium, but Ahab does appeal to whatever cause the sailor's require to recruit them to his task. Most are won over by the gold doubloon, but Starbuck requires "a little lower layer," as he recognizes the blasphemy in Ahab's mission (168). He too is eventually won over though, ensuring the compliance of the entire crew, as he was the lone voice of dissent and remains the first mate of the ship. Starbuck is no Abdiel; he does not stand up to the demonic rebel, and his acquiescence assures Ahab's ascension over the crew as their new captain and king.

Although it may not have been a conscious effort, as Ahab lacks the foresight of the divine that he rebels against, his promise of the doubloon is one that he ends up rewarding to himself, providing another parallel with Satan's false-parliament in hell; just as Beelzebub sets up the near rhetorical question of "who will we find sufficient" to take on the mission of corrupting Paradise in order to create an illusion of choice amongst the host of devils, Ahab too seems to set up a false prize in the doubloon. Ahab, despite spying Moby Dick at the same time

as Tashtego, proclaims, “Not the same instant; not the same—no, the doubloon is mine, Fate reserved the doubloon for me. *I* only; none of ye could have raised the White Whale first” (562). Ahab points to fate as the cause of his receiving his own boon, but fate too could be said to factor in to Satan’s taking on the role of the tempter; his theological history (and even his name) require him to take on this task, even if he applied a layer of conscious political manipulation atop these forces as well. Ahab renews his promise tenfold for whoever spies the whale again, but he has already rescinded the initial promise that he made to his men, serving himself before allowing Tashtego to receive any gift for his part in the hunt.

Ahab is not content with the initial consent of the crew, though; he must affirm it with an occult ritual. He gathers the crew around him in a circle with his mates standing at his side, then “stood for an instant searchingly eyeing every man of his crew. But those wild eyes met his, as the bloodshot eyes of the prairie wolves meet the eye of their leader, ere he rushes on at their head in the trail of the bison.” He cries for the crew to drink, and “the crew alone now drink,” initiating them to his faction, then repeats the process with his mates, “glancing intently from Starbuck to Stubb; from Stubb to Flask.” None can meet his gaze though; “Stubb and Flask looked sideways from him; the honest eye of Starbuck fell downright.” This gesture of submission is enough for Ahab, who then appoints the pagan harpooners as his cupbearers, comparing himself to a “great Pope [washing] the feet of beggars” and telling them that “I do not order ye; ye will it” in the process. Ahab beckons all his officers to drink from the upturned heads of the harpoons, ratifying “ye who are now made parties to this indissoluble league.” As cries are raised against Moby Dick, “spirits were simultaneously quaffed down with a hiss,” a

line with the ominous double meaning of alcohol and the spiritual beings of these crew members (169-70).

This ritual serves to both push Ahab and his cohort further into the darkness and away from the light (hence the staging of the ritual at the close of day), but it also functions in the same way that Satan's ascension in *Pandaemonium* does; it affirms the hierarchy of the crew while also lending near-absolute power to Ahab, power that he gains through rhetorical appeals of force and desire, not through any actual democratic process. He creates a "sphere in which he has absolute sway" in order to "challenge the authority of God," but loses part of his legitimacy in the process. This legitimacy, of course, does not matter to Ahab; he only cares about the compliance of his crew, varying his methods between "getting his men emotionally involved in the hunt, demanding oaths from them, bribing them, and even resorting to violence if necessary" (Canaday, 42-43). He dons the mantle of a tyrant and begins his rule over the hearts and minds of his crew; "Aye, he would be a democrat to all above; look, how he lords it over all below!" (*Moby Dick*, 173).

These are the beginnings of a tyrannical rule and isolation that will continue to grow throughout the novel, but this ceremony is the initial establishment of the hierarchy of power aboard the ship that will eventually culminate in Ahab's exclamation, musket in hand, that "there is one God that is Lord over the earth, and one Captain that is lord over the *Pequod*" (486). This is the "irresistible dictatorship" that the narrator Ishmael is reflecting on later, that he claims undermines human freedom and democracy: "or be a man's intellectual superiority what it will, it can never assume the practical, available supremacy over other men, without the aid of some

sort of external arts and entrenchments, always, in themselves, more or less paltry, and base” (152).

Ahab’s projection onto the doubloon is a fitting image for his own self estimation: ““there’s something ever egotistical in mountain-tops and towers and all other grand and lofty things; look here,--three peaks as proud as Lucifer. The firm tower, that is Ahab; the volcano, that is Ahab, the courageous the undaunted, and victorious fowl, that, too, is Ahab; all are Ahab” (443). This egotism leads to his isolating individualism and eventual loss of personality and humanity. He elevates himself above the rest of the crew and seeks to dominate them through force and false persuasion alike. In doing so, he takes advantage of the existing hierarchical structure of the ship; he is the captain after all, and he exploits this system in order to gain even more power for himself and become an authoritarian ruler, echoing Satan’s own exploitation and perpetuation of the irrational hierarchies of heaven.

Before we continue mapping Ahab’s arc of isolation, it is useful to examine the story of the *Town-Ho*, a smaller rebellion and mutiny that interrupts this larger narrative, centered on the rebel Steelkilt, “who though a sort of devil indeed, might yet by inflexible firmness, only tempered by that common decency of human recognition which is the meanest slave’s right,” be kept from lashing out destructively (53). The instigation and insult of Radney, however, incites Steelkilt to strike Radney and mutiny against the captain of the ship. While he is barricaded on the forecastle, Steelkilt states his terms to end the mutiny: “we are ready to turn to; treat us decently, and we’re your men; but we won’t be flogged... we don’t want a row; it’s not our interest; we want to be peaceable; we are ready to work, but we won’t be flogged” (259). Steelkilt resists violence at first, agreeing to be locked below-decks with his compatriots until the

situation could be resolved with the promise of fair treatment. All of his men eventually defect, however, going so far as to serve Steelkilt up to the captain, bound and gagged. His rebellion fails and he is strung up as an example with the two Canallers that betrayed him and whipped, first by the captain, then by Radney, who survived Steelkilt's initial assault. Radney continues to whip Steelkilt even after the captain quits, driving Steelkilt to take up the cause of murderous vengeance again, although this time alone; his uprising had failed the first time due to its difficulty, so now he feels he must take justice into his own hands.

As Ishmael notes, however, this plan turns Steelkilt's nobility to stupidity, and, if carried out successfully, would doom him. Nearly all were on his side still; they continued to resist the captain by refusing to shout out whale sightings and agreeing to desert the ship at its next harbor, but Steelkilt would not be sated without violence. "But, gentleman, a fool saved the would-be murderer from the bloody deed he had planned. Yet complete revenge he had, and without being the avenger. For by a mysterious fatality, heaven itself seemed to step in to take out of his hands into its own the damning thing he would have done" (264). The form that heaven takes is Moby Dick, the White Whale, who drags Radney down to the deep from his boat (with Steelkilt aboard as an oarsmen) when he attempts to claim the whale. The rebel's vengeance is averted, then, and the story actually concludes in Steelkilt's favor. When they reach port, all but five or six crewmen abandon the captain and leave with Steelkilt aboard a war canoe that later takes the old captain's ship prisoner; they leave the captain bereft on an island without his crew and successfully rid themselves of their unjust ruler, striking out on their own ship and taking up with a new captain together.

Ahab, unlike Steelkilt, is all too committed to his violent deed, and his adversary does not take the shape of a mortal man, but rather the mythical Leviathan. His steadfast will and loss of humanity prevent him from holding back from violence and persisting in a more communitarian show of resistance. Steelkilt had the benefit of divine intervention via Moby Dick, but Ahab is taking on the divine himself, and for all these reasons, his rebellion is doomed to fail.

There are two instances, however, of Ahab nearly being pulled back from the this destructive abyss, and they both come in the form of other crew-members. His connections with Pip and Starbuck, albeit two very different connections, both serve to strengthen his bond with humanity and thereby weaken his individualistic, tyrannical will that drives him to hunt and destroy Moby Dick. They offer a chance at redemption through communitarian love.

Potential Redemption in Pip and Starbuck

The first of these two human anchors is Pip, “the most insignificant of the *Pequod*’s crew,” a little black boy too “slender, clumsy, [and] timorous” to be a crewman on the boat, so he remains on board as a ship-keeper (*MD*, 423). He is described as an individual of exceptional brightness, both in intellect and in his overflowing tenderness and love of life prior to his traumatic experience at sea. This changes after one of Stubb’s oarsman sprained his hand in the ambergris incident, and Pip is forced to fill in on the boat for him. The first time Pip’s boat comes in contact with a whale during a hunt, he leaps out of the boat in fright and becomes entangled in the whale line of the harpoon that Tashtego just stuck in the whale. Enraged, they loose the whale in order to save Pip, but Stubb swears that if Pip bails again, they will make no effort to save him, for “we can’t afford to lose whales by the likes of you; a whale would sell for thirty times what you would, Pip, in Alabama.” Ishmael himself comments on the troublesome

nature of this racism, saying, “Stubb indirectly hinted, that though man loved his fellow, yet man is a money-making animal, which propensity too often interferes with his benevolence” (425)

“But we are all in the hands of the Gods; and Pip jumped again,” this time left adrift on the sea as Stubb keeps his word and continues to chase the whale. Pip is left to the intense loneliness and space of the sea, and “from that hour on the little negro went about the deck an idiot; such, at least they said he was.” He is abandoned, but this abandonment leads him to witness Wisdom’s “hoarded heaps; and among the joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw the multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the firmament of waters heaved the colossal orbs. He saw God’s foot upon the treadle of the loom, and spoke it; therefore his shipmates called him mad. So man’s insanity is heaven’s sense.” He returns in a shattered state, seemingly “uncompromised, indifferent as his God” (425-26).

It is by no accident that this spiritual expansion of Pip’s mind is the chapter immediately adjacent to “The Squeeze of the Hand.” As I have mentioned, Pip comes to represent human community and compassion for Ahab, a sentiment that Ishmael himself discovers on the very next page as he is called to squeeze lumps of solid sperm back into liquid form. Here, Ishmael has his own transcendent experience of compassion:

I forgot all about our horrible oath; in that inexpressible sperm, I washed my hands and my heart of it... 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 unwittingly squeezing my co-labourers’ hands in it, mistaking their hands for 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-humour 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. (428)

Ishmael encounters his own feeling of insanity here, his own apperception of the divine kindness and felicity that comes not from God but from interdependent persons. Ishmael's experience contrasts with Pip's in that he is overcome with humanity, whereas Pip is dropped into a mental void by the complete lack of humanity around him.

They both, though, arrive at similar conclusions; that salvation lies in other people. Pip clings to Ahab, who becomes his caretaker hereafter until the final chase, while Ishmael discovers that felicity can be attained by "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," affirming the democratic and humanitarian spirit that moves him throughout the novel (428).

Whereas Ishmael ties himself to Queequeg, though, Pip ties himself to Ahab. Upon seeing Pip's new mental state after his abandonment, Ahab remarks:

There can be no hearts above the snow-line. Oh, ye frozen heavens! look down here. Ye did beget this luckless child, and have abandoned him, ye creative libertines. Here, boy; Ahab's cabin shall be Pip's home henceforth, while Ahab lives. Thou touchest my inmost centre, boy; thou art tied to me by cords woven of my heart-strings... Lo! ye believers in gods all goodness, and in man all ill, lo you! see the omniscient gods oblivious of

suffering man; and man, though idiotic, and knowing not what he does, yet full of the sweet things of love and gratitude. Come! I feel prouder leading thee by thy black hand, than though I grasped an Emperor's! (536)

The cords around the heart tie Ahab to Pip in the same way that the monkey-rope binds together Ishmael and Queequeg, recalling the interdependent nature of all mortals to each other that Ishmael had ruminated on, although Ahab takes a characteristically atheistic bent in his recognition of this truth. “Pip holds out to Ahab the same promise of redemption through love that Queequeg holds out to Ishmael,” but it is a promise that Ahab will ultimately leave unfulfilled (Karcher, 86).

After Ahab breaks this promise to Pip, he breaks from another covenant being offered to him on the third day of chasing Moby Dick through Starbuck, who represents the religious, moral opposition to Ahab’s murderous mission and serves as a reminder of the domestic felicity that Ahab is abandoning in order to pursue his vengeance. A. R. Humphreys referred to Starbuck as, “along with Ishmael, [the most] reliable focus of judgement in the book” (Humphreys, 68). Harold Bloom refers to him as “the only Christian aboard the *Pequod*” (Bloom, 1). “On board the *Pequod*, the first mate Starbuck constitutes himself the spokesman for the softer, more ‘human’ values” and the values of the Christian doctrine that Ahab is rebelling against (Douglas, 305). He is perhaps the character with the most explicitly good moral convictions aboard the ship, although his failure to act on these convictions represents a failure in its own right.

Starbuck is the one who must be conquered upon the quarter-deck, who is not conscripted merely through a gold piece but who must be bullied into obedience by Ahab into going along with his “heaven-insulting purpose.” Even so, he still resolves that “with the soft feeling of the

human in me, yet will I try to fight ye, ye grim, phantom futures!” (*Moby Dick*, 173-74). His resistance, though, fails; he is overpowered by Ahab’s madness and resolve. He recognizes the ill omens that plague the *Pequod*, but he still fails to pull the trigger of the musket that he points at the sleeping Ahab, ironically, because of his own pacifistic beliefs. During “The Musket,” as he contemplates murdering Ahab in his sleep, he desperately searches for any alternative to prevent the doom of the ship: “but is there no other way? No lawful way?” (528). The answer, of course, when standing against Ahab’s obsession is no; only death can stop him.

Starbuck’s standing in for Christian and lawful values aboard the *Pequod*, though, does place him in a unique position alongside Pip to try and oppose Ahab’s mission by bringing him back to his humanity. When the final encounter with Moby Dick occurs, though, Ahab finally completes his impersonalization and isolation from humanity, dooming himself and his crew in the process.

Ahab’s final removal from human community begins in “The Cabin” when he dismisses Pip: “lad, lad, I tell thee thou must not follow Ahab now... There is that in thee, poor lad, which I feel too curing to my malady.” Pip pleads with him to stay by his side, saying that he will not abandon Ahab like Stubb abandoned him, “do ye but use poor me for your one lost leg; only tread upon me sir; I ask no more, so I remain a part of ye.” His words begin to reach Ahab: “if thou speakest thus to me much more, Ahab’s purpose keels up in him... Weep so, and I will murder thee! Have a care, for Ahab too is mad” (548-49). Ahab resists and tears himself away, refusing to depend on another human to lean on; not only has the whale robbed him of his biological leg, but it has also taken away his ability to replace that leg with the support of his fellow man; all that remains is the jawbone of a whale where the leg once stood.

Pip never again leaves Ahab's cabin, and Ahab moves that much closer to his final doom. After rebuffing yet another sailing ship, this time the *Delight*, Ahab finds himself upon the waters where he originally lost his leg to the White Whale. Starbuck spys him along the ship's railing dropping a tear into the ocean and moves to accompany Ahab. Ahab, recognizing Starbuck's reaching out, reminisces on his past and speaks of the "life I have led; the desolation of solitude it has been," recognizing the gradual isolation that both his position of authority as captain has brought him as well as his violent trade in general. He has had to live "away, whole oceans away, from that young girl-wife I wedded past fifty, and sailed for Cape Horn the next day, leaving but one dent in my marriage pillow-wife? wife?-rather a widow with her husband alive" as he chased whales and became "more a demon than a man" (559). Here, Ahab laments the absence of the domestic happiness that Ishmael had revealed to him with his hands in the vat of sperm, the kindness in human community that Ahab has left behind through his quest.

This recognition, though, offers a chance at redemption; Ahab begs Starbuck, "Close! stand close to me, Starbuck; let me look into a human eye; it is better than to gaze into sea or sky; better than to gaze upon God. By the green land; by the bright hearth-stone! this is the magic glass, man; I see my wife and my child in thine eye" (559). He orders Starbuck to stay aboard and not lower for Moby Dick in a last-ditch effort to preserve this ideal of domestic life, but such half-measures cannot redeem Ahab's cause, and Starbuck sinks with the *Pequod*.

Prior to this, though, Starbuck begs Ahab one last time to turn the ship around, to imagine his family waiting for him on the Nantucket shore, but Ahab turns his back; "like a blighted fruit tree he shook, and cast his last, cindered apple to the soil" (560). He refuses the call to turn back, then places the blame for his decision upon fate. Although fate may play a role, Ahab has a

choice, though, a choice made clear by the Edenic imagery of the apple falling from the tree. His reward, like Satan's, is a hunger for a prize that falls to ashes as he grasps it. He is finally and forever "damned, most subtly and most malignantly! Damned in the midst of Paradise," unable to enjoy human community and kindness any longer (171). "All loveliness is anguish to [him]," looking as Satan does upon first sighting of Adam and Eve in Eden, "where the Fiend / Saw, undelighted, all delight" (IV.285-86).

The Manxman's prophetic diagnosis of the log-line finally comes to fruition here: "But here's the end of the rotten line—all dripping, too. Mend it, eh? I think we had best have a new line altogether." The rotted line that accompanied the initial bonding of Ahab and Pip that symbolized the "man-rope" that held their two souls together snapped, as "long heat and wet have spoiled it" (*MD*, 535-36). John Bernstein characterizes this conscious act of Ahab's:

Ahab's pride and his humanities are incompatible and he himself realizes this, as is implied in his previously quoted speech about human inter-indebtedness. The more that Ahab becomes drawn into the world of human kindness, the more he is removed from the pursuit of Moby-Dick, and the more intensely that he pursues the Whale, the more he is removed from the world of human kindness. (Bernstein, 112)

Ahab acknowledges the nature of "human inter-indebtedness" as the carpenter fashions him a new leg, lamenting that he stands "proud as a Greek god, and yet standing debtor to this block-head for a bone to stand on!" (*MD*, 484). The final pursuit and withdrawals from the human and personal realm as illustrated by his rejection of both Pip and Starbuck resolve the division within Ahab's soul, purging him of that humanitarian-half that Bildad had described before the final journey of the *Pequod* began. The mark upon his body, "that perpendicular seam

sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree, when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it, and without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top to bottom,” dividing him in half, creating “some sort of Equator cuts yon old man, too, right in his middle,” represents the division that, until this point, had raged inside of Ahab (127;542). Now, though, he is given wholly over to the impersonal and the inhuman, feeling only rage and destruction.

Burgeoning Democracy Amidst Tyranny

Ahab and Satan succumb to the same fatal pride and individualism that mars their very being and their rebellious causes. Satan is damned for his selfishness and for his inability to recognize the injustice of the hierarchical, monarchical system in general, but Ahab’s fall goes even further and, for the democratic Melville, is even more nefarious. Not only does he install himself as a tyrant in his own realm aboard the *Pequod*, as Satan does in hell, but he also rejects the salvation of human community, sacrificing his own humanity in the process, the very thing that his rebellion depended upon. His egalitarianism becomes narcissism and his quest destroys him. “Melville created in Ahab's tragedy a fearful symbol of the self-enclosed individualism that, carried to its furthest extreme, brings disaster both upon itself and upon the group of which it is part. He provided also an ominous glimpse of what was to result when the Emersonian will to virtue became in less innocent natures the will to power and conquest” (Matthiessen, 445). Retaining one’s humanity is required when fighting for the principles of equal treatment for all humanity.

Melville is not completely given over to pessimism, though. Even if the central character to his novel is a monomaniacal individualist who abandons his humanity, Melville experiments

with formal elements and offers multiple perspectives throughout the novel in order to undermine the totalitarian grip Ahab might otherwise exert on this narrative reality, creating a space in which the roots of an actually egalitarian, democratic society may grow. Jason Frank proposes that Melville's stories:

Are animated by a concern that America's fantastic narratives of heroic independence and futurity diminish the actual lives of mortal, vulnerable, interdependent human beings, especially those monumental narratives associated with American exceptionalism, the hegemonic discourse of American national experience to which Melville's oeuvre can be read as a sustained counternarrative. (Frank, 5)

There is no better tragedy of heroic independence gone wrong than that of *Moby Dick*, and the counter-narrative within this text comes out through the various subjective experiences offered in contradiction to Ahab's totalitarian will aboard the ship. This mostly occurs through Ishmael's narration, but there are also other structural means utilized by Melville.

Nancy Fredricks identifies the democratic effort of Melville in *Moby Dick* specifically, saying:

Melville employs several methods in breaking with one point perspective to create a decentered, all-inclusive view that is analogous to the panoramic vistas of the American landscape painters. He repeatedly breaks the linear flow of the first-person narrative to open the text to different voices. At key moments, dramatic monologues and dialogues erase the presence of the narrator entirely. He also evokes the different voices and values of various genres, treating genres, such as the temperance tale, with an objectivity that his

rooted in his cultural relativism. At times, Melville breaks with his own words all together when he incorporates the texts of others in the spirit of collage (Fredricks, 43-4). Were *Moby Dick* to retain the hegemonic discourse that Frank outlines, it would simply be a story of a man hunting a whale imbued with evil. If this were the case, it might lend credence to the claim that some critics, such as Montgomery Belgion, make, that there is no symbolism in *Moby Dick*. That, of course, is not the case.

We are not presented with only one quest and one point of view in one form, though. Ahab announces his perspective of the White Whale during his ceremony on the quarter-deck. “He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate” (*MD*, 168). For Ahab, the whale is an embodiment of divine malice towards him, a hatred that can only be met with fire, just like the lightning that strikes his masts in “The Candles.”

This scene on the quarter-deck, though, which establishes the authority and tyranny of Ahab, as I discussed earlier, is also the first in a series of five chapters in which we exit from the narrative form of the novel and enter into dramatic form, complete with introductory stage directions, soliloquies, and the structure of a script. This is one of “the novel’s two sequences that interrupt Ishmael’s narrative form with a dramatic form,” the second of which begins with “The Candles” and continues for four chapters” (Markels, 80-1). Ahab, although his presence can never completely leave the journey of the *Pequod*, is moved off-stage, as it were, while the mass of sailors who were given no voice during the “Quarter Deck” take the main stage. Ahab and Starbuck are both given soliloquies of roughly equivalent length preceding the revelry of the crew, however, in a formal presentation of both of their individual, separate points of view. By

exiting the narrative form, Melville is enacting a dissolution of the literary norms that contribute to an aristocracy of the brain and offering alternatives to what would otherwise be a teleological moral crusade whose endpoint lies in the destruction of “all evil visibly personified” in the *White Whale* (Fredricks, 56).

The text then opens up even further to include the “different voices” that Fredricks mentions in “First Night-Watch” and “Midnight, Forecastle.” These voices include: multiple Nantucket sailors, a Dutch Sailor, a French Sailor, an Icelandic Sailor, a Maltese Sailor, a Sicilian Sailor, a Long-Island Sailor, an Azore Sailor, a Chinese Sailor, Tashtego (a Native American), the Old Manx Sailor, a Lascar Sailor, a Tahitian Sailor, a Portuguese Sailor, an English Sailor, Daggoo, a Spanish Sailor, St. Jago’s Sailor, a Belfast Sailor, and Pip, who is given the last word in the dramatic sequence. Melville is choosing to highlight and give voice to a remarkably heterogeneous society that extends far beyond national borders.

We then return to Ishmael’s narrative form, but we soon enter into Chapter 42, “The Whiteness of the Whale,” a chapter that offers a directly contradictory perspective to Ahab’s regarding *Moby Dick* and that includes extensive footnotes, transforming the material text itself and how it is displayed on the page. Even as Ishmael is speaking, he contradicts himself with multiple perspectives, both through the main text vs. footnote balance and through his own opinions on the whiteness itself; he begins by examining the beauty and pre-eminence we normally associate with whiteness, “as in marbles, japonicas, and pearls,” the banners of various nations, and the imperialism of white man who claims “mastership over every dusky tribe.” The “kindly associations” proliferate, but then Ishmael turns to examine the “terrible” aspects of whiteness, aspects seen in the “white bear of the poles, and the white shark of the tropics.”

Divine whiteness follows, then in the shape of the “White Steed of the Prairies, but divinity comes with its own terrors. Whiteness can also “abhor,” as it does with albinism, and can become an image of maliciousness, as in the “White Squall of the Southern Sea” and the “White Hoods of Ghent” (193-97).

Ishmael begins to recognize the futility of his attempt to categorize and analyze whiteness: “But though without dissent this point fixed, how is mortal man to account it? To analyse it, would seem impossible.” But “let us try.” His attempt continues and eventually concludes that nothing can be concluded: “the wretched infidel gazes himself blind at the monumental white shroud that wraps all the prospect around him. And all of these things the Albino whale was the symbol” (197-201).

In direct contrast to Ahab’s reduction of the White Whale to “inscrutable malice” as a means of justifying his destructive, teleological crusade, Ishmael presents a subjectivity and multiplicity of meaning that comes from breaking away from one single perspective. This comes much closer to the ambiguous truth of the world and the inscrutable sublimity of the whale than Ahab’s account possibly can thanks to Ishmael’s heterogeneous, democratic approach. Ishmael even recognizes this same perception of the sublime in Pip, whom he allows to have the last word in two chapters built on this subjectivity: the aforementioned “Midnight, Forecastle” and “The Doubloon,” in which every character projects their own worldview onto that promised gold piece that represents the material engine of Ahab’s quest for many of the crew. In both of these chapters, Pip, who experiences the sublime truth in a “like abandonment” that Ishmael himself feels with the sinking of the *Pequod* (426). “Ishmael and Pip are linked by their experience of the sublime,” and Ishmael, recognizing that Pip holds wisdom different from his own, “defers to Pip

by granting him the last word” (Fredricks, 62). Not only does Ishmael include other voices, but he does not override them with his own voice, something that Satan and Ahab fail to do.

Ishmael’s openness is a product of the muse that guides him and Melville alike: “the democratic dignity which, on all hands, radiates without end from God,” the “centre and circumference of all democracy!” His invocation follows his assurance that he will treat with all people fairly:

If, then, to meanest mariners, and renegades and castaways, I shall hereafter ascribe high qualities, though dark; weave round them tragic graces; if even the most mournful, perchance the most abased, among them all, shall at times lift himself to the exalted mounts; if I shall touch that workman's arm with some ethereal light; if I shall spread a rainbow over his disastrous set of sun; then against all mortal critics bear me out in it, thou just Spirit of Equality, which hast spread one royal mantle of humanity over all my kind! Bear me out in it, thou great democratic God! who didst not refuse to the swart convict, Bunyan, the pale, poetic pearl; Thou who didst clothe with doubly hammered leaves of finest gold, the stumped and paupered arm of old Cervantes; Thou who didst pick up Andrew Jackson from the pebbles; who didst hurl him upon a war-horse; who didst thunder him higher than a throne! Thou who, in all Thy mighty, earthly marchings, ever cullest Thy selectest champions from the kingly commons; bear me out in it, O God!

(*MD*, 120)

Ishmael presents an alternative mission alongside that of Ahab’s vengeful crusade: he is attempting to find aesthetic truth and approach the sublime. His frequent interruptions in the

main narrative attempting to organize and measure cetology and the natural world represent these efforts, efforts which he tries even if he knows they are in vain.

In this way, Ishmael much more closely embodies the egalitarian principles of Melville; he is striving for “visible truth,” by which Melville means “the apprehension of the absolute condition of present things as they strike the eye of the man who fears them not, though they do their worst to him” (*Letters*, 124). The formal structures of the novel, a novel that Ishmael is supposedly narrating, coincide with this aesthetic mission.

Ahab stands in stark contrast to Ishmael with his single-mindedness, which further “distances Ahab precisely in his single-minded certainty, removing him to what Bakhtin calls 'the zone of the distanced image' characteristic of classical genres, a 'zone outside any possible contact with the present in all its openendedness' (Bakhtin, 19)” (Markels, 81). Not only does he withdraw from human community through his unrelenting, individualistic will to destruction, but he is also alienated from the narrator and the reader by disallowing any subjectivity within his worldview, an untenable stance in a novel as heterogeneous as *Moby Dick*. Nancy Fredricks provides an eloquent summary of Melville’s democratic formal mission that I have outlined:

In creating an art that embodies the values of an egalitarian and heterogeneous democratic society, Melville represents traditional artistic structures like typology and one-point perspective as aesthetic analogues to the politics of totalitarianism... Melville's sublime destabilizes the ultimate signifier/telos (God or the self) and dismantles or recasts totalizing structures from a marginal, decentered perspective... The totalitarian energy in *Moby-Dick* centers around Ahab, and his monomania contrasts sharply with Ishmael's openness and relativism. (Fredricks, 53)

The injustice of Ahab's cause is brought to light thanks to a knowledge of Melville's own politics and an examination of the formal organization of, and an examination of, the alternatives that Melville provides within the text, both explicitly through Ishmael's narration, and implicitly through the formal structures that Melville experiments with. Even though Ahab's revolution fails to truly liberate anyone due to his narcissism and destructive isolation, there is room for progress within the pages of *Moby Dick* thanks to those who are able to find community; there is hope for redemption for Ishmael, just as redemption lies along the path of providence for Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*.

Conclusion: Human Potential and *Felix Culpa*

These texts show two different failed revolutions against perceived unfair and unequal treatment, one of which is angelic, the other completely mortal. Satan and Ahab both fail in their cause and undermine the principles that may have justified their rebellions for similar reasons, reasons which can generally be summarized as their perpetuation of the very unjust hegemonies they rail against and their own obsessive, destructive impulses. They cannot imagine any resistance other than violence, attempting to strike out at the agents and principals of their divine, cosmic enemies.

Their critiques of tyranny, however, hold water. This is the tragic component of these stories; these grand individualists simply failed to grasp the true way forward out of their narratives and the structures of power that have created them because their narrow concern for their own wellbeing perpetuates the authoritarian, self-serving mindset that engendered their rebellion and what they perceived as unfair treatment in the first place. Defeating authoritarianism and tyranny would require an understanding of one's equality and community with others, who are also being treated unfairly, not an ascendancy of the individual to power. There is a reason we only view the fully-formed, rebellious Satan and Ahab rather than Lucifer and pre-Moby Dick Ahab; their narrative function, as laid out by fate, sets their paths in iron. This narrative function conflicts with their inner souls; their fully formed characters chafe against this function, but their function is incited by the divine itself and overpowers whatever love and humanity may lay in the hearts of Satan and Ahab. Their "function develops into a proper name; so it becomes a character, whose life and death have a narrative; and then the function is lost in the character," but it can never be completely lost when these characters take

their fight to fate and the divine ordering of the world itself (Kermode, 94). They are typologically and narratively fated to their doom; they cannot turn back.

Their rebellions are not in vain, however. The rebellions of Satan and Ahab destabilize the worlds of everyone involved and, though this destabilization begins with failure and destruction, it clears the way for a new reality to replace the old. Heraclitus commented that “everything comes into being through strife and necessity,” an idea which Stathis Gourgouris built on in his description of political revolution: he claimed that nations are built upon a “founding crime,” and that “revolution is consubstantial with violence, at least since the foundations of the French republic were laid on a veritable river of blood” (Gourgouris, 50). A revolution, for Gourgouris, has a variable authenticity based on its commitment to violence. He is explicitly referring to post-Enlightenment societies here, but the movement towards democratic principles during the Enlightenment and the adjacency of Milton to proto-Enlightenment thought (including his own essays) justifies the inclusion of this theory. Though Satan’s and Ahab’s rebellions are themselves failures, both in their inability to overthrow the hierarchies in place and because their rebellions are not executed according to the principles of right rule and democracy that would have justified them, they do serve as a catalyst for change. The very fact that a rebellion occurs violently destabilizes the political landscapes of these texts and, although the rebellions themselves do not provide the way forward, they at least allow those who follow to break out of the traditional structures of power that have ordered the world prior to these rebellions. The rebellions prove the need for change, and their insufficient means and methods point to a need for something other than individualistic, destructive rebellions.

The “Happy” Consequences of Satan’s Rebellion

Satan and Ahab may fail, but things are never the same. Satan himself becomes an entirely different individual, but his initial war in heaven also prompts the creation of Earth and Paradise. His corruption of Adam and Eve is allowed by the Father because he will use it for a greater good in the end: the ascension of the Son. Satan also acts as a catalyst for the destruction of the monarchy in heaven; In Book III, after the war in heaven, the legitimization of the Son through his expulsion of the fallen angels, and the Son’s promise to redeem mankind from their sins (sins begot by Satan), the Father cedes authority to the Son:

Because in thee
Love hath abounded more then Glory abounds,
Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt
With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne;
Here shalt thou sit Incarnate, here shalt Reign
Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
Anointed universal King. (III.311-17)

The Son, however, is a loving instead of fearsome figure. He refuses to be a tyrant like the Father and instead follows through on the dismantling of the authoritarian rule that Satan started, ceding power to all who would worship God and accept divine love rather than hate: “Scepter and Power, thy giving, I assume, / And gladlier shall resign, when in the end / Thou shalt be All in All, and I in thee / For ever, and in mee all whom thou lov’st” (VI.730-33).

The Son destroys the hierarchy that Satan would rebel against in the name of distributing divinity throughout existence. Michael Bryson notes this transition of power and revolutionary change in power:

By offering to die, and to freely put off 'glory,' the Son has made the leap beyond the concepts and categories of Heaven's monarchical court, and has entered a cognitive and moral realm hitherto unseen in Milton's Heaven: the truly Christian realm in which to be great is to serve others. Service, however, is not here constructed as *fealty*, but as love, interrelation, even interdependence, and as actions that bring the best of oneself and others to the forefront. (Bryson, 142)

Satan's rebellion laid the foundation for this succession and deposition of the tyrannous Father while also ensuring the redemption of humanity. The war in heaven justifies the Son's promotion and calls attention to the instability of authoritarian rule, and Satan's corrupting of Adam and Eve allows the Son to sacrifice himself, proving his love, mercy, and devotion to serve his subjects, positioning him as the ideal vehicle for changing the structures of Heaven. Satan's corrupting humanity also allows the Father to justify not damning them for eternity as well; the moral weakness of Adam and Eve that is born of their "cloisterd virtue," as Milton would characterize it in *Areopagitica*, makes it likely that a fall would have occurred eventually. Adam, from the very moment of his being shown the garden, "each Tree / Load'n with fairest Fruit, that hung to the Eye / Tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite / to pluck and eate" (VIII.306-9). Eve's awakening points to a sort of vanity born out of her Narcissus-esque infatuation with her reflection, and Adam himself confesses that he is "onely weake / Against the charm of Beauties

powerful glance,” yet another potential weakness that, given enough time, surely would lead to their fall, a fall that they would have no external excuse for, and thereby no hope of salvation.

This hope for salvation, though, is the key. Not only does the Son rid heaven of its monarchy, Adam and Eve discover their own inter-dependence; after the fall, the two dissolve into fighting and bickering, even after the Son comes down and delivers his promise to them. Adam delivers a speech to Eve, calling her “thee miserable / Beyond all past example and future, / To Satan only like both crime and doom” (X.839-41), a scene “made to form a deliberate pair with Satan’s soliloquy on Mount Niphates” (Forsyth, 294), who proclaims, “Me miserable!” (IV.73) and laments a similar abyss to that which Adam fears falling into: “And in the lowest deep lower deep / Still threatening to devour me opens wide” (IV.76-7).

The difference, though, is that Adam and Eve form a loving pair. The tears of Eve after she asks Adam for help move Adam: “She ended weeping, and her lowlie plight, / Immovable till peace obtain’d from fault / Acknowledg’d and deplor’d, in Adam wrought / Commiseration; soon his heart relented / Towards her, his life so late and sole delight” (X.937-41). The message of the Son returns to Adam in his memory and he assures Eve of their future salvation. “What Satan, alone and damned, cannot hear, Adam and Eve, together in solitude, eventually receive,” the hope for salvation and an understanding of providence (Forsyth, 294).

This togetherness is the only hope for the redemption of humanity and the eventual defeat of Satan. Michael, when expelling Adam and Eve from Eden, attempts to comfort Eve about the loss of paradise, saying, “thy going is not lonely, with thee goes / Thy Husband, him to follow thou art bound; / Where he abides, think there thy native soile” (XI.290-92). Michael then proceeds to show Adam the future of humanity, good and bad, that will be born by the offspring

of Adam and Eve. He is sent, partially, “to teach thee that God attributes to place / No sanctitie, if none be thither brought / By Men who there frequent, or therein dwell;” the sanctity of soil comes from the actions, love, and faith of those who frequent it (XI.836-38). He also tells them of how the Son will finally defeat Satan, “Not by destroying Satan, but his works / In thee and in thy Seed,” fulfilling the law of justice that the Father has laid down “both by obedience and by love, though love / Alone fulfill the Law” (XII.394-404). Only through love is Satan defeated, the love of the Son that is enacted through his sacrificing himself for the whole of humanity. And this victory can only come about should Adam and Eve join together, resist despair and thoughts of suicide by depending on each other, as they have already, and go out into the world to make possible the entire redemption of the world and themselves. Should they forsake each other and their love, no redemption would be possible, as Christ would never be born.

And so, Michael tells them to go together out into the world with this new knowledge in mind but also to:

Onely add

Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add Faith,

Add vertue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,

By name to come call'd Charitie, the soul

Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath

To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess

A paradise within thee, happier farr. (XII.581-87)

Not only does the love and charity of the Son make future redemption for all of humanity possible (which requires Adam and Eve's continued community), but Adam and Eve themselves

have hope of recovering their own paradise in each other's "native soil," soil that they can sanctify with their care and which they can cultivate through patience, temperance, love, and charity to create a new paradise in their own lifetimes.

Together, Adam and Eve form a community of two that carries paradise within themselves; "these two / Imparadist't in one anothers arms / The happier Eden" (IV.505-7) are capable of finding providence through each other, something denied the devils in hell, who "reason'd high / Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will and Fate, / Fixt Fate, free will, foreknowledg absolute, / And found no end, in wandring mazes lost" (II.558-61). Adam and Eve, with the promise of salvation in their mind and their revived dependence on one another, depart Eden: "The World was all before them, where to choose / Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide: / They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow, / Through Eden took thir solitarie way" (XII.646-49).

Out of Satan's founding crime comes the establishment of all humanity and the potential for heaven to be found "All in All" between those that form a loving community of humanity as Adam and Eve have.

Ishmael, the Prophet of Democracy

Ahab's crime lacks the cosmic consequence of Satan's, but it does set the stage for a proper democratic covenant between Ishmael and Queequeg, the Adam and Eve analogs in *Moby Dick*. They meet because they are both going whaling aboard the *Pequod* and are therefore staying at the same inn, but the journey that Ishmael undergoes also leads him to understand the true salvific potential of such a democratic, interdependent relationship with all of humanity.

The Biblical Ishmael is left out of the covenant of God and the inheritance of his father, and the narrator's opening imperative to the reader to "call me Ishmael" represents his breaking free of the covenant of God and the restrictiveness of land and the stability that implies. This, in turn, "frees him to establish an alternative, and more inclusive, covenant in the form of a marriage contract with the pagan Polynesian harpooner, Queequeg," and "Melville's subversion of the typology of covenant theology allows for a vision of democracy beyond the radical individualism of the Puritans: a vision of a democracy of multiculturalism and egalitarianism (Fredricks, 48-49). Ahab's symbolic throwing away of his pipe into the ocean illustrates his increasing alienation from the social world and from pleasure in general, an event that is mirrored by the foundation of Ishmael and Queequeg's community of two:

Soon I proposed a social smoke; and, producing his pouch and tomahawk, he quietly offered me a puff. And then we sat exchanging puffs from that wild pipe of his, and keeping it regularly passing between us. If there yet lurked any ice of indifference towards me in the Pagan's breast, this pleasant, genial smoke we had, soon thawed it out, and left us cronies. He seemed to take to me quite as naturally and unbiddenly as I to him; and when our smoke was over, he pressed his forehead against mine, clasped me round the waist, and said that henceforth we were married; meaning, in his country's phrase, that we were bosom friends; he would gladly die for me, if need should be. (*MD*, 53)

Their covenant will be the one that ends up saving Ishmael's life, in the end, and beginning to open him up to his new democratic philosophy; it is better, after all, to "sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian" (*MD*, 23).

Viola Sachs characterizes this Biblical interrogation of the covenant as a largely American endeavor:

To the American writer, the quest into the self, into his identity personal, national, and universal, leads to the discovery, acceptance and integration of what in our Western culture is called the Antichrist, the Black Man, the Devil, and which is the ancient heritage of Pan... Nevertheless, the biblical framework is used to question the existing model. Ishmael, the narrator of *Moby Dick; or, the Whale* re-enact the Covenant: a 'Pagan' who is also a 'Cannibal' takes the place of Abraham's Almighty God. (Sachs, 51)

Queequeg's displacement of God is the reason for Ishmael's survival; his democratic, egalitarian outlook towards man saves his life.

The truth of this tie between the two of them is enacted through the monkey-rope, a situation in which Ishmael and Queequeg are literally tied by a rope, but a rope far stronger than the log and line that failed to tie Ahab and Pip together:

For better or for worse, we two, for the time, were wedded... So, then, an elongated Siamese ligature united us... So strongly and metaphysically did I conceive of my situation then, that while earnestly watching his motions, I seemed distinctly to perceive 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 or death... still further pondering, I say, 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. (*MD*, 329)

Ishmael's new covenant with Queequeg that disregards all but the character of the individual, his realization here of the interconnectedness of all mortals, and his transcendent belief in kindness in the whale sperm produce the prophetic Ishmael that survives to preach the word of Melville. "In the vortex that Ishmael is delivered at last, Queequeg's coffin has become his life-buoy because Queequeg has also created with Ishmael a civil society that has made Queequeg immortal" (Markels, 98).

William Hamilton identifies an "unmistakable redemptive color" in the *Pequod's* voyage: "It sets out from Nantucket on Christmas day; it is prepared for by the appearance of Elijah, as the messiah himself was to be, as Jesus in fact was, and at the end it sinks into the Pacific, tempting us to imagine a strange inverted resurrection, on 'the morning of the third day'" (Hamilton, 9). The one who rises from this inverted resurrection, though, is Ishmael; Ishmael is redeemed by Queequeg, the Son, but Ishmael is also the Jonah prefigured by Father Mapple's sermon and, after fleeing land and the connections of the covenant, returns to preach the word of the importance of democracy and the dangers of individualism. Ishmael takes up the torch of Adam and Eve and carries the republican, progressive values of Milton and Melville into literature and into the life of the modern world. He warns us, "give not thyself up, then, to fire, lest it invert thee, deaden thee; as for the time it did me," but to instead look to each other (437).

Providence born from community and felicity born from interconnectedness; these are the foundations of more democratic social and political systems the likes of which Milton and Melville both strove for. Satan and Ahab are tragic figures with a certain seduction to them, but they are only the shovel that breaks the ground upon which these societies will be founded. In order to move forward, one must move beyond destruction and look outward towards the rest of

humanity, a humanity born free by natural right and deserving of a kinder, more democratic world.

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