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**Lost and Emerging Manhoods in Melville's Later Novels**

（メルヴィルの後期小説で描かれる男らしさの行方）

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## **Introduction: Changing Manhoods and Men's Silence**

In the late works of Herman Melville (1819–91), protagonists and breadwinners, at some instances, fall victim to capitalism, war, and American expansionism. As the traditional social order and hierarchy are shaken, male characters lose their patriarchal authority and eventually their manhood, which is a reflection of the changing circumstances of the mid-nineteenth century. Melville's male protagonists lose their voice and struggle against the changing current in the situations they face. Such challenges include changing social cleavages resulting from the revolutions of the nineteenth century, the shifting market economy that created new socioeconomic classes, and financial opportunities for men in a capitalist society. Some of Melville's male characters, especially those in his later works, remarkably lose a sense of aggressive manly passion. Instead, they either remain silent or use indirect words to protest against new social order. Melville also expresses shifting societal cleavages through his use of humor or choice of peculiar words by fathers in a family. For example, Bartleby in "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street" ("Bartleby") and Billy in *Billy Budd, Sailor* (*BB*) use unintentional peculiarities of speech at unexpected occasions, horrifying the people around them. The male characters' odd behavior constitutes a destructive force in the established order of communal belief and hierarchy, and this is reflected as such in "Bartleby" where the law office on Wall Street is challenged and again on a warship where great

importance is given to what Captain Vere calls “forms” (128, ch. 27). The lawyer and the employer in “Bartleby” are “unmanned” (54) by Bartleby’s peculiar behavior as he repeatedly exclaims, “I would prefer not to” (47). Hence, words are occasionally a destructive force for men in leadership roles. “Unmanned” signifies the depravity of manhood, lost leadership, or, possibly, that Bartleby made the lawyer sexually impotent or immature as a boy. Therefore, Bartleby helps us define the nature of manhood during the mid-nineteenth century.

According to E. Anthony Rotundo, nineteenth-century America was an era of increased competition and self-advancement. In order to become the “best man” in social competitions, men felt the need to express their “manly,” aggressive passions. The expression of such aggressive passion was necessary to avoid being socially destructive (Rotundo 20). Rotundo adds that to fully comprehend the meaning of “man” or “manhood,” we should understand the opposite of “manhood.” He states, “If a man is not a man, he must be like a woman. But nineteenth-century men had a second answer: If a man is not a man, he must be like a boy” (Rotundo 20). Rotundo’s explanation indicates that in the nineteenth century challenges toward manhood could lead to men revisiting their boyhood past. However, another possible interpretation is that men simply failed to “vent” any manly aggressiveness at all. Those unable to vent such aggression became self-destructive, such as Pierre in *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities (Pierre)* (1852), who wishes to become an established American author but fails to be his family’s successful breadwinner. Therefore, he feels a sense of lost manhood and is

unable to cope with changing gender roles. As a consequence, he returns to the behavior of his boyhood, possibly out of his inability to vent manly aggression.

Another possible symptom of lost manhood is sometimes reflected in reclusiveness, a factor that most critics have overlooked. To understand this state of being, Patricia Barber's essay on Melville, "What If Bartleby Were a Woman?" helps. Barber suggests that changing Bartleby's gender is effective because he is passive and engages in irrational refusal (219). However, Barber overlooks Bartleby as an sexual being who is not attracted to men and does not appear to have such urges. Furthermore, although Bartleby's passiveness and his inability to initiate action which could be considered feminine traits; however, this does not necessarily mean that he assumes the behavior of a woman. Also, some of Melville's characters, such as Pierre's mother, initiates action, and thus exercises overwhelming authoritative power over Pierre. However, in "Bartleby," homoerotic desire does not take place inside the law office. Other than having the menial and boring job of verification, Bartleby accepts almost all of his tasks without protest. Bartleby, therefore, either takes on the persona of a very old man who is resigned to his fate or that of a very young boy who is devoid of sexual desires and in need of an adult guardian or protector to take care of him. As Dan McCall indicates, "Bartleby" tells the story of a lawyer's own "helplessness," and "he [the lawyer] was not adequate [for] the challenge of Bartleby" (McCall 108). McCall's words are meaningful because they deny the

lawyer's adulthood as he eventually fails to fulfill the function of taking care of Bartleby as his guardian and leaves the protagonist helpless.

Another point of note is that both Bartleby and Billy are not eloquent enough to express their protest against newly emerged social forces. Billy is chronologically young and his youth is emphasized through his work; however, Billy cannot claim innocence because of his youth and immaturity. Regarding this point, Robert K. Martin notes that Melville conducted "a lifelong search for a way to repudiate the power-lust of Western man," and *BB* is the final stage in the author's body of work where he ends this lifelong search (126). Martin also points out Billy's stutter as "a sign of his powerlessness, an inability at once sexual and verbal" (Martin 112). However, conversely, or indeed paradoxically, his stutter and unexpected articulation of words have the power to unman Captain Vere who makes an incorrect judgment to cash in on Billy's perceived innocence and helplessness.

Protagonists such as Billy and Bartleby are often far from being eloquent, and they only articulate unfamiliar or inexplicable words during unexpected occasions to unsympathetic listeners. Bartleby's famous remark "I would prefer not to" ("*Bartleby*" 47) when he passively refuses his menial job shows that Bartleby's eccentricity destroys the harmony in his office. Billy's exclamation of "God bless Captain Vere!" (*BB* 123; ch. 25) during the hanging scene is also similarly eccentric because the audience of the public execution does not expect such words of obedience from someone sentenced to death for plotting a mutiny.

The manhood of Melville's protagonist and his overall nature can be described using Michael S. Kimmel's words. Kimmel defines manhood in America after the 1830s as follows:

To derive one's identity, and especially one's identity as a man, from marketplace success was a risky position.

Yet that is precisely what defined the Self-Made Man: success in the market, individual achievement, mobility, wealth. America expressed political autonomy; the Self-Made Man embodied economic autonomy. This was the manhood of the rising middle class. The flip side of this economic autonomy is anxiety, restlessness, loneliness. Manhood is no longer fixed in land or small-scale property ownership or dutiful service. Success must be earned, manhood must be proved—and proved constantly. (Kimmel 17)

Some of Melville's protagonists might represent "the flip side" of economic autonomy; however, they draw the readers' sympathy by exhibiting their peculiar sense of spiritual independence.

Both Bartleby and Billy appear to be the victims of "forms" or orders of commercialism and worship that do not accept exceptions or individuality. However, these characters are not so weak as to succumb to the power of authority. They are both influential enough to "unman" their leaders, a feeling experienced by Bartleby's employer. The male characters who actually experience the loss of their manhood are those who Bartleby and Billy consider leaders.

Captain Vere, for example, is agonized by the image of Billy while on his death bed and even calls out Billy's name while regretting his decision to hang him. Owing to miscommunications with silent protagonists such as Bartleby and Billy, their insensitive leaders cannot understand the real situation in which they find themselves. The quiet protagonists' sudden inexplicable words and silences confuse the unsympathetic leaders and they eventually make ill-conceived judgments. Unable to fathom the meanings of the words, they lose patriarchal authority within their organizations and feel weakened by the presence of such silent but eloquent men.

Unlike Captain Vere and the lawyer, fathers in Melville's short stories such as "I and My Chimney" ("Chimney") and "The Apple-Tree Table or Original Spiritual Manifestations" ("Apple-Tree") are by no means insensitive. Rather, they are careful observers of the forceful behavior of the female members of their families; they rationalize such behavior in a manner that is humorous from the perspectives of both the fathers and the narrators. Fathers in these works have a reserved attitude toward their wives' superiority. On this point, Gregg Camfield argues that "male and female become opposites, with the women trying to protect their mortality from the onslaught of male drive, declining though it may be" (81). According to Camfield, in "Chimney," Melville intends the chimney to represent the narrator's phallus, and the narrator's wife seeks domestic remodeling as an effort to castrate men (80). The narrator, also a father in this story, is outside capitalistic competition, favoring old ways and reclusion

in the suburbs, whereas his daughters and wife favor a modern chimney and new-style houses. It is obvious that the protagonist is far from the definition of Kimmel's "Self-Made Man," and he is apparently on "the flip side" of economic autonomy. However, he demonstrates that he is not yet completely emasculated by his spouse. In other words, he proves his manhood not with visible wealth or political autonomy but by using wits or humor to overturn female outrage.

The power of the females in each family appears to symbolize the loss of manhood and the role of the father figure in the family, although they are not completely absent. Fathers begin to resemble their wives' comical behavior and mimic their speech in an attempt to express, humorously, their protest against the dominant female powers of the family. Such humor is employed to scoff away problems and avoid addressing the main issue of weakening patriarchy. Instead, fathers show spiritual strength by simply laughing. In "Chimney," the father uses his chimney to express his own sense of identity and explain his everlasting power over his family. The chimney's oldness represents how his manhood has eroded over the years. However, the father finds affection in the chimney's aging. This story shows a recluse as one of the forms that constitute manhood, and a reclusive man is broadminded enough to accept the dominance of female power and avoid breaking the family unit. Melville's fathers never explicitly explain their problems through words. Instead, silent fathers pretend to be humorous narrators or the heroes of the story, demonstrating spiritual strength and the ability

to laugh off family problems. This demonstrates a form of spiritual autonomy by that of a man or father. Melville's definition of manhood does not necessarily demonstrate economic or political success in the marketplace of the time. In reality, however, they admit their weakness and accept the arrogant behavior of their childish spouses.

In contrast, some of Melville's characters express wordless authority or even menace. In "Benito Cereno," Babo's head at the end of the story horrifies his former captain, Don Benito. This image of terror and fear eventually brings about the captain's death. Babo's lifeless head and his staring eyes haunt Don Benito, thus leading to his waning ability to lead. Melville repeatedly depicts the weaknesses of his male protagonists as well as their struggles and miscommunications that contribute to the depravity of their leadership. William B. Dillingham is one of the critics who agrees that lost manhood is the central theme of Melville's works. He states that Bartleby, Benito Cereno, and the father in "Chimney" all commit a "gradual, silent suicide" (Dillingham 287), thus indicating their inability to be strong men with patriarchal power. As Dillingham implies, some of Melville's male characters silently face death; however, at least Bartleby and the father in "Chimney" cling to their core beliefs, such as the refusal to endure boring menial jobs or keeping an old ruined chimney. Therefore, they are not necessarily staring at death or in the process of "gradual" suicide; rather, they are staring at life with peculiar persistence and obsessiveness. In doing so, they

are insisting on and fighting for their everlasting manhood, which has not yet been totally eradicated.

As for Bartleby's persistence in defying his employer, Leo Marx states that what Bartleby refused was not necessarily the work itself but the nature of the work, which involved verifying and copying documents. This is especially due to Bartleby being a writer whose creativity allows him to be lax with the truth (609). As Marx indicates, Bartleby's passive resistance of "I would prefer not to" begins soon after he is asked to verify a document. It is important to note that Bartleby hates to write exact copies of someone else's words. Bartleby's rejection is associated with a writer's fear of plagiarism, which a creative person abominates. To make money, however, many creative persons accept employment that may drain them of their creativity. In this case, it is the verification of documents. This is partly a result of the need for workers in a capitalist system to maintain their position as breadwinners in exchange for their "humanity," as expressed by the lawyer's cry at the end of "Bartleby." Although Bartleby appears to be a loser financially and fails to be a breadwinner, and therefore stays single his entire life without the possibility of having his own family, this does not necessarily mean that he is a failure. With his persistent quest for originality, avoiding plagiarism, or the loss of his humanity, he challenges the lawyer's leadership of the law office, shaking off the bonds of patriarchal authority.

In this regard, Pierre is similar to *Bartleby*, although he does not cling to notions such as “humanity” or a writer’s originality to the same extreme as *Bartleby*. Pierre, the inexperienced young author Pierre declares that all literary works are “born of unwillingness and the bill of [the] baker” (258; bk. 18, sec.1). He believes that the “parent,” or an author, is “careless of life herself” and “reckless of the germ-life she contains” (258; bk. 18. sec. 1). Pierre also focuses on negative aspects of authorship in America, becoming desperate and self-destructive once he finds it impossible to make a living as a writer. He fails to vent his aggressiveness because of his doubt toward the commercialism in the literary industries in America. The American publishing world’s commercialism is caricatured as inexperienced or “unarchitectual” (258; bk. 18, sec. 2), business-minded, un-literary milieu; it leads to Pierre’s extreme poverty and eventual self-destruction.

However, Pierre is unable to take the action required to change the literary world, and he soon finds himself losing his manhood and the ability to be a family man. His marriage and his former fiancée Lucy become great burdens to him. Therefore, *Pierre* can be read as a story of a man’s struggle between the newly emerged commercialization of the literary world and new family dynamics resulting from increasingly assertive women. Pierre is on “the flip side of this economic autonomy,” and as a result, he shows anxiety over his profession and earnings. He fails to be a “Self-Made Man” and is conquered by female power in domestic life.

Going back to the newly emerged commercialism, which could make men aggressive or drive them to despair and destruction if they did not have the ability to vent their aggression, a common theme is found between *Pierre* and “Bartleby.” Hopelessness for authors in general and their skepticism toward American commercialism is reflected in not only *Pierre* but also “Bartleby.” The author is voicing his thoughts and *Pierre*’s ideas about creative writing through the protagonist Bartleby to emphasize on his situation of being forced to not have free thought. The protagonist Bartleby is not allowed to have free thought while he is working, and he is at first forced to copy someone’s writings in a solitary office. Bartleby’s menial, mind-numbing position silences and, finally, destroys him. In the story, Bartleby’s wordless protest stir the employer’s imagination, and the horrified employer is reminded of the Colt incident in 1842. He says:

It was now in such a state of nervous resentment that I thought it but prudent to check myself at present from further demonstrations. Bartleby and I were alone. I remembered the tragedy of the unfortunate Adams and the still more unfortunate Colt in the solitary office of the latter; and how poor Colt, being dreadfully incensed by Adams, and imprudently permitting himself to get wildly excited, was at unawares hurried into his fatal act—an act which certainly no man could possibly deplore more than the actor himself. (“Bartleby” 25)

Colt was the author of an accounting textbook. After completing his work, he quarreled with Adams of his printing company. During this quarrel, Colt suddenly became furious and violent and is believed to have committed murder. However, Colt's motive was never clarified since he committed suicide in jail. Here Melville's lawyer shows more sympathy to Colt than to the victim, Adams. The lawyer adds that "an uncarpeted office, doubtless, of a dusty, haggard sort of appearance—this it must have been, which greatly helped to enhance the irritable desperation of the hapless Colt" (25). In other words, the lawyer superficially considers the lonely, cold office atmosphere to have caused this tragedy.

Similar to Colt, *Bartleby* and *Pierre* are both protagonists scribbling away, isolated in a cold room. *Bartleby* and Colt both die a solitary death in a sort of jail. Colt committed suicide in jail, and so did *Pierre*. Both *Pierre* and Colt commit murder soon after quarreling with publishers. *Pierre*, called a "swindler" (356; bk. 26, sec. 3) by his publisher, suddenly becomes furious and passionately kills Glen, his cousin. These three share a similar fate even though Melville does not make his characters' motive for murder and suicide explicit. The labor of writing and relationships with an employer or publisher trigger self-destruction, thus indicating unstructured or immature publishing industries in general. Such circumstances certainly prevent, in particular, authors' free thought and, in general, American literary growth.

The idea of Bartleby's refusal to verify authenticity and his abomination of copying derive, at least in part, from Melville's major work, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale (Moby-Dick)* (1851). In his work, Melville demonstrates a skeptical attitude toward commercialism and unstable, restricted authorship based on public reactions and popularity. In chapter 89 of *Moby-Dick*, which concerns "Fast-Fish" and "Loose-Fish," Ishmael relates whales' property rights and "thoughts of thinkers" (334), indicating that people's thoughts should not be controlled by capitalism, employers, or publishers. A person's ideas or thoughts belong to that person alone, and others should not possess or control them. This chapter's general idea is that, while other countries do not have a "formal whaling code authorized by legislative enactment" (331). According to American whaling law, "I. A Fast-Fish belongs to the party fast to it" and "II. A Loose-Fish is fair game for anybody who can soonest catch it" (331). At the end of this chapter, Ishmael declares, "all men's minds and opinions" (334) must be Loose-Fish, in other words, should be free, not someone else's property. Similarly, Ishmael indicates that "the ostentatious smuggling verbalists" are Fast-Fish, while "thoughts of thinkers" are Loose-Fish (334). Taking historical background into consideration, "verbalists" could be writers or critics who skillfully use words, mainly for their own profit. They are captivated by prevalent capitalistic ideas, namely, popularity among readers and money from book sales. Some authors believe the ultimate aim of writing is earning money. Those "verbalists" do not care about imitating or stealing someone else's words since they are willing to "smuggle," bringing

British or other European ideas into American literature and then boasting the originality of their work. They acted to gain popularity, but their originality is lost in pursuit of profit. They cannot stir their imaginations to create new forms of writing; therefore, they are captivated by capitalism, making money, or by European ideas or its old aristocracy.

Melville stressed that becoming a Loose-Fish should be an ideal for American writers because they should not limit their writing to maintain popularity and profit nor should they be controlled by British ideas. His “Loose-Fish and Fast-Fish” chapter silently elaborates on this, indicating the American literary world’s general immaturity.

My dissertation explores lost manhood in Melville’s characters and the power that can change the manhood. This power can be female dominance as seen in *Pierre* and some of Melville’s other short works, or it can come from the protagonists’ silence and inexplicable words that deprive their leaders of power. Miscommunication between the silent protagonists and their unsympathetic leaders causes confusion. This does not necessarily reduce the power of the socially weak but it does take away the power of leaders who become “unmanned.” The balance of gender power is also discussed through words that cause such confusion in works such as *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities*, “I and My Chimney,” “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids,” “The Piazza,” “Benito Cereno,” and *Billy Budd, Sailor*. In these stories, some characters are isolated from society, protesting silently against leadership on slave and

warships that leads to anarchy. Indeed, failed leadership is portrayed to show the danger of self-confident American leaders and their loss of sensitivity.

In this dissertation, the first chapter explores how dominant female power influences the nature of fatherhood within the family by examining *Pierre* and Melville's short family novels to clarify how this is gained or lost. Then, the second chapter discusses how new conceptions of womanhood emerged in Antebellum America by observing factory girls in "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" and the lonely single woman in "The Piazza." It will be argued that female characters' celibacy influences the power of the male bachelor counterpart, although they never form a family relationship. Eventually this social system weakens patriarchy or destroys the family system and changes the very definition of manhood. The final chapter investigates two of Melville's sea novels to highlight weakening leadership in relation to problems such as inexplicable words, miscommunications, and untold stories of homosexuality and slavery on board. By writing about the weakness of American fathers and leaders, the dissertation attempts to clarify how peculiar words and miscommunications influence manhood in general.

This thesis largely comprises material from the following of the my previously published papers: "Ridiculous Landscape in Melville's 'The Piazza'" *Sky-Hawk* 27 (2012): 7–24, published by Melville Study Center Japan; "Incapable Leaders in Melville's 'Benito Cereno'" *Language and Culture* 28 (2013): 21–31, published by the Institute for Language Education

Aichi University; “Dominant Female Power and Distorted Images of the Father in Melville’s *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities*,” *Studies in English Literature* VI (2014): 229–37 published by The English Literary Society of Japan; “Silent Mutineers in Melville’s *Billy Budd, Sailor*” *IVY* 48 (2015): 53–80, published by The Society of English Literature and Linguistics Nagoya University.

## **Chapter 1: Lost Manhood and the New Manhood Emerging from Capitalism**

### **1-1) Dominant Female Power and Distorted Images of the Family Man in Melville's *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities***

#### **I. The Father's Two Images and Pierre's Confusion**

In Herman Melville's *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (*Pierre*), the theme of female power is dominant throughout the story. Female characters have a great influence on the protagonist, Pierre. Their power is rather too intrusive and dominant for the males in the family. Pierre's father's image is distorted by the power of the female characters in the novel. In addition, images of his father, as presented by female characters influence Pierre's subsequent images of his father. The presence of patriarchy within the family is overwhelmed and obscured by the female characters.

In *Pierre*, although a superficial family relationship is formed, it is not at all stable. It is shaken by female power and the family man's authority is likewise suppressed by this female power. The image of the family father only remains in the portrait, which makes it difficult for Pierre to imagine the family father as a role model to follow. In this work, Pierre's mother, Mrs. Glendinning hangs her deceased husband's "drawing-room painting" (83; bk. 4, sec. 5) in a position of prominence as a formal family portrait in order to present the image of an ideal father to Pierre (83; bk. 4, sec. 5): The portrait "occupied the most conspicuous and honorable place on the wall" (72; bk. 4, sec. 3). On the other hand, Pierre's aunt, Dorothea owns another of Pierre's

father's portraits called the "chair-portrait," which is said to mirror his genuine image (74; bk. 4, sec. 4). Dorothea considers this portrait a "holy" and "inestimable" treasure (73; bk. 4, sec. 3) although it was painted at a time when the father had an affair with a French woman, possibly resulting in an illegitimate child.

These portraits confuse Pierre by the different images they present. Isabel, who might be his father's illegitimate child, also, by the way she expresses herself, possesses something of Pierre's father's image. Pierre casts a questioning eye on each of these images, and wonders which image is the correct model for him to follow. He needs a positive paternal role model in order to later establish himself as a suitable head of family. However, his deceased father provides no guiding voice, leaving him with the two images of his wife and Dorothea, which leads to confusion in the minds of other family members.

*Pierre* was often criticized as being merely melodramatic and incestuous when this work was first published. For example, the February 1853 issue of *Putnam's Monthly* referred to the novel as "a well-got-up hoax" (163) and ridiculed Pierre as a man "with inexcusable insanity" (163). However, Pierre is not insane at all. As an immature boy, Pierre experiences the psychological growth generally experienced by adults. The only difference between ordinary adults and Pierre is the fact that he did not have a concrete image of his father that could provide a role model for him.

Pierre's insanity can be explained when we look more closely at women's controlling power over Pierre's and the father's portraits throughout the story.

Some critics have already mentioned dominant female characters as the cause of Pierre's self-destruction. As for Isabel's authority and influence over Pierre, Ellen Weinauer, for example, examines the final scene in which Isabel's hair spills over and veils Pierre's corpse, indicating that it "reminds readers that the possessive male individual can never determine and secure his own boundaries" (143). Thus, Pierre's body is covered with Isabel's femininity, which indicates that her female power is dominant even after they get married. Another critic, Taras Alexander Sak has pointed out that female characters such as Isabel, Lucy, and Delly have what he calls "connective function" in that Delly's past act of adultery and Isabel's illegitimate origin are connected to each other. Also, Lucy works as a servant of Pierre and Isabel and "she more or less becomes a kind of sister-maid-whore" (122). Hence, it has been interpreted that female characters are the destructive negative force for males. Sak briefly adds that Isabel connects the mystery of Pierre Sr.'s portrait to a past hitherto unimagined by Pierre Jr., and to deconstruction (122). However, substantial research has not yet been done to clarify the process of Pierre's self-destruction in connection with the presence of more than one father portrait. I would like to discuss further how his father's images and portraits become destructive force for Pierre in relation to Freud's theory of Oedipus complex from the 1920s.

According to Peter Gay, the Oedipus complex is generally known as a process in which a boy acquires a superego after the threat of castration has destroyed his oedipal program of conquest (Gay 515). Gay indicates that Freud believes that women originally had a phallus but are already castrated, implying that they never go through an oedipal process. Therefore, Gay's interpretation of the Oedipus complex demonstrates that women's ego never becomes as inexorable, impersonal, and independent of its emotional origins as that of men (Gay 515-16). Although Melville's *Pierre* was written more than half a century before this theory emerged, it shows the contradiction of Freud's original theory. In Melville's work, female phallic authorities attack the male protagonist Pierre's superego, and their superegos become rather inexorable and impersonal, causing him to become self-destructive.

In this section, I examine the process of Pierre's self-destruction in connection with the different images of his father owned by the women in the novel. First, I discuss the role that white American mothers in general played within the family in the nineteenth century, and compare Pierre's mother with these historical roles in order to assess her actions in terms of authority and social background. Then, I outline the action Pierre takes to rebel against this female power in order to regain paternal authority. By observing the confrontation between men and women within the family, I would like to suggest that by using the various portraits and distorted father images presented by women, in an eccentric way, Melville seeks to describe common family problems

caused by a father who has lost his patriarchal authority within the family. In Melville's works, the deceased father's authority does not last, and female authority takes its place after the father's death.

## **II. Maternal Roles in *Pierre***

In the 1850s, when *Pierre* was written, ideas on a mother's role in the family were changing, largely as a result of capitalism and commercialism. In *Pierre*, commercialism is portrayed remarkably by a money-making literary world, which is represented as the section title of "Young America in Literature" (244; bk. 17, sec. 1), a movement to save young American authors, but it ironically drives Pierre to extreme poverty in the end. It weakens Pierre's patriarchy and overturns his position as a family man. As men's position within the family changed in fiction and reality, and as the market economy developed with more family men working outside of their homes, women's domestic power was also changing. According to Carolyn Johnson, women's domestic labor was devalued because it was unpaid, but women of the time claimed moral superiority and exerted their influence covertly at home in order to have some power to affect the conditions of their lives (15-17). Also, housewives were still expected to preserve moral and religious values in an increasingly competitive, ruthless, and materialistic world and to provide a haven to which men

could return (Johnson 15). In *Pierre*, Mrs. Glendinning exerts her influence overtly, not covertly, sets herself up as head of the family and becomes less respectful toward her deceased husband.

Pierre's mother enjoys her authority and her husband's absence. The narrator relates that Mrs. Glendinning is "uncankered by any inconsolable grief" and "never worn by sordid cares" (4; bk. 1, sec. 2), so the absence of her husband is no longer sorrowful or unfortunate for her. Instead of being prostrate with sorrow, she enjoys attracting "handsome youth" (5; bk. 1, sec. 2) as they wish to marry this widowed mother, and Pierre is "namelessly annoyed" (5; bk. 1, sec. 2) seeing the "handsome youth" around his mother. Michael Paul Rogin stresses the similarity between historical fathers in America and Pierre's father in fiction. He states that, aside from the incestuous relationship between the mother and son and the father's absence in death, the Glendinnings are not a particularly exceptional American family, as American fathers had become increasingly absent from home due to their work, if they were not deceased like Pierre's, while mothers were becoming more authoritative at home, especially in child-rearing (162). Pierre's mother becomes deeply engrossed in establishing her authority without a thought for the psychological influence on Pierre, and takes advantage of her husband's eternal absence.

Mrs. Glendinning adores her son, Pierre, so much and has a strange relationship with him. In Pierre's family, mother and son call each other brother and sister, and this shows the change in position within the family, which would ultimately lead to the destruction of family order and

moral values. In his essay, “The Transformation of Puberty,” Sigmund Freud describes the influence of an immature boy’s relationships with his mother. Freud argues that it is natural for a child to select whom he/she loves in their childhood, such as the mother, as his/her sexual object, which is, so to speak, a “suppressed libido” (102). Therefore, the first serious love a young man experiences is often for a mature woman (104). Freud adds that such a mature woman triggers “the memory picture of his mother, as it has dominated him since the beginning of childhood” (104). Pierre’s object for love shifts from his mother to his sister, Isabel, but the relationship is still incestuous and is dominated by his mother’s image. After her husband’s death no one can challenge Pierre’s mother since she becomes so powerful and autocratic. She is described as “an affluent and haughty widow” with “unfluctuating rank, health and wealth” (4; bk. 1, sec. 2). She is strong enough to reject male authority. The narrator describes her that “... a powerful and populous family had by degrees run off into the female branches, so that Pierre found himself surrounded by numerous kinsmen and kinswomen, yet companioned by no surnamed Glendinning, but the duplicate one reflected to him in the mirror” (8; bk. 1, sec. 2). The degree of her influence is reflected on Pierre’s appearance, so that, “her [Pierre’s mother] own graces strangely translated into the opposite sex (5; bk. 1, sec. 2). Pierre is always subordinate, so he cannot overcome and be released from his mother’s authority. Pierre’s mother does not conform to the image of an ideal American mother of the time because she fails to preserve moral and

religious values in the family as she enjoy attracting “handsome youth,” and would not provide a resting place for her family members. Therefore, Pierre’s mother’s attitude represents moral corruption and intrudes the psychological growth of her son, leading him to self-destruction.

This is the reason why Pierre leaves Saddle Meadows, after he meets Isabel, his half-sister.

Not only does she fail to preserve moral values but she also neglects her duty to keep religious values in the family. Pierre’s father’s marble statue once had a religious value and was an object of worship. The marble statue is treated as a holy object that belongs in a temple, but “the eye-expanded boy [Pierre] perceives, or vaguely thinks he perceives, slight specks and flaws in the character he once so wholly revered” (68; bk. 4, sec. 1) when he grows up. This shows the failure of Pierre’s mother to protect the father’s image. She is unfit to assume the role of an ideal mother because she could neither preserve the father’s image properly nor convey appropriately the religious value of the statue to Pierre. Consequently, without any thought, she showed a defective father’s image to her son, and the image of the perfect father collapses within Pierre’s mind. Pierre begins to cast a doubtful eye upon the value of their family treasure. Again, Pierre’s mother fails to preserve moral value within the family in a different way.

The preservation of the image has long been considered essential for maintaining moral value and patriarchal authority within the family. After his death, Pierre’s father should invoke a religious value so that his family can hold on to their memories of the father and worship him to

maintain the family bond. Walter Benjamin's famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," discusses a classical statue of Venus and its decay, and the ideas in the essay assist us in interpreting the decaying statue of Pierre's father. Benjamin points out that there are two extremely different traditional contexts for understanding the Venus statue (10). For the Greeks, it was "an object for worship," while for medieval clerics, it was seen "as a threatening idol" (10). In either case, the work of art has what Benjamin calls an "aura" (10), which has a spiritual and religious meaning, and the "aura" stimulates people's feelings in various ways. The most important point that Benjamin stresses is that "this auric mode of being of the work of art never becomes completely separated from its ritual functions" (11).

Pierre's view of his father's marble statue is also two-dimensional in a way that is similar to Benjamin's example of the Greeks and medieval clerics. Although Pierre once believed his father's statue to be a holy object, he now perceives flaws in it; not in the object but "in the character" of its subject. Works of art, which are copies of the original made by hand, faithfully express the features of the original. The interpretation of the work of art differs according to each individual and the value of the work changes over time. Pierre makes no further reference to this marble statue because he recognizes that this father's image has not been preserved with care as a family treasure, meaning that it is no longer an object of worship or threat for Pierre's family. His mother's dominance and father's helplessness are conveyed through the images of artworks, not in

literal terms. However, it encourages him to seek other examples of his father's true image hereafter.

Pierre's mother tries to implant other images of the father in Pierre's mind, not by using the marble statue, but by showing what she believes to be a formal family portrait. Pierre's father's "drawing-room painting" (83; bk. 4, sec. 5) meets the approval of Pierre's mother. When Aunt Dorothea talks to Pierre about the "drawing-room painting," she explains "she [Mrs. Glendinning] had painted for herself" and she paid "many hundred dollars for it" (80; bk. 4, sec.4). Since it is painted "for herself," the originality of the father's image is sacrificed to his mother's taste and her authority. The painting is a made-up image created by his mother. Also, the portrait is much larger than the "chair-portrait" and it occupies "the most conspicuous and honorable place on the wall" (72; bk. 4, sec. 3). Despite the wishes of his mother, Pierre cannot recognize any significance and value in the portrait. On the other hand, for his mother, this invented image is the most important factor because she wishes to alter her husband's image to suit her preference. Therefore, artworks also have the power to diminish his father's dignity, and undermine the traditional form of patriarchy. Silently, or possibly unintentionally, Pierre's mother uses artworks as agents to alter the image of the deceased father. Her careless preservation of his portrait causes the loss of its value; this eventually leads to the absence of the father's authority within the family.

Harry R. Rubenstein, in his study of portraits of the late 1840s, points out that a sitter, and an artist who captures the sitter's image, are both responsible for the "image composition," and that some studios published instructive guides on "how best to have your portrait taken" (190-91). Rubenstein mentions that in studios at the time, the proper attire and possible poses were suggested to the sitter (190). Therefore, in formal portraits in general, a sitter's originality or true nature tends to be suppressed by the "image composition." All the sitters posed in similar ways that were proposed by other people. Rubenstein says such images were "composed" (191) and were fictitious. In the "drawing-room painting," the image of Pierre's father perfectly conforms to his wife's taste, so it does not show his true features. In other words, the father's dignity and the religious values of the painting are suppressed by the dominant female power which has created the father's made-up image. The portrait is painted by "a celebrated artist of her [Mrs. Glendinning's] own election, and costumed after her own taste" (83; bk. 4, sec. 5). A portrait made with a perfect formality not only distorts the sitter's original image but also disappoints the observer who wishes to see the natural image of the loved one. Hence, the way in which a portrait is executed is also influential, bringing about a change in the power balance within a family; or a structure of a family, eventually, it creates confusion for Pierre, who seeks the original features of his own father. The power balance in the family in mid-nineteenth-century America was changing, as is reflected in the mother's relationships with young men in *Pierre*. According to Carolyn

Johnston, “the institution of marriage trapped women economically and sexually, their views were considered dangerous to the mainstream feminists, who were afraid that the women’s rights movement might come to be associated with encouraging sexual libertinism and thus be regarded as a threat to marriage and the family” (73-74). Pierre’s mother is no longer “trapped” after her spouse’s death. She is sexually free and is becoming a destructive force for family relationships.

Thus, in a way, Pierre’s mother uses her husband’s portrait to disclose the father’s past. Knowing this rather dubious past, when he left his illegitimate child and a French woman, Pierre’s mother maintains her moral superiority over her husband and suppresses patriarchy at home. With overwhelming female power, she unconsciously fails to make her home a haven to which Pierre wants to return.

### **III. The Eloquent Portrait; or, Messages from the Deceased Father**

In the same manner, Aunt Dorothea insists that another portrait of the father called “chair-portrait” displays the true father’s image, and relates to Pierre the history of the portrait. In contrast to the expensive “drawing-room painting,” the “chair-portrait” is referred to as an “impromptu portrait” and “no fancy-piece” “by an amateur” (72; bk. 4, sec. 3). The “chair-portrait” and Aunt Dorothea’s story are more influential on Pierre than the “drawing-room painting.” The “chair-portrait” was created when Pierre’s father might have felt a sense of guilt over his affair

with a French woman. Unlike the treasure-like “drawing-room painting,” it is similar to a police record of Pierre’s father’s obscure past. After seeing three different images shown by two women, Pierre is more interested in the “chair-portrait,” which captures natural feature of his father.

As described in Book 4 of *Pierre*, cousin Ralph was suspicious that Pierre’s father was having a love affair. He believed that the truth was apparent in the face and drew his portrait accordingly. Portraits, in general, not only depict the intended image of a person, but are also kept as records of the concealed past. Aunt Dorothea thinks that “cousin Ralph was stealing his portrait” (77; bk. 4, sec. 4), meaning that a portrait is recorded or composed like a police document or evidence—to reveal the truth. Also, the person’s past secrets can be read through the face that is reproduced. Thus, Ralph, with a feeling of excitement, surreptitiously keeps a record of Pierre’s father’s past.

As for the author’s attitude toward the portrait, Laura Rigal has indicated that Melville was against the idea of portraits being displayed in public because they evoked the image of a “mug shot” in police records (113). Rigal argues that Melville is probably implying that “a face could be assaulted by means of the camera and chemicals that had opportunistically seized the moment” (113). In *Pierre*, the father was captured and assaulted by others, but he had no power to resist it. He is now deceased and helpless. His image is displayed in public as his past behavior could be subversive to family relationships. Although the “chair-portrait” is hand-made, not a

daguerreotype, when considering Pierre's father's reluctance to be captured as a portrait, it seems certain that Pierre's father regards hand-made portraits as mugged ones, too. Rigal does not discuss further the "chair-portrait" in *Pierre*, but people of the time had an idea that a sense of guilt and reluctance to be captured would appear in the expressions of people in the frame. Pierre's father's reluctance to be mugged is displayed in the "chair-portrait" and this reluctance reveals to Pierre much about his father's past.

Ralph's "chair-portrait" reflects so naturally his father's younger days that Pierre uses this picture as a guide to seek the truth of his father's past. The picture for Pierre seems to have an apologetic voice like a living being. The portrait seems to speak to Pierre in the following way:

... as I [Pierre] look on the strange chair-portrait: which, though so very much more unfamiliar to me, than it can possibly be to my mother, still sometimes seems to say—  
Pierre, believe not the drawing-room painting; that is not thy father; or, at least, is not *all* of thy father. Consider in thy mind, Pierre, whether we two paintings may not make only one. Faithful wives are ever over-fond to a certain imaginary image of their husbands; and faithful widows are ever over-reverential to a certain imagined ghost of that same imagined image, Pierre. Look again, I am thy father as he more truly was.

(83; bk. 4, sec. 5)

Pierre discovers a living likeness of his father and imagines a “ghost” in looking at this portrait. If spirits and voices come from the picture, that, for him, is almost the same as having a living father. This image of his father has power over Pierre’s mind and deeds through its ghost-like voice.

This portrait with voice has the power to control Pierre, and for that reason, his mother hates the portrait. However, Pierre shows great interest in it against her will. He needs the “chair-portrait” to rebel against maternal power. The “chair-portrait” is a driving force for Pierre to reject his mother’s authority, to be independent, and leave Saddle Meadows. He begins to see his father’s image from his own perspective. Through the influence of this portrait upon Pierre, his mother loses her control over him. Pierre is about to gain power to reject female authority and correct female authority’s biased image toward his father.

For Pierre, the “chair-portrait” might be considered as an almost perfect reproduction made by hand. Ralph’s skeptical and inquisitive mind is indicated on a part of this portrait with the innermost emotions of Pierre’s father. According to Benjamin, “the here and now of the original constitute the idea of its genuineness” (5), and the characteristic of “the here and now” of the work of art disappears even with the most perfect reproduction (5). The “chair-portrait” is an original copy of Pierre’s living father, so the portrait has an “aura.” His portrait is like a living creature as it talks to Pierre and communicates with him. It also communicates with those who observe it. In a word, through this portrait, Pierre’s father now has a second life. However, Pierre destroys the

portrait upon realizing it is not the image that he needs to model himself after. Even after the “chair-portrait” is destroyed, it torments Pierre. Although “the here and now” disappears as time passes, the memory of the existence of an impressive work of art remains, and the silent portrait still influences an analytical and sensitive observer like Pierre. He observes a similar portrait at the fair in Book 26, which attracts his attention and reminds him of the destroyed “chair-portrait.” Pierre can never erase the image of his father, and the image of the portrait sticks to his mind.

There is further evidence that the truth is revealed by observing a person’s natural posture in a painted portrait. According to Dennis Berthold, Melville was interested in seventeenth century Dutch genre paintings, which depicted essential human nature in terms of “gross sensuality, excessive materialism, and vulgarity” (219). Similarly, American art critics at the time believed that the life of ordinary Americans was “worth painting” (226). Although Berthold does not refer to the value of the “chair-portrait” and to the incestuous theme of *Pierre*, the portrait and the themes in this novel cover the genre of Dutch painting with which Melville was familiar. The image of Pierre’s father in the “chair-portrait” captures his vague sense of guilt about his love affairs before the birth of his son.

A faithful portrait should not be a made-up image, but should mirror the natural features of the person. In other words, something regarded as too ordinary for an artistic theme would have meaning. If his father’s love affair with a French woman is true and he has an illegitimate child,

the “chair-portrait” could be an art that shows what Berthold calls “sensuality” and “vulgarity” (219). It is Aunt Dorothea who suggests both the genuine image and the dark side of human nature to innocent Pierre through the portrait. Without her, Pierre is never inspired to seek a genuine image of his father. Still, Pierre is not certain whether his father lived a disgraceful life. Therefore, Pierre continues to communicate with the silent “chair-portrait” until he reaches the truth of his father’s past. A silent artwork can occasionally be more eloquent than living people, but still, in *Pierre*, female authority is more dominant than that of the father.

#### **IV. Another Interpretation of the Chair Portrait and Dominant Female Power**

Although people’s ordinary lives reflect the sensual or disgraceful side of human nature, Pierre does not accept the image of a father who led a disgraceful life, similar to those events depicted in the Dutch paintings discussed previously. It is Isabel who suggests to Pierre the vulgarity of his father and gives new interpretations to the “chair-portrait.” She also mesmerizes Pierre and leads him to lose his way. Her power is more dominant than that of Pierre’s mother and Aunt Dorothea so as to make Pierre self-destructive. Isabel conveys a wordless message to Pierre. Her appearance implicitly suggests the disgraceful past of Pierre’s father. The following point shows the undeniable reciprocal relationship between Isabel and Pierre’s father:

In the strange relativeness, reciprocalness, and transmittedness, between the long-dead father's portrait, and the living daughter's face, Pierre might have seemed to see reflected to him, by visible and uncontradictable symbols, the tyranny of Time and Fate. Painted before the daughter was conceived or born, like a dumb seer, the portrait still seemed leveling its prophetic finger at that empty air, from which Isabel did finally emerge. (197; bk. 12, sec. 3)

In *Pierre*, the father's portraits are not regarded as tokens of affections, but as reflections of the father's disgrace, and eventually become objects to break the family ties. It is female power that destroys the father's dignity. The "chair-portrait" is described as a "noiseless," "ever-nameless," and "ambiguous" (196; bk. 12, sec. 3) picture, but Isabel's countenance involuntarily gives power to the portrait that stops the family line and invalidates the Glendinnings' popular family name. Pierre's resolution is overturned with Isabel's power, and all the male power in this work is suppressed with female force. If Pierre did not see Isabel in the "chair-portrait," he could establish himself and grow up to be a mature adult without failing to protect his father's good name.

In Book 26, Pierre encounters a portrait called "Stranger's Head" at the fair (351; bk. 26, sec. 1). The portrait is very similar to the "chair-portrait" that Pierre burnt in Book 12. Unintentionally, Isabel again gives another interpretation to "Stranger's Head," and confuses Pierre. Throughout the story, Pierre's father's image is reflected in Isabel's face, similar to a mirror. The similarity in

appearance is stressed without clear evidence that Isabel and Pierre are sister and brother. Their relationship and the relativeness to the “chair-portrait” remain ambiguous until Pierre goes mad. Pierre’s mention of “Stranger’s Head” is almost identical to the “chair-portrait.” The following description shows the similarity between the “chair-portrait” and “A Stranger’s Head.”

There was no discoverable drapery; the dark head, with its crisp, curly, jetty hair, seemed just disentangling itself from out of curtains and clouds. But to Isabel, in the eye and on the brow, were certain shadowy traces of her own unmistakable likeness; while to Pierre, this face was in part as the resurrection of the one he had burnt at the Inn. Not that the separate features were the same; but the pervading look of it, the subtler interior keeping of the entirety, was almost identical, still, for all this, there was an unequivocal aspect of foreignness, of Europeanism, about both the face itself and the general painting. (351-52; bk. 26, sec. 1)

Pierre reacts calmly because he has decided to stop analyzing such works of art. He accepts that what he once believed to be genuine is not actually his father’s image, but rather some undignified copiable person. Although Pierre could approach a portrait which is almost identical to the original “chair-portrait,” he is not influenced by this reproduction. Pierre’s interest in his father’s image has disappeared at this point, and he has placed a psychological distance between himself and his deceased father. John Berger’s idea assists us in interpreting Pierre’s state of mind at this stage.

Berger notes that “when the art of the past ceases to be viewed nostalgically, the work will cease to be holy relics” (30). When finding similarity in appearance between “Stranger’s Head” and Isabel’s countenance, Pierre would not seek his father’s image because he could not perceive it nostalgically as a memento of his loved one. He has come to realize that father’s image is no longer a holy thing, and father’s fake images are everywhere as reproductions. What Benjamin calls “the here and now” (5) is totally lost at this point. The fake portrait is only a commodity and it does not have life as the original “chair-portrait” has.

Pierre recognizes that he can never grasp his father’s image and the efforts he has made so far are meaningless. Isabel could provide a clue of how to grasp the image, but Pierre’s failure to be a successful breadwinner leads him to exhaustion and self-destruction. As “Stranger’s Head” becomes a mere commodity for artists to make ends meet, Pierre loses his desire to be an artistic author. Eventually, after Pierre fails to capture his father’s image, he betrays his principles as an artist to the prevalent commercialism of art, which reduces artworks to mere products or imitable commodities. Commercialism prevents Pierre from regarding his father as a breadwinner and the central power of the family.

#### **V. *Pierre* as a Domestic Version of *Moby-Dick***

Those self-centered female characters in *Pierre* are similar to Ahab in *Moby-Dick* although some critics have argued Pierre himself is Ahab-like. Linda Costanzo Cahir states that “Pierre’s charming, boyish irresponsibility, his youthful arrogance steels his will and creates a fortitude of purpose which, much like Ahab, he never pauses to scrutinize, despite the tragedies it endangers” (29). Newton Arvin, as well, comments on Pierre’s similarity to Ahab stressing that both are self-destructive (203). Arvin points out, like Ahab, Pierre is equally mad, destroying everyone or everything around him: “burning the father’s picture to the ashes, driving the mother to madness and death, shooting and killing the cousin, bringing death to the fiancée and the half sister, and at last gulping poison oneself” (Arvin 203-04). However, I would like to point out that Pierre “pauses to scrutinize” father’s portraits and endeavors to seek father’s image to establish his identity as a mature adult. He is trying to be responsible and to keep his family members at peace.

What Pierre has observed in his objective and inquisitive analysis of the portrait is rather similar to Ishmael’s in *Moby-Dick*. Ishmael sees the chase of Moby-Dick as a scene of a play and narrates what happened to the Pequod from an objective point of view. After seeing the “Stranger’s Head,” Pierre has a vision that the father-like portrait is talking with the portrait of Beatrice Cenci who killed her abusive father and was sentenced to death in the late 1500s. Both portraits are reproductions for sale. Since they are commodities, they are never the mementos of loved ones or images for worship. Ironically, a girl who hates her father and Pierre’s father-like

images are facing each other. Pierre's view on his father's image changes at this point. The following lines show that Pierre turns into a mere observer of the displayed portraits at the fair.

Now, this Cenci and "the Stranger" were hung at a good elevation in one of the upper tiers; and, from the opposite walls, exactly faced each other; so that in secret they seemed to pantomimically talking over and across the heads of the living spectators below. (351; bk. 26, sec. 1)

Although Pierre's emotional condition is not expressed in words, he silently maintains a psychological distance between himself and his father. To Pierre, seeking his father's image has lost its meaning in the end, similar to how Ishmael ends his quest for Moby-Dick. The threat of castration or the oedipal process to become a grown-up man are never prepared for Pierre because the threatening image of his father is completely lost. Instead he views the father-like image as if enjoying a mime show as a mere observer. He becomes one of the "spectators" seeing a father-like person who is blamed by a poor daughter, Cenci. A sacrificed woman is elevated to the same level as a father. She talks to a father-like portrait face-to-face as if she condemns her father's disgrace and discloses what he did to his daughter. Cenci's portrait represents another voiceless female power in the novel. Female characters, who are free from castration anxiety, are allowed to challenge the father's authority. Especially when the father is deceased and no more has a practical

influence on a female family member, a woman, like Pierre's mother, can exercise female authority. Thus, Pierre's father is emasculated by female power after his death.

When we turn to Ahab in *Moby-Dick*, Ahab's lost leg is equivalent to Freud's concept of women who originally had a phallus but were subsequently castrated. According to Christopher Sten, Ahab's lost leg is described as "mitigated castration" (61). Sten describes how "the whales sometimes appear to conspire with their pursuers, permitting themselves to be captured and sacrificed for the good of the whalers" (61). Similarly, he indicates that "in some early tribes, the elders are known to have sacrificed or bled themselves to supply sustenance for the young during the long period of their initiation" (61). Sten argues that Ahab is not brave enough for self-sacrifice and that, accordingly, his whaler's manhood is constantly threatened in his struggle with the powers that rule the self and the world (Sten 61). Ahab's selfish attitude, disgust, or fear for self-sacrifice possibly comes from his "mitigated castration," which unmans him and influences his fellow members' manhood as well. Due to his selfishness, he fails to contribute to the sustenance of other whalers, with the exception of Ishmael. Similar to Pierre's mother and other female power portrayed in *Pierre*, Ahab is inexorable, impersonal, and selfish. As a result, Ahab, who experienced "mitigated castration," did not complete his Oedipal process successfully, or perhaps he was completely freed from the Oedipal process after he lost his leg.

Hence, throughout the work, female power is so dominant as to change father's image in Pierre's mind. Isabel's countenance leads to a collapse of the Glendinnings. Pierre feels her face as a "mirror" of his father's image, and he concludes both Isabel and Pierre's father signify negative social forces that destroy the moral code and his family order. Mrs. Glendinning also exercises controlling power in so far as she transforms the father's image within the family, destroys family order, and alters the relationship between mother and son into one of sister and brother. Isabel and Pierre also break the moral code under the assumption that they are related by blood. Therefore, the women who make them accept a different image of the father and force monomaniac relationship with Pierre are rather Ahab-like, as they destroy everything around them.

Finally, Pierre completely loses his confidence and gives up his pursuit of his father's image. Although Pierre tries to trace and prove both his father's manhood and of him being a family man, this attempt ends in vain. The result of this defeat is that it was the female power who could change or alter the deceased father's image as the son was unable control it. The conclusion of the novel shows that Pierre's search for his father's image has completely collapsed, and he finally loses his way. Having been shown more than one image of his father—and the one that he sees last is the extremely devalued fake commodity—Pierre loses the model that he had hoped to imitate. He also loses his confidence to become head of the family. If there had been one concrete image of his father for Pierre, he would not have been confused and lost. Moreover, he loses the

sister whom he protected at the cost of his life, and he now assumes that he did not have a sister at all from the beginning. His wish, “Oh, had my father but had a daughter!” (7; bk. 1, sec. 2) is overturned by the fact that his father’s image is copiable, and that there are numerous engraved images of his father around the world.

Within the domesticity in this work, Pierre’s mother is unfit to bring up her child to be a mature adult. The mother’s immorality hinders her child’s development. Isabel is not a good wife who supports her husband, but instead she impoverishes him, and, consequently, drives him mad by depriving him of his manliness and hinders his ability to be a “Self-Made Man.” Female family members never sacrifice themselves for the sustenance of the family. Both Mrs. Gledinning and Isabel are sexually attractive and their power works as a destructive force to destroy family ties. In other words, the women in *Pierre* are extremely self-indulgent and monomaniac. Overall, like Ahab, women in domesticity invalidate the accepted moral code and lead their family members to total destruction. In this sense, *Pierre* can be read as a domestic version of *Moby-Dick*, and Pierre becomes the fatal victim of women’s self-indulgence.

## **1-2) Melville's Fathers in the Antebellum Period: Their Protests and Laughter**

### **I. Melville's Two Types of Domestic Novels**

Melville has written three major domestic narratives all of which show the husbands' or fathers' struggling to be the breadwinners of their families. This section explores the effect of laughter in Melville's domestic narrative "Chimney" and discusses the important symbolic and comic roles of the chimney and the "secret closet" (345), which once belonged to the narrator's distant relative. This entire chapter is dedicated to discussions on these works as they characterize domesticity in antebellum America. During that period, another patriarchal characteristic emerged to sustain family relationships. In "Chimney," the father simultaneously plays two roles: a weak father and a first-person narrator who views himself objectively. Without hesitation, the narrator explains his comical, weak nature and threatened patriarchal authority to elicit laughter from the reader.

For this story's family, the chimney and the secret closet are central concerns and the cause of arguments. Critics such as E. Hale Chatfield and Darwin T. Turner focus on sexual tensions in Melville's domestic novels, viewing the chimney as a phallic symbol of the narrator's endangered authority over his wife. Turner observes that concern about the chimney's excavation reflects castration anxiety (Turner 112) while Chatfield argues that the narrator's wife desires to castrate her husband (Chatfield 167–68). Chatfield proposes that the narrator is

“impotent” or in a “semi-amputated state” (Chatfield 167). His wife attempts to remove her husband’s masculinity and complete the reversal, transforming him into a female (Chatfield 168). These ideas are similar to Gregg Camfield’s interpretation. According to Camfield, the wife desires castration to gain power in the family. True, the old chimney represents the narrator’s castration anxiety, similar to the Oedipus complex, a psychological process experienced by boys becoming men (Camfield 80). However, unlike chronologically young boys, the narrator’s anxiety is not serious at all. A mature man’s fear of a chimney’s excavation is humorously compared to a boy’s castration. Therefore, the narrator’s humorous treatment of the chimney makes it more remarkable and impressive, changing it from merely an old chimney to something more meaningful and attractive, thus making it a central concern for readers.

This section’s first part defines the benchmarks of manhood prevalent in Melville’s time. It describes how comical and optimistic men in general succeeded in creating an image of an ideal father who is not a dominant patriarchal authority and who has the eloquence to calm his family members. Thereafter, the second part describes the roles of laughter in this story by explicating their philosophical meaning. The final part demonstrates why the narrator maintains his house’s old-style construction and its old, inefficient chimney, despite his knowledge that these features do not benefit his family at all. The narrator’s stoutness does not satisfy his family members. By exploring the laughter and paternal optimism in this story, I clarify how

breadwinners in the antebellum period in America established their fatherhood: the nature of fatherhood differed from that in the period before the antebellum era.

Melville showed typical features of the American father in this story, compared to the typical British father, to emphasize the conflict between traditional fatherhood in Britain and newly emerging fatherhood in America. While playing the role of a family father, the first-person narrator–protagonist persists in the traditional British-like fatherhood represented by the selfishness and arrogance of Henry VIII. However, when he becomes the narrator and his role in the story changes, he reports how traditional fatherhood has become invalid, thus accepting America's newly emerging fatherhood. Indeed, the father's ill treatment in the family is not serious, even though the narrator's ideal is the grand, unshakable authority of a family father. His ideal is portrayed with images of Henry VIII and the "smoky" (352) philosopher-like chimney that produces "a mighty smoke," which the narrator's wife hates. The narrator and the chimney "have to philosophize together;" thus, without words, eliminating his wife from the conversation. Although the narrator in "Chimney" may at times try to follow such traditions, he is entirely different from typical British fathers, being, for example, more amusing and friendly.

Melville's domestic works are all written after *Moby-Dick* (1851) and include *Pierre* (1852), "Chimney" (1856), and "The Apple-Tree Table, or Original Spiritual Manifestations" ("Apple-Tree") (1856). While *Pierre* is a complete tragedy, the other two works are both short

comedies narrated by comical father figures. Melville wrote family men in order to express what ordinary family men are like. These fathers are typical American fathers, portrayed in ways that indicate what laughter means to American families in general. In America, fathers are not at all superior beings, but are equal to other family members. In other words, to maintain a good family relationship, a father should be like a friend. Arguments between a father and other family members should be accepted in a positive way, in order to maintain equality and to ensure the comfort of freedom of speech within the family.

The narrator-father displays affection for his chimney by effusively calling it “a huge, corpulent old Harry VIII” (327), “grand seignior,” or “the one great domineering object” (328). Historically, the egoistical Henry VIII is known to have been a king of personal extravagance, having married six times. Although Henry VIII is far from a family-oriented, ideal father, the narrator admires him. Why he does so is unclear, but readers can surmise that his admiration probably relates to the king’s powerful oppression or dictatorship. From the narrator’s preference for such a historical figure, readers learn that the narrator favors the British aristocracy of old, and admires an insecure, selfish man such as Henry VIII, neither an ideal, caring family father, nor a friend to his family members.

Pierre, the protagonist discussed in the previous section, and his father are both family men, but they are not at all like Henry VIII. Pierre is frustrated because he does not earn enough to make a living. He struggles between his career as a writer and family obligations. Pierre’s

problem, however, is not so much his family's comfort as completion of his artistic literature. His writing matters most to him. In the same way, what matters most to the protagonist in "Chimney" is not family members' opinions and comfort, but the chimney's existence. To feel secure, Pierre grasps at an image of a past hero; namely, the image of his father. However, he fails. Therefore, an image or object that comforts a man is essential, and the man who has fully grasped a hero's concrete image can prevent himself from being self-destructive. Hence, the chimney keeps the narrator from becoming self-destructive.

Those attitudes could be norms for antebellum American fathers. According to Michel S. Kimmel, "so many breadwinners faced with becoming breadlosers." To relieve the anxiety of the erosion of their masculinity, they proclaimed the exploits of historical figures. "As individuals struggling to find meaning in the world we create those symbols to help us return to those earlier experiences so that we can again feel secure and without anxiety" (Kimmel 81). The narrator wishes to feel secure through his dependence on the personified aristocratic chimney or Henry VIII. He cannot act like a tyrant, but he nevertheless shows a strong desire to be like Henry VIII, and to return to the old days when aristocracy was still prevalent.

Contrary to the tragic hero of *Pierre*, the fathers in "Chimney" and "Apple-Tree" are optimistic and cheerful. The image of optimistic fathers can never be associated with Melville's real-life situation, although the comical narrator is suffering from sciatica, as Melville himself was at that time. The characteristics of the fathers in those short stories are antithetical to

Pierre's, and they represent what American family men in general are like. Pierre and his deceased father both represent the failure to be a successful breadwinner. Just as the marble statue of Pierre's father is poorly taken care of, his patriarchy is neglected and lost. In other words, his nonexistence releases his spouse from former phallic oppression. The same is true for the wife and narrator in "Chimney." Hence, both the old chimney and the marble statue lose their revered value representative of a father's authority.

With the son's self-destruction in *Pierre*, lost fatherhood is negative or tragic. However, "Chimney," portrays lost fatherhood positively, in order to emphasize the father's existence. The protagonist-narrator's family relationships resemble those portrayed by Alexis de Tocqueville in his work, *Democracy in America*. According to Tocqueville, typical American families in the 1830s were as follows:

In America, the family in its Roman or aristocratic sense no longer exists. Only a few traces have been found in the first years of children's lives when the father exercises an unopposed domestic dictatorship made necessary by his son's weakness and justified by both their weakness and his unquestionable superiority.

(677-78)

Hence, the typical American father's image contradicts the narrator's ideal, which resembles that of British aristocracy and Henry VIII. Similarly, in "Apple-Tree," the protagonist, a family man, is treated as a weak but comical being. In this story, the husband and wife are like friends,

and the wife is never subordinate to her husband. In fact, she warns her husband in a loving way about drinking too much punch:

“You have been taking too much of that punch, I fear. That sad habit grows on you. Ah, that I should ever see you thus staggering at night into your chamber.”

“Wife, wife,” hoarsely whispered I, “there is—is something tick—ticking in the cedar-parlor.”

“Poor old man—quite out of his mind—I knew it would be so. Come to bed; come and sleep it off.”

“Wife, wife!”

“Do, do come to bed. I forgive you. I won’t remind you of it to-morrow. But you must give up the punch-drinking, my dear. It quite gets the better of you.”

(368)

The husband in this story does not hesitate to show his weak nature to his wife. The wife seems to ridicule and denigrate her husband, stressing that he is losing control due to the influence of alcohol. However, there is still friendship between them. The father’s miserable position is illustrated in an amusing way, subverting traditional patriarchal images.

In *Pierre*, Melville tries to portray his protagonist in extreme poverty as authentically as possible in order to write in an American way, being focused on the weak side of human nature in this work. In *Pierre*, Melville illustrates not only how a family man becomes self-destructive,

but also how a widow becomes free of phallic oppression. On the other hand, in “Chimney” and “Apple-Tree,” Melville’s two family fathers are both optimistic and comical. These fathers appear weak and demonstrate no oppressive power over their families; their lack of influence allows female family members to be free and active. This concept of patriarchy differs from that of the British aristocratic family. In “Chimney,” the narrator’s wife wants to get rid of the central power, the “English aristocracy” or the chimney, which “cast a contracting shade all round it” (334-35), representing traditional British patriarchy that oppresses female family members. She wants to make her home more democratic, while her husband does not. The weakness and silence of these fathers grant an opportunity to their forceful wives, allowing them to exercise female authority over the families. The fathers in these two stories of Melville are both comical; they elicit laughter from readers.

In previous studies, critics have regarded Melville’s weak fathers in a negative light. William B. Dillingham, for example, states that the narrator or the father in “Chimney” is shown as “channeling his force and masculinity into the chimney” but “has already gone too far in weakening himself in favor of the chimney.” Dillingham goes so far as to say that the narrator also “commits a gradual, silent suicide,” as do Bartleby and Benito Cereno (Dillingham 287). I argue that, instead of facing death, the narrator pursues and achieves a series of benchmarks to sustain his own status of fatherhood in his family. The narrator retrieves his fatherhood by becoming the humorous narrator figure. On the other hand, as father—not narrator—the

protagonist becomes a housebound recluse, guarding his chimney. Although as a family father, the protagonist's attitude may be regarded as weak, the narrator remains optimistic and talks tough, stressing his property ownership.

## **II. Father Images in Antebellum America**

The weak-appearing father in "Chimney" consistently follows the traditional fatherhood befitting British aristocracy, while the narrator—his other self—knows that his wife prefers the democratic American family. The father recognizes his weakness as a traditional father, while the narrator stresses his power by objectively observing his family relationships and by using his old chimney's power effectively and wisely. The following quotation shows how the narrator observes his wife. She considers the chimney symbolically connected to their family's annoying British aristocratic structure.

How often has my wife ruefully told me, that my chimney, like the English aristocracy, casts a contracting shade all round it. She averts that endless domestic inconveniences arise—more particularly from the chimney's stubborn central locality. (334-35)

The narrator's wife maintains that a central power should not exist inside the house as it is a "domestic inconvenience" for her. Her idea is similar to Tocqueville's idea. Tocqueville mentions that "the power of a father's opinions over his sons is reduced" as the state of society

becomes more democratic (680), and, at the same time, “power slips away from aristocracies, the austere, the conventional, and the legal part of the paternal authority is seen to disappear and a kind of equality to reign around the domestic fireside” (680). Although the narrator’s family has no sons, his daughters prefer a relationship of equality, like that of a friend, with their father, matching what is found in Tocqueville’s explication. Therefore, the chimney exists to restrict excessive female dominance, maintaining the balance of power in the family. The family itself is becoming more democratic, and the narrator knows that, but he never surrenders to the new trend. Hence, he stresses the chimney’s attractive features and amusingly regales the reader with them.

The fathers in Melville’s “Chimney” and “Apple-Tree” try to act strong by showing off their belongings. The narrator in “Chimney” claims an importance for his old and useless chimney when his wife and daughters propose destroying it. Likewise, the father in “Apple-Tree” is proud of his table being placed at “an honorable position” at home, while his daughter “never got over her strange emotions upon first accidentally encountering the table” (365). In this story, the father also needs an object, which the wife in “Chimney” calls a “contracting shade,” to represent the family’s central power and to restrict female authority. These men’s stout defense of their worthless objects appears awkward, eliciting laughter, as the uselessness is apparent to everyone else. Namely, in “Chimney,” the narrator is incapable of persuading his family members to keep the chimney. However, he pretends to be a strong man and shows off

his manly nature in a superficial way, saying “I and my chimney will never surrender” (354). He shows his undaunted spirit in an awkward way, and is proud of his own undismayed self-confidence.

However, he fails to be a stout father, since his wife looks down on him, and keeps calling him an “old man” (339) as his ideas are old and useless. However, the narrator likes to be called “old.” He says of himself, “I am sometimes crippled up as my old apple tree” (“Chimney” 336), and “Old myself, I take to oldness in things,” such as “old cheese and “old wine” (337). Therefore, in these stories, the family relationships and the narrators’ awkward elaborations elicit laughter from the readers. The father completely lacks respect here. In these two stories, age and awkwardness only serve to elicit laughter.

The narrator prefers tradition, meaning that he wants to remain helpless. He not only needs care from others, but also identifies himself with the chimney’s appearance. He depends on the huge chimney to maintain control, believing that the chimney is his own second self. He considers that to “abolish the chimney” is to extract the central part of his body; saying, “No, no, wife, I cannot abolish my backbone” (341). The narrator’s fear could be described in relation to Freud’s thesis “Totem and Taboo,” in which a totem is an object of reverence, uniting family members as one blood, one tribe, or as “descendants of a common ancestor” (Freud 103). Therefore, the clansman “seeks to emphasize his kinship with the totem by making himself resemble it” (Freud 105). In Melville’s story, the father fears that his totem, the chimney, will

be removed not by male power as in Freud's theory, but by female power in his family, and, subsequently, that its female members will assume family authority.

The narrator is no longer respected as the father of the family. His patriarchal power is diminished due to his egocentricity and the force of his wife, who hates the aristocracy and the strong patriarchy he attempts to exercise in the family. The chimney symbolizes eroding aristocracy and the father's fear of castration. The family's attitude toward the chimney and the father's castration anxiety show that traditional patriarchy or aristocratic power is no longer effective.

Not insensible of her superior energies, my wife has frequently made me propositions to take upon herself all the responsibilities of my affairs. She is desirous that, domestically, I should abdicate; that, renouncing further rule, like the venerable Charles V, I should retire into some sort of monastery. (338)

The narrator adds that "By my wife's ingenious application of the principle that certain things belong of right to female jurisdiction, I find myself, through my easy compliances, insensibly stripped by degrees of one masculine prerogative after another" (338). Although he recognizes that he cannot exist as his home's central power, he strongly insists that the chimney should remain, in order to maintain his egocentricity and oppressive nature as a father. The narrator knows his old aristocratic idea is no longer feasible, but he tries to act tough, in an awkward

way. This evokes laughter from readers, who are able to see the problems of his family as somebody else's problem.

The narrator's awkwardness stems from his ham-handed way of concealing his secret. Robert Gale notes that disgust on the part of the narrator is conceivable in Melville's real-life situation. Like Melville, the narrator of "Chimney" also exhibits symptoms of sciatica. To this point, Gale stresses that "when Melville says in 'I and My Chimney' that Hiram Scribe, the master mason, has examined the narrator's chimney, he is thought to be alluding to Holmes's examination of Melville himself" (191-92). Another critic, Michael Paul Rogin, also mentions that the "chimney is not simply a householder's interior" but "internal weakness" or "insanity," which the narrator and Melville himself hesitated to expose (232). It is true that the narrator in this story admits his own weakness, but, unlike Melville himself, the narrator exhibits his own private nature to his readers, sharing his feelings of fear and disgust with them. He admits publicly that he has a weak nature and dread, but he can manage his state of mind by bravely laughing off his fears. The narrator says his wife believes that certain family matters are under "female jurisdiction," so he goes about "his fields, a sort of lazy, happy-go-lucky, good-for-nothing, loafing, old Lear" (338). The narrator has no intention of covering up his sciatica, as critics have indicated. He says, "Wife, the sciatica takes me; be so good as to put this pipe on the mantel" (349). He does not hide his physical disorder from the members of his family, but he attempts to hide his tameness as a father, wishing to maintain his sense of superiority. The

story's humor emerges when the authoritative family man becomes horrified by female power, including that of his daughters, and his territory is about to become women's jurisdiction. The humor is not that another man owns the totem, but that female family members are about to strip him of its ownership.

The narrator, instead of maintaining this feeling, experiences fear when his "secret closet" is found to be empty, with no valuables inside. Generally, valuables and secrets should be stored inside the closet, in order for the narrator's pride to be maintained. He is afraid of disclosing its emptiness and hollowness, defects of his phallic symbol. The narrator's awkwardness and weakness are reflected by the irresponsible remarks in his narrative. He makes unclear statements that he has such a closet at home. He remains ambiguous in his speech until the end of the story. He reports that the architect, Scribe, suddenly sends a letter on "April 1st" (345) describing the existence of a hidden closet inside the chimney and asking "whether it is Christian-like knowingly to reside in a house, hidden in which a secret closet" (346). The letter is sent on "April Fool's Day," implying that the remarks on the closet may be an elaborate joke played on the narrator. However, he is afraid of its being checked by an architect. The narrator shows his own instability, suddenly losing all his stoutness, which dissolves in awkwardness. The gap between his bullish nature and bearish attitude is so great that his weakness appears not as tragic but as comical. When the protagonist becomes the narrator, he talks tough to show that he can diminish family problems by laughing off his wife's forceful attitude. However,

while playing the father's role, he pretends to be a weak, helpless old man. In other words, one protagonist has two dimensions. To elicit readers' laughter, the narrator has to perform a double role, and he defends the father to maintain his weak but comical authority in the family.

To laugh off the fears of the closet's being discovered, and to maintain his pride and sense of superiority, the narrator explains his wife's queer behaviors at home. The narrator's wife taps the wall as a physician might do to a person's chest, saying that "there is a secret closet here. Here in this very spot. Hark! How hollow!" (352) after learning of the possibility of her husband's having a secret closet. The wife's remark is similar to the attitudes of the physicians of the insurance company. The narrator says, "I have seen the physicians of life insurance companies tap a man's chest, and then incline over for the echo" (352). He feels disgusted by physicians. The wife's word "hollow" implies not only a closet-like empty space in the chimney but also her husband's emptiness and unreliability. Her heartless idea of destroying the old chimney threatens the narrator and shows her dissatisfaction with him. The wife's arrogance at home shows the tameness of the narrator, who never resists his wife with power, warning her against tapping by his commands. The narrator's autonomy as the father of the family is both tested and proved repeatedly each time the chimney faces the danger of excavation or destruction. His authority as a family father is sustained as long as the chimney remains preserved.

The narrator neither hopes to live a long life for the sake of his family nor desires it for the stability and well-being of his family. Instead, he is proud of his age and the erosion of his chimney. The narrator's attitude is not at all that of an ideal family man. According to Barbara Hobson, respectable British men in the nineteenth century took active steps to secure both themselves and their families, joining insurance schemes and making regular payments (260-61). Hobson's definition of a good father converges with the narrator's admiration of old British traditions since he finds insurance companies and physicians to be only a nuisance. The narrator experiences a feeling of pleasure when he exposes a weakness to the readers in an amusing way. The narrator admits his mental hollowness and weakness as a father, at least in his own mind, but he explains his other side as well, as the family father who plays a philosopher. A great gap opens between the father and the narrator, rendering the protagonist the hero of the comedy. He believes his weak nature is worth discussing with the audience.

The narrator's attitude may be explained by employing Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) thesis on humor. Freud explains humor in the following way:

The ego refuses to be distressed by the provocations of reality, to let itself be compelled to suffer. It insists that it cannot be affected by the traumas of the external world; it shows, in fact, that such trauma are no more than occasions for it to gain pleasure. (162)

Even if the narrator recognizes his weakness, he is able control his emotions, using laughter and humor to gain pleasure from the recognition of his own weaknesses. The narrator's attitude is explained by Freud's argument, namely, "the humorist would acquire his superiority by assuming the role of the grown-up and identifying himself to some extent with his father, and reducing the other people to being children" (163). The narrator treats his forceful wife as being only childish. He looks down on his wife, treating her as his enemy. Even so, he disregards his wife in an affectionate manner, so that readers are able to maintain a favorable impression of both the protagonist and his wife.

The narrator feels himself to be philosophically above his wife. Commercial success does not matter for the narrator. Rather, he is concerned with the abundance of philosophical knowledge and the preservation of the chimney, which is in fact the narrator's main source of pride. Hence, he sacrifices his family's health and annoys them for the sake of his pride. The narrator says, "I and my chimney have to smoke and philosophize together," producing "mighty smoke," (353) which his wife hates. As a traditional British father would actively secure his family's health and stability by joining a group health insurance, the narrator sacrifices his family's health unintentionally in order to keep his pride. As long as the chimney exists, it damages his family's health. Without recognizing this, the narrator continues to insist on the importance of the chimney and producing smoke. His attitude is regarded as self-centered and egoistic, but not as arrogant as Henry VIII. He fits neither the image of the traditional British

father nor that of the stout British man. While the British fathers of the time strongly cared for the stability and repose of the family, as an American father, the narrator pays less attention to his family's health and their state of mind.

### **III. The Narrator's Appeals for Popularity**

The narrator does not pessimistically lament his tragic situation, but he details his misery in an ironic and humorous manner. This means that the narrator is strongly conscious of his readers, caring about their impressions. He recognizes the logic of how laughter is theoretically caused and tries to produce laughter with his own logic. The narrator's logic of laughter is somewhat similar to the theory of Henri Bergson (1859-1941). According to Bergson, "degradation," which is one form of "transposition," can be a source of laughter, and "degradation" is even more comic (Bergson 81). The narrator speaks ill of his wife, but in a loving way. This is applicable to the logic of "degradation" although that notion did not exist in Melville's day. The following remarks by the narrator show how he makes fun of his wife:

But the most wonderful thing is, my wife never thinks of her end. Her youthful incredulity, as to the plain theory, and still plainer fact of death, hardly seems Christian. Advanced in years, as she knows she must be, my wife seems to think that she is to teem on, and be inexhaustible forever. She doesn't believe in old age.

At that strange promise in the plain of Marme, my old wife, unlike old Abraham's, would not have jeeringly laugh within herself. (337)

The narrator is attempting to get a laugh from his audience; he is not at all serious. The narrator's wife is said to be unchristian, although at the time this short work was written, women were expected to teach Christian morals to children and maintain morality within the family. Instead, of being a typical weak man of the time, the narrator believes that he must be a humorist in order to laugh off his family problems, drawing his readers to his side. By contrast, he verbally degrades his wife to show his affection toward her.

His old age is an important topic of humor and is stressed throughout the work. Although the narrator and his wife are almost the same age, he pretends to be much older than his wife. He needs care from his family and is satisfied with his own old age. The narrator also says, "Old myself, I take to oldness in things: for that cause mainly loving old Montaigne, and old cheese, and old wine..." (337). The narrator's image is far from that of an ideal father of the time, but still his irresponsibility does not appear malevolent or cynical.

Another example of "transposition" is discovered in the illustrations of the chimney. The narrator is proud of his chimney: "the architect of the chimney must have had the pyramid of Cheops before him" (331). Also, he calls it his "superior" and illustrates it with the image of the stones at "Gilgal," which "Joshua set up for a memorial of having passed Jordan" (333). He regards the chimney as an important historical monument, explaining that the chimney is eroded

with “blotchy symptoms akin to those in measles” (332). He degrades his chimney by himself, after showing great respect for it. His narrative, therefore, appears unreliable, as he suddenly describes the chimney as being stricken with illness, explaining the negative aspect of his superior, his old chimney. This unreliable narrative shows how the narrator recognizes the reduced value of the chimney. He knows his chimney is eroding but he still talks tough, using extraordinarily sacred imagery to describe its nature. The narrator intentionally uses “transposition” in his narrative, so that his own story sounds humorous.

Another cause of laughter, according to Bergson, is “inversion,” explained by ironical literary themes, such as when a robber is himself robbed (67-68). In “Chimney,” the narrator’s energetic wife assumes husband’s authority and tries to change the structures of the house, so that she can feel comfortable living there. However, the narrator simply resists his wife through his own inaction, laughing off her actions, reducing her to a mere child, or unchristian figure. Without knowing the narrator’s real intentions, his wife still believes in her own authoritative power within the family. Therefore, the wife who exercises seemingly authoritative power over her husband is practically controlled by the narrator.

The most remarkable scene with the logic of “a robber being robbed” is seen in a conversation between the narrator and the architect, Scribe. The narrator is almost deceived by his wife and the architect, Scribe, who insists on the presence of the “secret closet” in the house. They persuade the narrator that the closet should be gotten rid of by destroying the chimney

and the entire house along with it. The narrator, who wishes to keep the closet in the chimney as it is, stresses that the architect does not show clear evidence of the existence of the closet, and eventually, the narrator asks Scribe to write a “certificate,” (351) showing that there is no evidence of there being a secret closet there. The following lines show what Bergson calls “inversion”:

“You have made three visits to the chimney. With a businessman, time is money. Here are fifty dollars, Mr. Scribe. Nay, take it. You have earned it. Your opinion is worth it. And by the way,” as he modestly received the money—“have you any objections to give me a certificate, certifying that you, a competent surveyor, have surveyed my chimney, and found no reason to believe any unsoundness; in short, any—any secret closet in it. Would you be so kind, Mr. Scribe?” (351)

Hence, Scribe, who is plotting to deceive the narrator with his wife, is deceived by the narrator: the same logic as “robber is robbed.” Scribe is taken in by the narrator’s smooth talk, which shows that the narrator is not a mere loser but an authoritative humorist. The outsider tests the father’s authority; however, the narrator invalidates it and ridicules the one who challenges him.

The narrator derives pleasure from deceiving his opponents and eliciting laughter from his readers. He gains energy from his audience’s laughter. His chimney and the structure of his house are continually presenting topics for laughter. Therefore, laughter and humor are indispensable to prevent family disruption. The father never fights against his forceful wife and

daughters with words, partly because he admits he would lose such an argument. He believes that his chimney is an important agent, benefitting the family relationship by providing a topic, although its oldness and uselessness are annoying for the narrator's wife and daughters.

There are critics who admit the humor of the narrator together with his self-esteem, for example, Newton Arvin, who refers to the identifiable repetitions of humor in this story, saying that "the tone of surface good humor, with a suppressed understrain of deep resentment, is so naturally kept up, and the great spinal chimney, with its dark subterranean base, is so expressive a symbol of man's essential self, that the sketch would always be worth preserving from oblivion" (236). Arvin partly admits the effects of humor in this story. However, Arvin takes the narrator's anger too seriously, overlooking the narrator's well-developed intention to make his readers laugh. The narrator is irritated by his wife's efforts to destroy the chimney; however, his deep-rooted irritation, Arvin claims, is relieved by his own humorous narration, through which he expects to gain reader's understanding. Rather, the narrator accepts the importance of the argument over the chimney, as it provides a topic to tell the readers about. The narrator feels isolated from his family members owing to the conflict of opinion over the existence of the huge old chimney, but enjoys the isolation. He allows his wife to maintain her sense of superiority, knowing that she lacks philosophical knowledge and is a morally inferior being, stressing that she "hardly seems Christian" (337). He befriends his readers and draws him to his side, but individual readers cannot see whether his attempt is successful because they cannot

perceive other readers' reactions. Since audience reaction is invisible, the narration is only a monologue by the protagonist, who is proudly pretending to be a dramatic hero.

The narrator's view contradicts the traditional ideals associated with a family father, creating an extremely serious family problem. Readers can never see his economic or political autonomy within the family, and, as a result, he fails to bring comfort or spiritual stability to his family members. In this story, however, the narrator-protagonist regards his own comical character in a manner that is fittingly humorous. In fiction, this father is not at all unusual, because traditional masculinity had faded by this period of antebellum America. Weak men with anxiety over erosion of masculinity were also the norm, as Kimmel explains. Just as anxious men in general proclaimed the exploits of historical figures (Kimmel 81), the narrator of "Chimney," wishing to act tough, pretending to be a hero in a comedy, and personifying his chimney as Henry VIII, humorously disregards his persistent castration anxiety and family problems.

#### **IV. The Narrator's Awkwardness and Laughter**

The narrator not only implies the existence of a "secret closet," but also proudly shows off the structure of his house. He wants the readers to admit its value and that of his land, but his explanations are inconsistent. His statements about his own house are not at all clear and persuasive. As for the land on which his house was built, he says "Indeed, so cheap—dirt cheap"

(330) implying that there is no value for ordinary people. Considering the fact that “the pyramid of Cheops” was originally a tomb, the chimney’s symptomatic illness reminds the readers of its death.

While the house is illustrated with the image of death, the narrator himself boasts of having a “secret closet.” The narrator thinks that it is a privilege to have a secret closet, his own space, where he can enjoy himself, alone and relaxed, separated from his family. While the narrator believes that himself and his chimney are stout in nature, his wife thinks of the chimney as empty and disturbing. The wife’s image of the chimney is reflected by the image of her husband. She regards the chimney as useless as her husband, and complains of the emptiness of both. Totem worship is no longer valid for the narrator’s wife and daughters. As they have blood relationships, they form a family; however, they are becoming democratic. Therefore, they do not need what Freud calls “totem” to identify themselves as members of the clan. The wife does not want to accept that she resembles an old chimney; therefore, she neither respects the totem-like chimney nor permits her husband’s kinship with it. Whereas Arvin states that the chimney has a “dark subterranean base,” and that it is “a symbol of man’s essential self,” the wife denies its value. She feels both are hollow and have no value. The narrator, however, wishes to fill the closet with his private biographies, as the rumor or gossip of his kinsman is newsworthy to his neighbors.

The narrator stays firm on old ideas of aristocracy in England, particularly to those of the sixteenth century, the period when Henry VIII was alive, and selfish patriarchy was once the accepted norm of family life. He likes British-style aristocracy while his wife hates it and supports new American democratic families. When Henry VIII was alive, fathers were allowed to possess a secret closet at home, and they took it to be a symbol of their essential selves. According to Alan Stewart, in sixteenth-century England, small rooms known as closets appeared all over large houses but were often secreted within massive interior walls, in “false” chimneystacks, in the center of the house or in high basements, with little or no natural light. The closet itself is considered a private space, but there is a paradox in this idea. According to Stewart, “the overall sense was of privacy exhibited in public, as if one were visiting a museum of the history of private life” (Stewart 80-81). The narrator wants to make his closet a “museum of the history of private life.” He does not want it to be called “hollow,” a word that implies its emptiness. He wishes to show off his own, private value as a great man, although he himself recognizes his own emptiness.

In sixteenth-century England, valuables such as silver, tapestries, clothes, and jewels are locked in private rooms or closets, so that as few people as possible would know their whereabouts, and such valuables are kept even from his wife (Stewart 78). The narrator, who clings to old ideas of home and patriarchy, has a similar hidden closet to that of Stewart’s Englishmen. The narrator indicates the possible existence of a closet that belonged to his

kinsman, “Captain Julian Dacres, long a ship-master and merchant in the Indian trade” (346); however, the narrator describes this in such a way as if he himself had never been inside such a “secret closet.” The narrator only indicates that he might possibly have a private space at home, implying that the closet is secreted within the massive chimney. He boasts of sharing this secret space with his kinsman, Dacres, who is the center of local gossip.

Although the narrator describes Dacres as a sacred man, he is not at all sacred. Merton Sealts’ work helps interpret the meaning and the role of Dacres in this story. According to Sealts, as the bottom of the chimney is compared to the shape of the bottom of a man’s heart, “the heart of a man” is hidden in the large space at the bottom of the house (Sealts 145). Taking up *Pierre*, Sealts explains that, as both the Great Pyramid of Cheops and the narrator’s house have a structure involving a large space at their bottoms, Pierre’s father has a dark past at the bottom of his mind. In the same manner, the bottoms of the hearts of Dacres and the narrator’s are also sacred; the name “Dacres” is “the anagram for *sacred*” (Sealts 150). Sealts admits the sacredness of man’s heart; however, the narrator’s attempt to show his own sacred nature fails. Sealts ignores the fact that such an anagram is only a play on words; hence, the awkwardness of this playful emphasis is on its sacredness. The narrator rather stresses the comical aspects of his kinsman. Dacres was reportedly “heavily mortgaged” (346), having “died a bachelor” (346), meaning that he far from resembled “the Self-Made Man” in Kimmel’s definition. Dacres represents the antithesis of economic autonomy and family relations. The spelling Dacres,

therefore, sacrifices the mysteriousness and the sacredness of the anagram and of the “secret closet” itself.

By giving himself airs, in the appearance of taking over the secret or mysterious property inside the house, from the kinsman, the narrator conceals his weakness and emptiness. The narrator publicly states that the kinsman’s closet is not a mere space but “his [Dacres’] breast,” which should not be intruded on by his wife, thereby stressing on the sacristy of a man’s territory within his house.

Though standing in the heart of this house, though hitherto we have all nestled about it, unsuspecting of aught hidden within, this chimney may or may not have a secret closet. But if it have, it is my kinsman’s. To break into that wall would be to break into his [Dacres’] breast. And that wall-breaking wish of Momus I account the wish of a church-robbing gossip and knave. Yes, wife, a vile eaves-dropping varlet was Momus.” (353)

The narrator warns his wife in an amusing way, illustrating his spouse as Momus, which is the Greek God of mockery, evil-spirited blame, complaint, and stinging criticism. He does not want his wife to discover his hollowness, so he keeps her away from the closet. He does not like to be criticized by his wife, but is not seriously afraid of it. He rather takes his hatred and his wife’s Momus-like nature lightly, and elicits laughter by using his closet and his wife as a topic of humor. The narrator boasts of the dignity and authority of Dacres in public in an awkward way

for the sake of the humorous tone of the story. At the same time, the narrator portrays his wife as extremely annoying, using the example of Momus, intending to elicit laughter.

If the hollowness of the narrator's closet is exposed by his wife, the original purpose of having a closet is lost. The narrator, like a traditional family father, wishes to keep showing off that he, too, has a closet to hide his valuables, and that there is privileged privacy, but this ends in vain. The idea of destroying the chimney for the sake of ensuring the existence of the "secret closet" is, for the narrator, the destruction of his pride as a family man. The narrator says "No, no, wife, I can't abolish my backbone" (341). If the narrator's family members find an empty closet with no valuables inside the chimney, the narrator's imaginary museum of his private life will also be lost. The structure and the core of the house are illustrated as the owner's backbone or as the inside of his heart.

The narrator never gives in to the wife's heartless challenge to "abolish" his "backbone." He is always free and open with his readers, intentionally exhibiting his weakness and emptiness. A closet paradoxically exhibits someone's private life, and in this story, the closet reveals an emptiness of valuables, rather than his anxiety about his physical disorder.

There is another reason why he should maintain his house as it is. The narrator's house provides a moral teaching to the members of his family, as the centrality of the chimney impress his wife and daughters with the authority of a strong leader. In addition, the narrator himself

learns from the structure of his house that his quarrel with his wife can never be settled; yet, he knows he must get along with her. His state of mind is reflected in his house, as follows:

The consequence was, almost every room, like a philosophical system, was in itself an entry, or passage-way to other rooms, and systems of rooms—a whole suite of entries, in fact. Going through the house, you seem to be forever going somewhere, and getting nowhere. It is like losing one's self in the woods; round and round the chimney you go, and if you arrive at all, it is just where you started, and so you begin again, and again get nowhere. (340)

The narrator learns from his experience that the argument with his family will not be settled. The back-and-forth structure of this argument is reflected on the structure of the house. While the narrator proudly shows his house to the audience, stressing its philosophical value, his wife does not believe that the house has a good moral influence. She particularly hates the location of the chimney, and feels pressure from it, saying that it is “like the English aristocracy” (334-45). While the narrator prefers the English aristocracy, as is seen in his respect for Henry VIII, his wife is more democratic. She idealizes a typical democratic American family found in Tocqueville's statements. She prefers equality among family members, although she appears to take the lead of the family.

The narrator's wife and daughters have a different image of the ideal house as well. They not only hate the spiral structure of the house, they insist on conceiving of the old chimney as

a nuisance, even knowing that their father likes the structure. The narrator personifies the chimney as his mentor and his superior. The chimney is psychologically disturbing for her, while the narrator feels it to be his second self, calling it “I and My Chimney.”

The construction of the house influences the state of mind of those who live in it. The narrator thinks that the old chimney and the structure of the house are ideal models of patriarchy. The following remark by the narrator shows how he hates democracy within the family:

Then again, almost every modern fire-place has its separate flue—separate throughout, from heath to chimney-top. At least such an arrangement is deemed desirable. Does not this look egotistical, selfish? (329)

The narrator feels that the structure of the house reflects how the father exists within the family and influences the family members’ state of mind. He considers that the modern structure makes them “egotistical” and “selfish.” Hence, the narrator interprets that his wife and daughters’ demands for a “modern fire-place” and a “separate flue” should not be taken into account, because they are seeking privacy and freedom. He knows that modern fireplaces with separate flues are more convenient. However, he feels that this structure makes his family members more “selfish,” because, with the modern fireplace, family members stop “being grouped together” (329) and warm themselves here and there separately. In other words, a house without a central, large chimney will have a bad moral influence on the members of the family, making them “egotistical.”

Therefore, the wish for the “modern fire-place” reflects the democratic attitude of the members of the family, but the narrator does not accept it, stressing the importance of the older, aristocratic style. The narrator’s explanations are occasionally awkward and not at all persuasive; however, they still work to elicit laughter and sympathy. This demonstrates that eloquence is not always crucial for patriarchal authority; rather, popularity as a person is more important.

#### **V. Wordless Authority by the Narrator**

Overall, the narrator shows that there is a wordless authority that controls the family members, although his patriarchal power appears superficially weak. The structure of the house also exercises a wordless power over the residents. The narrator pretends to be a hero in a comedy. He sticks to the old British aristocratic ideas. No one in his family understands his ideals, and he seems to be alone in his family. He feels close to his chimney, calling it a philosopher friend. The narrator repeatedly personifies the chimney in order to rid himself of his loneliness and sense of isolation. However, his loneliness does not seem unhappy but comical and amusing. The narrator pretends to be a humorist and a philosopher, showing his spiritual toughness. He shows the readers how easily he can deal with his family problems. By doing so, the narrator controls his feelings of isolation.

The narrator recognizes that his patriarchal authority is no longer effective; however, he explores other ways to make himself look strong. He portrays the chimney as a historical monument, personifying it with the historical figure of the arrogant king Henry VIII, in order to make his readers laugh. He repeatedly uses extraordinary images and examples to prop up his eroding chimney. Hence, the readers can recognize that the narrator is merely talking tough to maintain face.

Melville illustrates an American father of a family, using an implicit comparison with traditional British aristocracy. The narrator strongly desires to be treated as a father in an aristocratic family, although he knows his family members prefer an extremely democratic family system. He struggles between the old aristocracy and the new American democracy, but his struggle is not at all tragic. He gives up on reality and abandons the possibility that he will win his wife over on the chimney by quarreling with words. However, he gains energy by laughing off serious family problems. His chimney and the structure of his house continually provide topics for laughter and humor.

Laughter and humor are both indispensable for the illustration of typical American fathers of the time. The narrator's wordless protest is an ideal model of a spiritually strong father, whose traditional patriarchy is about to erode. Melville illustrates the reality of the American family, in order to show how an ideal American family man should behave optimistically. While Pierre becomes a self-destructive breadwinner, the family man narrator of "Chimney" shows how he

can control his emotion, and he prevents his own self-destruction for the sake of stable family relationships. This short story is a challenge by Melville of the original American canon in the literary world in antebellum America. He distinguishes the image of British aristocracy and American democracy using the examples of the structure of a chimney and of a family relationship. To explain the differences and to provide authoritative power to the protagonist, Melville used laughter and not persuasive words at literal levels. The narrator also demonstrates that a father's success in market economy and his wealth are not always necessary to maintain family relationships.

## **Chapter 2: Deviations from Womanhood: Isolated Women's Influence on**

### **Men**

#### **2-1) Patriarchy in the Factory and the "Pale" and "Blank" Factory Girls in Melville's "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids"**

##### **I. Melville's Factory Girls in the Diptych**

In "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" ("Paradise"), which is one of Melville's diptychs, two working environments are portrayed. One is the bachelor lawyers who do very little work, but enjoy gregarious meals together in London. The other is the female workers who are employed by a paper making factory in England. A bachelor narrator visits both places of work and makes comments on the irony of both. After seeing the lawyers at the Temple, he remarks, "Sir, this is the very Paradise of Bachelors!" (210). Also, at the end of the second section, when leaving the factory where the girls work in New England, the narrator praises it, saying, "Yours is a most wonderful factory" (222). Noted political scientist Michael Paul Rogin takes the narrator's comments about both working environments positively and offers the interpretation that the segregation of male and female workers was a positive economic trend and further characterizes the lawyers' position in this story as "middle-class professionalism," although, at the time when this short story was written, lawyers in England were no longer the professionals that Rogin implies. In the same manner,

Frances B. Cogan has analyzed American women's labor issues in the mid-nineteenth century and views the working conditions of factory girls more favorably. Cogan's research on American factory girls shows that they were more privileged than schoolteachers, who enjoyed far less employment stability. Also, working shifts allowed women to be freed from domestic duties at home (228). At the time Melville's story was published, female factory workers in America were generally presumed to enjoy independent lifestyles with stable working conditions and good wages. Therefore, Rogin's interpretation is more acceptable for readers of the time. However, if we take a closer look at the countenance of Melville's factory girls, they do not appear to be satisfied with their jobs whatsoever. Similarly, both Tom Allen and Wiegman express relatively positive attitudes toward female labor. Allen admits that female power, as demonstrated in the story, is so considerable as to remake the lawyer bachelors into "blank" people (67). Allen asserts that the impressive but "blank" and "pale" female labor force does not signify women's weakness but rather expresses the vitality necessary for the mechanical age and for historical change (67). In addition, he asserts that the work discipline of the factory made women of the time more capable and well educated (51). Wiegman states that "one of the stunning achievements of American patriarchal organization is its use of gendered ideology of the male bond to negotiate differences among men—the mythos of men together providing an efficient point of access for cultural hegemony to construct and maintain its power" (750). Although Allen and Wiegman assert the benefits of

such factory work for women, and describe how both male and female spheres turn into “the privileged space of a masculine paradise” (Wiegman 744), it should be stressed that the narrator would not share such optimistic views. Therefore, Melville’s factory labor system is not at all very optimistic. As these critics indicate, Melville was not writing about factory labor in such a way, partly because the author’s interest was directed towards the individuals themselves and the feelings of the laborers about their work in the factory, rather than the factory system itself. What the author portrays is that the miscommunication between the workers and a male employer who controls the factory is a means to show how the failed patriarchal system worked for the benefit of the employer.

In the story, Melville’s factory girls do not speak at all, but paradoxically, they convey a great deal through the “pale” (214), “sheet-white” (218) faces that they have in common. Their faces indicate sickness and reflect the poor working conditions in the factory. The narrator’s reports on the girls are also filled with irony and paradox. He does not directly comment upon the truth of the labor conditions that exist in both New England and England. However, his paradoxical narrative and the factory girls’ silence reflect the honest truth about female labor conditions and the failure of the factory system of the time.

In this section, I will show that the lawyers’ paradise is about to turn into a “Tartarus” because of the insensitivity of the lawyers, who unintentionally, but insensibly, place the silent girls in unhealthy conditions and thus drive them to a premature death. However, this fact is

not explained clearly. Instead, only devastating facts or scenes are presented in the story. As with the “Tartarus” that is created by the girls’ silence and the lawyers’ insensitivity, other characters lacking social power who appear in Melville’s diptychs also suggest that female workers’ devastating conditions are caused by the insensitivity of the socially privileged. Silence leads to misunderstanding on the part of readers and critics, and to the possibility of multiple interpretations. Hence, this section argues how negative economic trends and the patriarchal factory system are portrayed in Melville’s works to highlight the extent to which manliness outside the family sphere manifested itself in nineteenth-century America in general.

Also, by comparing Melville’s other diptychs, such as “Poor Man’s Pudding and Rich Man’s Crumbs” (“Poor Man’s Pudding”) and “The Two Temples” (“Temples”), I analyze the insensitivity of male characters who fail to save women in trouble. Melville repeatedly portrayed insensitive male characters who treated the socially disadvantaged inadequately. In all three diptychs, pale silent women commonly appear, and the male characters’ insensitivity is described by each narrator through paradox and irony. Through the narrators’ account, then, the silent women gain a voice for expressing their difficult situation and resentment against male authority.

In the first part of “Paradise,” the narrator visits the Temple in London, which “LIES not far from Temple Bar” (202), where the heads of criminals were displayed in medieval times,

and he joins the lawyers' dinner party. There, he observes the lawyer bachelors' indulgent lifestyle, which is extravagant and idle. In spite of the "grim" (211) atmosphere, their residence is called a "delightful spot" (205), similar to "a honey-comb" (205). The narrator's words not only show his envy of the lawyers and of the "Paradise," but also include a denunciation of them for not committing themselves to the establishment of the male-oriented economic system. The narrator praises the lawyers' lifestyle in an unnatural way in order to hide his obvious disapproval.

In contrast, while the narrator criticizes the lawyers implicitly, he shows great sympathy for the factory girls in the second half of the diptych. In "Paradise," only the narrator perceives the girls' physical weakness. He finds virtue in their "pale virginity" ("Paradise" 222) while factory supervisor sees them as merely a useful workforce, calling them "girls" regardless of ages. Also, the sensitive narrator feels as if he were Actæon in Greek mythology, who is bitten to death by his own dog.

Soon a horrible, tearing pain caught at my reviving cheeks. Two gaunt  
blood-hounds, one on each side, seemed mumbling them. I seemed Actæon.

(216)

The narrator also declares that "some pained homage to their pale virginity made me involuntarily bow" (222). He refers to their harsh working conditions and their "pale" (214) faces. The workers' miserable situation is expressed in terms of a comparison with the

environment in the factory, which evokes the image of death. For example, the factory building is similar to a “sepulture” (211), which reminds the narrator of the “dark and grimy Temple Bar” (215). Just as the lawyers in the Temple wear a white “snowy surcoat,” and have a “grim ghost look” (203), the image of the sphere the girls inhabit is also associated with death. The narrator employs the image of death and darkness to represent both places indicating that lawyers’ joy is not long lasting and the male-oriented market economy would bring about the death of laborers and the destruction of the entire economic system. Whiteness is also emphasized through words such as “whited sepulture,” and “snowy” (211). Thus, the narrator implies the similarity between these two different social and economic spheres using images representing barrenness.

Tartarus is a creation of Cupid, a boy supervisor who is an immature man. He is insensitive, careless, and negating towards the illness and eventual death of the girls in the factory. What appears to a well-organized factory system is about to collapse by Cupid’s ill-management. Cupid takes for granted that the factory girls should remain single, even remarking, “We want none but steady workers,” (222) a comment which fills the narrator with “the strange emotion” (222).

In contrast to the narrator’s denunciation of and skeptical attitude toward the factory system, some critics mention that women’s working sphere in New England at the time may also have had the possibility of becoming a paradise for men in the same way that the Temple

is a pleasant paradise for its bachelor lawyers. Robyn Wiegman, for example, states that the “Tartarus,” or the women’s sphere, represents “the colonized space of masculine desire” (743), and that women are by tradition well trained for the expansion of a masculine economy (743). As Wiegman indicates, it seems beyond dispute that the girls are supervised and well trained by their supervisor—the boy Cupid—to produce high-quality foolscap. However, demand for this product of the girls’s labor has fallen very low. The “seedsman” (211) narrator reports that “the demand for paper at my place became so great, that the expenditure soon amounted to a most important item in the general account” (211), and he stresses his need for paper. He visits the girls’ mill in order to obtain paper for his envelopes; however, the paper becomes unimportant to him. Instead of negotiating the price of paper for the benefit of his business, he absorbs himself in observing the factory. Although he buys the girls paper, he is only temporarily a consumer, demonstrating that even the most sensitive man in the story could not save the girls from their harsh working conditions. Thus, silently and implicitly, Melville shows that a consumer in one sphere can contribute to the wages of workers in another sphere, and that this was one of the economic systems of the day. Once this cycle gets started, no one can stop it.

The narrator’s business as “seedsman” is also ironic. “Seedsman” has an implication of sexual desire or fertility, but even after he sees the girls he only bows to “their pale virginity” and feels no sexual attraction. Segregation in the working sphere discouraged both men and

women from having sexual desires. Therefore, instead of childbearing, both men and women engage in the mass production of commodities, and they become consumers of either products or someone else's labor.

The lawyers in the story do not become consumers of the girls' paper, nor do they save the girls from their harsh working conditions. Instead, they appear to be outside of this economic system because instead of working industriously and using paper for their legal documents, they would rather enjoy eating and drinking for their own pleasure. The selfishness of these men is portrayed as a characteristic of manliness. The disappointed narrator writes that "the sworn knights-bachelors grew to be but hypocrites and rakes" (203) to indicate their uselessness. The profession eventually became more businesslike, and at the beginning of the story, the narrator describes how the lawyers now give counsel "for fee" (204). They may begin to earn money by counseling clients and producing legal documents so that eventually they can become rich enough to indulge in sumptuous meals.

Lawyers' lack of professionalism and poor sense of economy are obvious in this fictional work. Melville's image of lawyers fits with the prevailing image of lawyers at that time. Conversely, Cupid strives to establish an efficient factory system in order to contribute to the factory's profits and offer job security to the factory girls. He supervises the girls and exercises a dominant and paternal power over them. Unlike Cupid, however, the lawyers

neither sympathize with the girls nor provide jobs to them by consuming the paper they produce.

In the first half of this story, the lawyers, all of whom are bachelors, use their position as lawyers to advantage by offering other bachelors in London the opportunity to lodge in a “shady tent” (205) and share the joy of being single together. The lifestyle of the bachelors is completely different from that suffered by the factory girls in New England, who are forced to work in terrible conditions for their wages. The Temple lawyers are never like the “knights-bachelors” (205) of the past who took clients’ problems to heart, as seen in the comment of the narrator who, when he observes the Temple lawyers for the first time, ironically declares: “...at last the monk’s austerity relaxed to wassailing, and the sworn knights-bachelors grew to be but hypocrites and rakes” (205). In this way, the lawyers are condemned for having dragged themselves down from their former, admirable knight-like position.

London is a common setting for each of Melville’s diptychs. For American readers at the time, London was regarded as the model of an advanced and industrialized city, as seen in the remark by Melville’s narrator: “sensible American should learn from every sensible Englishman” (206 “Paradise”), but Melville’s diptychs commonly reveal negative aspects of London, thus showing his rejection of the city as a model. Therefore, the reader should not take the narrator’s praise for and admiration of England at face value because his way of

speaking is actually paradoxical and ironical. The narrator seems to emphasize the idea that industrialization cannot be separated from the problems of poverty, moral crises, or people's miserable lifestyle. Particularly in "Paradise," the women's silent but angry pale faces join together, as in a labor strike, especially for sensitive readers. Silent factory girls, therefore, represent potential labor problems in America in an ironic way.

## **II. The Patriarchal Factory System and a Common Disease of the Time**

Factory girls in the latter half of the diptych show "blank" (215), emotionless faces, and only the narrator notices the crisis of the girls' health and their poor working conditions. The environment of the factory also evokes the image of madness because one area is known as the "Mad Maid's Bellows-pipe" (210). The girls' physical appearance and the region of the "Woedolor Mountain" (210) correspond with each other. Richard Chase acknowledges that the story is adequately projected into the landscape to give the reader a clear and complete sense of art (162). The landscape represented by "Blood River" (211) stirs up the images of the girls in agony, disease, and death. Therefore, the landscape itself is not simply a form of art for admiration, but it could be a warning of industrialization or a wordless message from nature. Although Chase does not refer to the precise geography of the mountain and the colors of the river, every feature of the mountain area must be carefully observed in order to discover implicit reflections of the girls' agony.

The river close to the factory, for example, is described as a “strange-colored,” and it is called “Blood River” (211). The contrast between the girls’ paleness and the redness of the river suggests the symptoms of tuberculosis. The narrator is shocked by the color of “Blood River” and says to Cupid that “it only struck me as so strange that red waters should turn out chee—paper, I mean” (217). The narrator almost lets slip the word “cheek,” but stops himself before articulating the word. This verbal lapse indicates that the narrator probably realizes that “consumption has a long history of being understood as a disease of extreme contrasts: white pallor and red flush” (Hutcheon 36), although Cupid is ignorant of this connection. The narrator doubts, however, that the girls are suffering from tuberculosis, which was extremely contagious in the mid-nineteenth century. Therefore, their whiteness is associated with fatal illness and death. It is possible that this illness could have the result of removing the girls from their workplace. Thus it can be said that this scene implicitly suggests the possibility that the girls might be ill.

The landscape around the factory shows the disgusting nature of the disease. The landscape is used as a means of portraying the suffering of women from tuberculosis, devoid of sexual desire or passion. According to Susan Sontag, “TB had already acquired the association of being romantic by the mid eighteenth century” (27), and tuberculosis has an image of the “diseased” love of a passion that “consumes” (21). Sontag adds that by the nineteenth century, the disease was generally considered “attractive” (29) because the patients

died young, tuberculosis makes “romantic personality” (31). In this story, what is “consumed” is only the factory girls’ labor, and the energy of the girls are not consumed for romantic passions. Also, the disease of “consumption,” another name of TB, indicates to the reader that the girls’ labor has also been “consumed” for the benefit of the economic system.

Furthermore, the factory girls’ personalities are suppressed, the narrator feels, as he observes how “at rows of blank-looking counters sat rows of blank-looking girls, with blank, white folders in their blank hands, all blankly folding blank paper” (215). The narrator sympathizes with one factory girl, indicating that she has “a face pale with work and blue with cold” (214). White paper and the girls’ countenances blend gradually into each other as if the fatal consumption is transmitted from person to person. Also, the narrator’s view of the girls’ working conditions is somewhat similar to factory conditions generally in London in the mid-nineteenth century, which the narrator sympathizes with one factory girl, indicating that she has “a face pale with work, and blue with cold” (214). Elaine Freedgood describes how sometimes London factory workers of the time died as a result of asphyxiation because workrooms were poorly ventilated (184). Also, Freedgood observes that not only did many workers miss their meals and were deprived of sleep, but they were also unable to breathe altogether due to unventilated rooms filled with cotton dust. Some workers urinated on themselves because they were only permitted to leave the factory at designated times (184). In other words, it was not just factory girls in New England, but it was also factory workers in

London who faced similar depraved working conditions. The lawyers of the story were unable to comprehend the underprivileged status of the girls, but, ironically, they are too much indulged by their freewheeling bachelor life that they would never really know what is happening in the female working sphere. This makes them additionally insensitive and ignorant of the social problems of the time.

Just as factory work in London makes workers ill, Melville's factory system proves harmful to the girls' health. When the narrator coughs in the rag room, he wonders why the girls "don't cough" (217). Coughing is one of the symptoms of tuberculosis, so he imagines that the girls may cough in the factory. Thoughtlessly, though, Cupid says they do not cough because they "are used to" it (217), but his remark does not hold up in comparison with the reality of the girls' actual physical strength. He cannot understand the meaning of the narrator's searching questions, which imply the girls may be suffering from an illness. Unfortunately, whatever the narrator asks, Cupid cannot answer to the point because he would not notice even if the girls were sacrificing their health for their work. Hence, while the narrator attempts to see the true aspects of the girls' labor situation, Cupid fails to direct his attention to the underlying problems in the factory.

In the story, the narrator places emphasis on the negative side of female labor in New England and describes aspects of the bachelors' lives in England by drawing a parallel. Although Melville seems to have created two distinctly different spheres in this story, there

are also similarities between them. Only the narrator identifies the similarities, especially the common negative aspects, between the two spheres. The narrator, who is familiar with both England and New England, has an ironic view of the bachelors' indulgent lifestyle, and as we have seen, praises it as the "very Paradise of Bachelors" (210). His word "very" is filled with irony because he has carefully observed the negative side of the bachelors' lifestyle.

The narrator's careful observation enables him to find a sick bachelor in the Temple. He is called an "invalid" (208) bachelor who has spent "three long, weary weeks" (208-09) in bed. However, at the Temple, there is no female nurse to take care of him. In the second half of the story, the guide Cupid tells the narrator that one female worker used to be a nurse. Cupid knows that a nurse is not paid well and he responds with "the business is poor in these parts, and she's left it" (220). The nurse chooses to work in a mill at the cost of her health. Ironically, supply and demand do not match in the diptych. The girls produce paper, but there is no demand for it, no one to satisfy their need. At the Temple, a bachelor requires nursing, but there is no one to take care of him—a parallel need that is not satisfied. What is still more ironic, the nurse has no voice with which to warn other girls of the health conditions in the money-making factory. The narrator's exclamation: "Oh! Paradise of Bachelors and oh! Tartarus of Maids!," at the end of the second story shows his despair. The girls place less importance on managing their own health but are more interested in making money. Even the

bachelors cannot manage their own health. Hence, the male and female spheres cannot be completely separated from each other, because both of them share common negative aspects.

Another negative aspect they have in common can be found in the same-sex friendships that dominate in each sphere. There is a bond between the bachelors, who enjoy their pleasant dining time together. A similar bond can be found between the factory girls and is expressed in their faces. Their shared expression reveals their common feelings and the symptoms of their illness. In both spheres, certain kinds of same-sex bonds are based on shared experience. Factory women's bond does not work to establish one stable economy since they are forced to work while suffering from TB and facing death. In the same manner, lawyers in New England are not doing productive work, only enjoying their feast. Also, the lawyers are not the consumers of papers, since in the story, they never see or write legal documents. These two homosocial bonds make the economy and the factory system weak and unproductive.

Unlike the patriarchal factory system, the bachelors' sphere is not controlled by a male leader, but instead is based on their desire simply to stay single. In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick categorizes this type of desire as "male homosocial desire," which is defined as "social bonds between persons of the same sex" (1). The bachelors in this story seem to live on their own terms, enjoying extravagant food and drink and the mutual company of male friends. Sedgwick's study mainly focuses on the novel between the mid-eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century; therefore, her research into

male friendship can be applied to an interpretation of the bachelors' lives in this story. The bachelors' desires to have a "shady tent" to enjoy their leisure time can be regarded as one example of "male homosocial desire." According to Sedgwick, there is the "potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual" (1). This is especially true with Melville's bachelors because they are not homoerotic, but they maintain good relations in order to enjoy their feasts. According to Vincent J. Bertolini, bachelorhood is a transitional state, and the bachelor is "precisely he who must fend off his association with the socially abject sexualities—the self-abuser, whoremonger, or sodomite—as well as he who struggles to define himself in imaginative relation to what he is not yet—a lover, husband, and a father" (21). As Kimmel and Rotundo indicate, a man who fails to establish economic or political autonomy cannot be defined as a "Self-Made Man" and is instead regarded as an immature boy. Hence, the bachelors are not yet mature enough to sympathize with others and to feel a responsibility for establishing a stable economy by themselves. The bachelors' bond is so harmful, in fact, that it interferes with the formation of a family and the creation of a stable social or economic structure.

Robert K. Martin describes the relationship between the lawyers' life and the factory system in his *Hero, Captain, and Stranger* as "the fundamental error of a capital/labor relationship," admitting that there is no harmony between the working class and so-called middle-class professionals. Martin adds that by "de-eroticizing their homosexual selves, the

bachelors simultaneously lose the possibility of establishing a relationship with women on a basis of equality” (Martin 106). Although Martin refers only to the relationship between the two spheres, the error that he refers to is also expressed in the male/female relationships within the factory in Tartarus.

The narrator of “Paradise” recognizes the unhealthy “blank-looking girls” (215) silently insist that their working environment is created by a ruthless masculine economy. The narrator’s cheeks also become “whitish” (222) after he spends some time with these paper-like, white, blank-looking girls. Cupid says it is a “bad sign” (222) for the narrator, but Cupid does not notice that all the girls show what he refers to as a “bad sign” on their faces. The signs that are already recognizable on the girls’ faces can be interpreted as the symptoms of a contagious disease. The sensitive narrator is not only influenced by the girls’ silent power but also possibly infected by the same illness that afflicts them. Their silent resistance is strong enough to make the narrator sick and weak, and the girls’ complete silence is regarded as another demonstration of the bonds of friendship between female laborers. These bonds are often powerful enough to weaken male authority.

Sedgwick says women began to engage in “the relatively continuous relation of female homosocial and homosexual bonds” in the twentieth century (5). However, this is not the case in the twentieth century but applicable to nineteenth-century America. Melville’s women already possess a silent homosocial bond, and their bond is articulated through their powerful

and eloquent silence. Their silence can be interpreted as the inexplicable agony they experience in their factory labor. The differences lie in the outspokenness of women between the twentieth and nineteenth centuries. The factory girls would not speak out about the agony they endured and what was on their minds. The sensitive narrator sympathizes with the girls and understands their silent message, but the story's other insensitive characters cannot understand the meaning behind the girls' silence.

In "Paradise," the narrator's "strange emotion" and the sympathy shown to the girls come from his acceptance of weak male authority. His pride as a male is offended as he recalls the selfish bachelors and compares their behavior to the thoughtlessly innocent Cupid. The narrator also witnesses the factory girls' silent anger and describes women's unity and their wrath as follows:

Yes, murmured I to myself; I see it now; turned outward; and each erected sword is so borne, edge-outward before each girl. If my reading fails me not, just so, of old, condemned state-prisoners went from the hall of judgment to their doom: an officer before, bearing a sword, its edge turned outward, in significance of their fatal sentence. So, through consumptive pallors of this blank raggy life, go these white girls to death. (218)

"Consumptive pallors" and the "blank raggy life" are brought to the girls from an external place where the "edge" is directed.

The factory girls form a social group to protest against their masters. According to Carole Turbin, at this time, women's labor activism differed from men's, with women's labor unions being much more militant than those of men (58). In particular, widows and female heads of household were more active in labor protests (59). In addition, widows and unmarried women were more independent of male authority, and so, instead of depending on others for their well-being, they had others who depended on them (60). Another critic, Judith A. Ranta, also asserts that when factory girls strike against the labor system, male pride is offended because they follow their female leaders, not their male supervisors (237). Therefore, the negative dimensions of female labor are reflected in this work. The "edge of the sword" which is "turned outward" can be interpreted as the unified anger of the women directed towards the lawyers or the supervisors who remorselessly exercise power over the girls. Although the factory offers an employment opportunity for the girls, the work itself is brutal. The very work that provides a livelihood of sorts seems primed to take their lives.

As a silent reprisal for being forced to endure a "blank raggy life," the girls transform the bachelors' traces of life (their discarded clothing) into blank paper. The bachelors dispatch materials to the girls' sphere, and with these materials, the girls produce paper. Although these two spheres seem to be completely different and unrelated, they are connected to each other through the materials and the products. The distribution system is materially well established in this story, yet the bachelors and the girls are spiritually separated.

Well-established factory systems were a kind of charitable option for the working class because their stable economy offered factory girls the possibility of regular wages and good health. However, in “Paradise,” the factory system itself is not functioning well, so the narrator’s words: “Yours is a most wonderful factory” (222), should not be taken literally because the system does not offer the women secure, long-term employment. Rather, it brings about a fatal illness that leads to their eventual death.

### **III. The Vicious Cycle of the Underprivileged and the Insensitivity of Male Characters**

The girls can neither find spouses nor enjoy their own leisure even when they receive their wages from the factory. As Kathy Peiss indicates, leisure activities for American working-class women were largely nonexistent, while working-class men had the social freedom and status to pursue leisure activities in public places not available to women (99). Some of the charities or systems of care and support for the underprivileged in Melville’s works such as the ones in “Bartleby” “Poor Man’s Pudding” and “Temples” are inadequate, and this inadequacy stems from the ignorance of the socially privileged about their social inferiors.

Graham Thompson’s research into the paper-making industry shows that the mill at which Melville’s girls work produces high-quality foolscap. In the work, foolscap is described by Cupid as “being in chief demand, we turn out foolscap most” (220). According to

Thompson, in a real life setting, the foolscap is considered to be fine paper because the factory is running its paper-making machine relatively slowly (512). For fine-quality paper, a slow pace of production is indispensable (512). In the story, the narrator is “amazed at the elongation, interminable convolutions, and deliberate slowness of the machine” (“Paradise” 219). The narrator relates that the paper is made for “sermons, lawyers’ briefs, physicians’ prescriptions, love-letters, marriage certificates, bills of divorce, registers of birth, death-warrants, and so on” (220). Thompson stresses that superior paper of this type was not sold for the general purpose of printing books and newspapers, for which demand was the highest (512). However, the demand for lower-quality paper was great in the mid-nineteenth century (512), and this meant that Melville’s paper mill, by concentrating on high quality, could not make as much money as other mills that produced low-quality paper. Although Thompson does not discuss further why Melville’s story focuses on fine-quality rather than low-quality paper as a theme, it can be said that fine-quality paper in the story is used to demonstrate the absence of consumers and the uselessness of the girls’ labor.

If factory work were being proposed as a positive, efficient labor system in this story, there would presumably be a number of consumers willing to pay for the product of the girls’ labor. However, no one does so. The story’s characters are all single, and both the bachelor lawyers and the unmarried girls lose the opportunity to meet a potential spouse. The paper for “love-letters” (220) and “marriage certificates” (220) is therefore quite useless, and there is no

real need to write out “bills of divorce” (220) or “registers of births” (220). The very nature of the male/female relationships in this fictional work makes it impossible for anyone to consume the paper from the girls’ mill.

As the demand for high-quality paper decreases, the employment opportunities for Melville’s factory girls decrease, and with this, a vicious cycle is created. In Melville’s diptychs, the rich and the poor are contrasted, but the rich male leaders commonly fail to give adequate charity to the poor because of the rich men’s “strange innocence” (218) and ruthlessness. The narrator again uses the word “strange” in order to point up the inexplicable nature of Cupid.

The image of Cupid in “Paradise” is different from the image of a son of Venus, or a God of Love. According to Theresa Tinkle, medieval Cupid, a son of Venus, “epitomizes an ardent, inexperienced, and mutable love that may imply an aristocratic milieu” (85). In her argument, Cupid is an inexperienced lover and suffers from ignorance and reveals the shame of love (85). Tinkle notes that while Venus epitomizes the female libido eliciting a rigorous suspicion of sexuality, Cupid evokes the bond between love and sexuality. However, unlike the old medieval interpretation of Cupid, Melville’s Cupid never evokes such a bond. The only bond he possibly evokes is the silent bond between women who do the same mechanical job under harsh working conditions.

Melville offers an alternative interpretation of Cupid's "ignorance" and his "shame of love." Cupid's original characteristic is turned into his indifference to love and sexuality. Therefore, the confused narrator can find no better word than "strange" to describe Cupid's nature, and yet, the word "strange" is still an ambiguous term to use in the circumstances.

More tragical and more inscrutably mysterious than any mystic sight, human or machine, throughout the factory, was the strange innocence of cruel-heartedness in this usage-hardened boy. (218)

Cupid is innocent, but with his intelligence and wit, he dodges the narrator's questions. It seems that he intentionally determines not to sympathize with the working-class girls so that he can effectively use the girls' labor to make money.

In the same manner, "Poor Man's Pudding" and "Temples" describe the innocence of the socially privileged and their inappropriate charities to exemplify the moral crises in England and New England. In "Poor Man's Pudding," a married woman named Martha can only afford poor meals, which the narrator describes with disgust. However, Blandmour, the poet in "Poor Man's Pudding" recommends that the narrator try a "Poor Man's Pudding" (167), stressing that pudding for the rich and pudding for the poor are equally tasty. Blandmour suggests that "if after this eating, you do not say that a 'Poor Man's Pudding' is as relishable as a rich man's, I will give up the point altogether" (167). After trying the pudding at Martha's place, the narrator says to himself, "bitter and mouldy is the 'Poor Man's Pudding,' groaned I to myself,

half choked with but one little mouthful of it, which would hardly go down” (172). The narrator neither approves of Blandmour’s positive opinion about the pudding nor corrects his rigid ideas about the poor.

Blandmour also believes that nature is “beneficent,” as much as Martha is “considerate in her charities” (165), so he believes “snow is white as wool, but warm, too, as wool” (166). These words reflect Blandmour’s “strange innocence” and thoughtlessness, which is similar to Cupid’s nature. The narrator is equally insensitive at first. For example, in front of Martha, he comments that what she serves is a “Poor Man’s Pudding.” Instead of protesting strongly against his remark, Martha calmly replies that her pudding is not “the Poor Man’s Pudding.” She continues to treat the narrator kindly, without any words of protest. The narrator stresses that Martha is “silent” (169), and this silence reminds the narrator of his thoughtless deeds and his boyish innocence, which is similar to the way Cupid behaves in “Paradise.”

In the second half of the diptych, the narrator appears in London, and there he sees what his host calls a “noble charity” (“Poor Man’s Pudding” 176). The narrator witnesses a “pale girl” (“Poor Man’s Pudding” 176) snatching leftover pastry that the emperor of Russia left at a feast the previous night. “Pale” girls appear several times in Melville’s diptychs, symbolizing their impoverished conditions. After learning where the pastry comes from, the narrator protests against what the host calls “noble charity”:

But not three times every day, my friend. And do you really think that jellies are the best sort of relief you can furnish to beggars? Would not plain beef and bread, with something to do, and be paid for, be better?

(“Poor Man’s Pudding” 177)

The narrator thinks that temporary charity is not true charity because it does not encourage the poor to be independent. Instead, he believes that offering them a stable job so that they can make a living by themselves is true charity and proper treatment. In a word, the narrators in “Paradise” and “Poor Man’s Pudding” both show their denunciation of temporary assistance for the socially disadvantaged. However, both of them do nothing to save these people. They remain observers and just note the poverty of the characters. Indeed, the work offered to the factory girls in their “Tartarus” might well become temporary assistance for them if the economic outlook for the factory does not improve. The host in “Poor Man’s Pudding” expects the narrator to boast that he has “witnessed the greatest of all England’s noble charities” when he gets back to America, while the narrator thinks it was a disaster and he was “saved” from what they call the “noble charities of London” (“Poor Man’s Pudding” 178). The narrator sees only a temporary act of charity, which turns into people’s distasteful search for sustenance, or a disastrous competition.

Another example of temporary charity is shown in “Temples.” In the second part of this story, the narrator describes himself as “a stranger in London on Saturday night,” and a man

“without a copper” (158). In this story, the narrator appears as a protagonist who does not accept his weaknesses and poverty negatively but instead objectively reports it. He is the one who needs charity, even if it is only temporary. He himself declares that “I had needed charity, but never had asked it, and certainly never, ere this blessed night, had been offered it,” “blankly and mechanically” (161). These words recall the faces of the factory girls, and their mechanized factory in the second part of “Paradise.”

When he is looking for “some inn-like chapel” (159) to take a rest, he acquires a ticket for the theater. He calls the theater the “Temple,” and it seems to be an example to him of more appropriate charity, although an example of temporary assistance. The narrator is saved for a moment in this “Second Temple” (164) in contrast to his rejection in “the First Temple” (164), a real Gothic temple in the United States, his home country. The irony of the story lies in the fact that charity was not provided in a religious place but rather in the theater where people enjoy a fictitious world of entertainment. The charity the narrator finds in London is given by someone temporarily through a fictitious world. It is only a brief moment in which he is saved, but it clearly shows that what he was offered does not ensure longer-lasting or deeper satisfaction. This is only a theater, not a real church, where he can take a rest. Ironically, the place in which he does come to enjoy charity is a place of fiction, not a place of religious teachings about the salvation of the poor. The narrator in “Paradise” buys paper from the girls’ factory, but his small purchase does not save them from their harsh working

conditions, although it may contribute to part of their wages temporarily. Hence, long-term charity and adequate provision for the socially disadvantaged are concepts that do not exist in Melville's diptychs. In his work, Melville stresses that the failure of charity is brought about by the male authorities.

#### **IV. Between Insensitive Men and Silent Women**

Overall, all the narrators' reports in the diptychs are ironic and paradoxical. This paradoxical narrative enables the silent characters in the story to have a voice of protest. The paradox also arouses readers' sympathy with silent characters who exist in conditions without privilege. Although the socially disadvantaged, pale women do not have words to warn the male authorities, they have the power to influence the sensitive narrator in "Paradise" to change his views on factory labor. Thus, the narrator creates an element of virtue from the labor of the weak girls. Other than that, he can do nothing else except for buying some paper from their mill.

The narrators in Melville's diptychs play the role of filling the gap between the two sides. Although the narrators do not identify what causes the disparity in perceptions, their paradoxical reports suggest the causes of labor problems and the immorality that bring inappropriate forms of charitable relief.

Hence, silence and paradox in this story play an essential role in conveying the voice of people in weak positions, such as the silent women in Melville's diptychs. These two elements are indispensable in order to understand the unexpressed feelings of weak and disadvantaged working girls and impoverished people in general. To return briefly to the first point discussed at the beginning of this section, the narrator's words "Sir, this is the very Paradise of Bachelors!" and "Yours is a most wonderful factory," are paradoxical and filled with irony for the guide Cupid, who cheerfully and proudly introduces the spheres with which they are familiar. The statements can be interpreted as resignation in the narrator's voice because he utters those words after noticing that the "paradise" is not a real paradise and that the factory system itself is a problematic system established by immature men, including boy-like bachelor lawyers. Cupid is not mature enough to exercise male authority over the patriarchal factory system. His unplanned management and appetite for consumption only leads the girls to death, which is portrayed as a failed example of male authority.

Due to the lack of consumers for the girls' paper, the distribution system in this story might cease functioning in the future. The reason for this is because the factory supervisor fails to design a functioning logistics system. The insensitive male characters in this story cannot perceive this failing distribution system, and their thoughtlessness is explained implicitly in the story. The silence of the factory girls and what is implied in the narration has

caused misunderstandings among readers and has increased the multiplicity of interpretations about the factory work itself.

Melville's factory reflects the male supervisors' inability to manage their own factory well. The narrator in "Paradise" speaks for the "pale" and "blank" factory girls, and protests against the gender-segregated labor system that makes their male counterparts blind and insensitive. However, the narrator also cannot do anything to save the girls' harsh working conditions. He is only an observer of the female working sphere. Thus, the women's silence in this story speaks the truth about the failings of distribution and the factory system, a consequence of Cupid's ill-management.

## **2-2) Natural Womanhood in Melville's *Moby-Dick* and "The Piazza": Maternal Nature as a Mirror to Rectify Male Perspective**

### **I. Marianna as a Truth Teller in "The Piazza"**

As the opening story of Herman Melville's collection *The Piazza Tales*, "The Piazza" has a narrator-protagonist who begins a journey into the mountains with the expectation of meeting an imaginary fairy-like girl, and he pretends as if he were a hero in an epic. However, Marianna, the girl he actually meets, is not at all fairy-like. She is a woman of extremely fanciful imaginings that bewilder the narrator. Both the protagonist and the mountain girl, Marianna, are outside the market economy and are in the natural landscape as they are absorbed with fancy imagination. After seeing Marianna, the narrator decides to stop communicating with her and begins looking at the reality before him. Accordingly then, his expectations of and imaginings toward the natural landscape change. The narrator realizes that escaping his weariness through fancy imagination is a foolish idea. In this fiction, female power influences the change in the narrator-protagonist's point of view about the natural landscape for which he has shown great admiration.

By portraying female power's effect on the change in the narrator-protagonist, "The Piazza" aims at overturning the European concept of the picturesque and the sublime in art. The greatness of nature does not really exist in this story. The story suggests that instead of

confronting the awesome might of nature to mature and demonstrate bravery, man should face reality and not be absorbed with thoughts. Hence, this story could be read as a protagonist's spiritual growth toward becoming a mature man. In addition, the story warns of the danger of expanding the imagination through the prevalent concept of Transcendentalism. According to Marjorie Hope Nicolson, between 1730 and 1830, artists admired nature through a pictorial appreciation, and "the art of travel may be said to have been fused into a single 'art of landscape'" (23). Pictorial admiration was remarkable not only in paintings but also in gardening architecture and poetry (23). Nicolson asserts that the combination is termed "the picturesque" (23). As for Melville's ideas on the natural landscape, Steven Frye mentions that "Melville consciously incorporates notions central to New England Transcendentalism, a dominant viewpoint which suggests that nature and landscape nurture and empower the imagination" (45). Frye says that while Henry David Thoreau, Melville's contemporary, sees a landscape as having mystical significance and suggests that a certain distance must be maintained for the imagination to thrive, Melville is skeptical about the affirmative views of the natural and the supernatural (45). Frye does not refer to the ominous betrayal of nature that prevents the protagonist in "The Piazza" from empowering his imagination. Another critic, Charles Feidelson Jr., also points out that Melville presents him as a conscious artist. Therefore, his concept of artistic truth was calculated and it led to his skepticism about art (164). Melville's own skepticism is reflected in his protagonists, who pretend as if they are

familiar with both art and nature, although they learn that the true features of nature are ungraspable in the end. In Melville's "The Piazza," the narrator did not maintain a certain distance from nature, but instead, looked closely at the natural landscape in front of him.

The narrator is aware of this prevailing idea of the picturesque and begins his journey seeking the "art of landscape," claiming that he is an artist familiar with the picturesque world. His challenge to the natural landscape could be described as his confrontation of the sublime or awe of nature. He retains his sense of manhood by pretending to be a hero of an epic or a brave adventurer. Beauty and danger's coexistence is described as the sublime, and Edmund Burke defines the source of the sublime as follows:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of *sublime*: that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. (36)

In "The Piazza," the sublime is represented by certain landscapes: "old wars of Lucifer and Michael" (5) and "unfavorable for fairy views" (5), and these influence the narrator so that "he [the narrator] had to keep his chamber for some time" (5). The narrator wishes to get rid of the weariness caused by the natural landscape and decides to conform to the nature before him; he stares at it in order to grasp its true image. According to Roald Hoffmann, "the sublime stages a confrontation between man and the limits of his power; the human is

diminished (or struck dumb) by an awareness of a power greater, by far, than his own” (130).

The narrator’s expectations about sublime beauty are betrayed as he travels up the mountain.

Although the sublime in nature does not fulfill his imaginative fancies, this betrayal is indispensable; by experiencing disappointment, the narrator learns to end his fanciful imaginings and, instead, stare at the truth.

In fact, it is the miserable, lonely Marianna who unintentionally denies the idea of the “art of landscape” for which the narrator has shown great admiration. Unlike the narrator in “Paradise,” the protagonist–narrator never shows sympathy with the unhappy girl; rather, he establishes psychological distance between them after meeting her during his journey. The places where the narrator and Marianna live are different, but both are in the countryside, separated from the sphere of commercialism to which Melville’s protagonists Bartleby, Pierre, and the factory girls belong. From a distance, each one believes that the place in which the other one lives has a picturesque landscape, but when they look closely at their residences with each other, they are not at all picturesque.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the narrator in “Paradise” shows great sympathy for the factory girls since tuberculosis is portrayed as a means of representing the harsh working conditions and the dusty environment inside the factory. In “Woedolor Mountain in New England” (“Paradise” 210), elements of the sublime are added not only by the factory building’s surrounding landscape but also by the factory girls’ life-threatening working

conditions. Therefore, both the landscape and the factory girls' agonies move the narrator to feel the sublime. This sublime that the narrator feels is not at all a kind of beauty but the same pain the factory girls feel.

In "The Piazza," landscapes and the abandoned barn with the sublime beauty influence the narrator differently from how landscape and agony influence the narrator in "Paradise." In "The Piazza," the landscape merely shows bareness, thus sacrificing the narrator's romantic imaginations. The following quotation shows the narrator's first impressions about the fairy-like girl; however, these impressions turn into disappointment at the end of the story:

Fairy land, at last, thought I; Una and her lamb dwell here. Truly a small abode  
—mere palanquin, set down on the summit, in a pass between two worlds,  
participants of neither. (8)

The narrator's feelings of disappointment and absurdity are caused by the encounter he has with the abandoned mountain girl Marianna, whose image differs from that of a fairy (6). Her house is a "low-storied, grayish cottage, capped nun-like, with a peaked roof" (8), indicating her celibacy. Marianna says to the narrator, "Thinking, thinking—a wheel I cannot stop; pure want of sleep it is that turns it" (12). This reminds the narrator of his own weariness or of the back and forth shifts in his imagination before he makes his journey. By using pictorial images in place of the elaboration of words, Melville portrays the barrenness of nature juxtaposed with the image of the infertile, celibate Marianna. The narrator believes that a girl

he meets in the mountains will somehow bring about his spiritual stability; however, that does not happen, and his disappointment in the natural landscape becomes more notable later.

The narrator decides that Marianna is not worth saving from her environment, and her wheel of thinking has the power to keep the male character away from her sphere. Marianna's circumstances are somewhat similar to those of the factory girls described in the previous section because Marianna lives on the mountain, isolated and celibate. The only difference is that she has a voice to speak to the protagonist. Still, communication breaks down between them in the end. When the narrator returns to his piazza, he becomes indifferent to the "fairy" on the mountain.

This section explores how the narrator's yearnings toward a picturesque landscape are reflected in the landscape he sees, and how the narrator's attitude toward art changes after he meets the mountain girl Marianna. By examining the change in the narrator's attitude toward Marianna and the natural landscape, I would like to clarify how romantic imagination is denied and how the narrator settles into his bachelor life.

## **II. Watery Landscape in "The Piazza" and Ishmael-like Weariness**

The narrator of "The Piazza" and Ishmael, in Melville's *Moby-Dick*, share somewhat similar feelings of depression and weariness throughout their narratives. Both characters also have an admiration for and fear of water and the sea. They seek landscapes that conjure up the

image of water. In “The Piazza,” although the narrator heads for the mountains—which are a dry landscape—he still has a yearning for water. While he is traveling on the mountain, he believes there are “fairies there” (5), and he considers his journey an “inland voyage” (4) and identifies his destination as “the golden mountain window, dazzling like a deep-sea dolphin” (6). In addition, he says, “I’ll launch my yawl” (6) and calls himself a “free voyager as an autumn leaf” (6). At the beginning of the story, the narrator describes one spot of radiance as “the circle of the stars” (1), where he imagines, at a later stage, “Una and her lamb dwell here” (8). For him, the sky and the mountains are linked to the watery image like “a deep-sea dolphin” or “yawl,” and he believes the girl in the sea will help him get rid of his weariness. Furthermore, the narrator says:

Fairies there, thought I, once more; the queen of fairies at her fairy-window; at any rate, some glad mountain-girl; it will do me good, it will cure this weariness, to look on her. (6)

The narrator admits that his residence and the landscape he observes are “a very paradise of painters” (1). Yet, just seeing the picture-like landscape does not satisfy the narrator’s mind, and he grows weary of the mysterious landscape. He is not the kind of artist who can superficially appreciate static, one-dimensional, picture-like beauty but rather feels irritated or struggles to explain the true features of “the circle of the stars” (1) and “a golden sparkle in the same spot” (5). He finds the landscape inexplicable, so he compares the landscape with

world of Edmund Spenser's epic.

In "The Piazza," the landscape filled with so-called natural beauty is thought to be an agent that can empower the protagonist's imagination, but it turns out to be nothing at all; it thereby encourages the protagonist see reality. Ishmael in *Moby-Dick* as well has an artistic outlook at the beginning of the novel and admires the watery landscape, but he also steps into nature to identify its true features. In the first chapter of *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael says:

But here is an artist. He desires to paint you the dreamiest, shadiest, quietest, most enchanting bit of romantic landscape in all the valley of Saco. What is the chief element he employs? There stand his trees, each with a hollow trunk, as if a hermit and a crucifix were within: and here sleeps his meadow and there sleep his cattle; and up from yonder cottage goes a sleepy smoke. Deep into distant woodland winds a mazy way, reaching to overlapping spurs of mountains bathed in their hill-side blue. But though the picture lies thus tranced, and though this pine tree shakes down its sighs like leaves upon this shepherd's head, yet all were vain, unless the shepherd's eyes were fixed upon the magic stream before him. (19; ch. 1)

After he makes this statement, Ismael asks the reader, "What is the one charm wanting?" (19; ch. 1), and answers his own question, saying, "Water—there is not a drop of water there!" (19; ch. 1). The narrator and Ishmael assert that water is essential to art and painting. Like the

shepherd in Ishmael's example, the narrator of "The Piazza" seeks a water-like landscape on the mountain and stares at a body of water there. Therefore, Ishmael and this narrator attempt to move into the pictorial world to rid themselves of their weariness.

In "The Piazza," the narrator feels depressed before he travels to the mountain where he believes that a watery and pictorial world exists. He becomes depressed after seeing "strange cankerous worms" (6) feeding upon the "starry bloom" (6) behind the leaves. This scene shows that, while the narrator can adore the beautiful and bright side of nature, he also sees its ugly side. The narrator is so insightful and sensitive to the objects he sees that "he had to keep his chamber for some time" (5). To get rid of this weariness that comes from seeing the inexplicably ugly side of nature, the narrator sets out to look at the true features of the landscape. Some readers might imagine that, as the example of "cankeraus worms" (6) indicates, nature and its beauty should be viewed from one dimension like pictures we see in a gallery. As with pictures, then, nature should be looked at from a long distance as a mere static landscape.

The narrator tends to look at an object from two different angles and make more careful observations than do his neighbors and ordinary painters, who only create superficially visible landscapes. While his neighbors say that a building they see, which is later identified as Marianna's house, is "some old barn" (5) or "an abandoned one" (5), the narrator retains hope

that the building is something more than an abandoned old ugly structure. The following passage shows his hopes for the aesthetics of abandoned objects:

A few days after, a cherry sunrise kindled a golden sparkle in the same spot as before. The sparkle was of that vividness, it seemed as if it could only come from glass. The building, then—if building, after all, it was—could, at least, not be a barn, much less an abandoned one; stale hay ten years musting in it. No; if aught built by mortal, it must be cottage; perhaps long vacant and dismantled, but this very spring magically fitted up and glazed. (5)

The narrator perceives magical powers in the building that others do not. An abandoned house has a spirituality that stirs up the image of possibly now-dead people. Therefore, it provokes a mixture of fear, spirituality, and pictorial beauty. The narrator, fatigued, sees in the house an image of both optimism and ominousness. However, he shows a certain courage and strength by not being struck into awareness of nature's power. Until he meets "Una," he pretends to be the hero of an epic, believing in his manly responsibility to save, in an imaginary world, a girl whom he has not yet met.

In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael as well goes to the sea when he is depressed. He cannot satisfy himself by analyzing the water and the sea from an artistic perspective, as the first chapter shows, so he decides to go to sea as a sailor to get rid of his depressed feelings. His weariness is expressed as follows:

Whenever I find myself grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp dizzy  
November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before  
coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet and  
especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a  
strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street,  
and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it is high time to  
get to sea as soon as I can. (18; ch. 1)

Ishmael's words suggest that water triggers suicidal wishes in the depressed when they are thinking by or staring at the sea from a distance. Hence, water is occasionally associated with the image of death. In the same chapter, Ishmael takes up the Narcissus story, saying, "still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned" (20; ch. 1). Hence, the sea brings death to people who risk their lives. Unlike the water in the picture, however, the dynamic sea is fiercer and more destructive. If water were static, Narcissus would have been saved. In "The Piazza," for the narrator, the mountains are dynamic as "they play at hide-and-seek, and all before one's eyes" (4), and "the vastness and the lonesomeness are so oceanic" (3) like "the Barbary coast" (4). Hence, just as the sea murders Narcissus, the mountains as well are portrayed as an ominous landscape for the narrator.

The piazza is a safe place for the narrator because it represents the border between rough nature and cozy homeland. He is at first satisfied with the landscape around his house, saying the “country round about was such a picture” (1). Moreover, he looks at “sun-burnt painters” (1) and calls his area “[a] very paradise of painters” (1). At this moment, however, the narrator is looking at the landscape one-dimensionally. At the beginning of the short story, the narrator associates water images with the landscape. Hence, the piazza is important for him because it is a border between outside and inside of the narrator’s house or a safe zone for him, or between the sea and the land. He needs his own piazza because he wants to enjoy both “the coziness of indoors” (1) and “the freedom of outdoors” (1), although the comfort and freedom of the outdoors betrays him later.

The narrator regards the inside of his house as a “picture gallery” (2), and he seems to be satisfied with his surroundings; however, he gradually changes his attitude toward the pictorial landscape. He wants to stare at the picture more closely and confront the nature before him. By bravely facing the threatening nature, he wants to act like a fictional hero. He is doubtful about the different side of nature and wishes to evaluate whether it is really a subject which most painters admire and consider worth painting. However, to show his bravery like Ishmael, he should report nature’s doubtful side. Up to this point, it can be said that Ishmael and the narrator of “The Piazza” share similar perspectives, although the narrator

is more artistic and has adoration and respect for the rough side of nature and for abandoned objects.

### **III. The Purpose of Visiting Melville's Gloomy Mountain**

The narrator of "The Piazza" falls into reveries while viewing the mountain from his home. The actions he takes to reach the mountain indicate that the narrator wants to pose the question of whether or not mountain landscapes are worth visiting in order to rid himself of weariness. The narrator contemplates and seeks the right answer to this question. To find it, he journeys to that landscape to escape his fixed piazza and decentralize himself. The journey allows him to see the picture from different perspectives. According to Ernest Gilman, this decentralization or dislocation of the viewer from the central point obliges him to see the work of art from 'multiple perspectives' before he grasps it fully" (50). However, such dislocation from the central point is not effective enough to grasp the true feature of art for the narrator. To understand the narrator's concept of beauty, it is necessary to communicate with a person in the natural landscape and perceive the picture in its entirety.

Gilman adopts Jean-François Niceron's and Thomas Hobbes's term "curious perspective" to cover a variety of objects such as anamorphic distortions, the double or reversible images, the unexpected concealments made possible through the use of mirrors and lenses (50). Gilman discusses Hans Holbein's *Ambassadors* (1533), saying that it "includes an

anamorphic figure: in the lower foreground of this double portrait there is an elongated, indecipherable streak which, seen from the side, turns into a death's head" (54). This technique is used twice in "The Piazza." One image is the "circle of stars" (1) that is visible and then becomes invisible at the end of the story. The other image for the narrator is that of clouds, which Marianna says she sees as "the shaggy dog" (10), a living creature, and not merely as clouds. Some images are visible to people with vivid imaginations.

In "The Piazza," the mountain works as a mirror to idealize the mountain girl Marianna. The narrator believes that even an old barn and a fairy inside it may have some magic to cure his weariness and to fulfill his curiosity about the art of landscape. Marianna's old barn could be an object of the sublime, as the following description by Nicolson shows.

Nicolson adopts the remarks of the modern British painter John Ruskin (1819–1900), who was Melville's contemporary. According to Nicolson, Ruskin was surprised at "the number of landscapes showing mountains, lakes, clouds, and ruined castles or cathedrals" (4). Moreover, Ruskin said: "There is something strange in the minds of these modern people! Nobody ever cared about blue mountains before, or tried to paint the broken stones of old walls" (4). This remark shows how people's attitude toward what Nicholson calls the "Gloomy Mountain" had completely changed; mountains were no longer a dismal sight for the British, but instead, they became subjects of art. Although this is originally a British idea, Terry Abraham mentions that it came into Canada and the west of America. Indeed,

Americans found in such landscapes as palatial rockeries sublime elements, for instance the picturesque, by bestowing upon them conjectural European origins. Abraham also mentions that the West is full of “fantastic” rocks, in shape, in color, or both. Therefore, many were characterized as architectural ruins, thus passing onto them the associations with European landscapes (82).

In “The Piazza,” the narrator has a feeling of yearning for “old-fashioned farmhouses” (1) and a “winter piazza” (3), which are similar to the object that Ruskin and Abraham indicates. The appearance of Marianna’s house also fits into Ruskin’s concept. From the piazza, the narrator enjoys the mysterious mountain geography, such as “a sort of purpled breast pocket” (4) and a “hopper-like hollow” (4). The narrator takes pleasure in the landscape and what people of the time called the “picturesque.” However, the landscape also has another ominous dimension, such as “certain witching conditions of light and shadow” (4), and it brings about a “mad poet’s afternoon” (4). Unlike ordinary painters and observers of sublime paintings, the narrator desires to step into and experience sublime beauty because he is curious about “one spot of radiance, where all else was shade” (4). The narrator’s awe of nature arises from this shady element. On the mountain, the narrator encounters the dry and barren aspects of nature that people should not step into. The Aries that the narrator encounters on the mountain path goes the “wiser way” (7) because it considers the narrator as

“some lost soul” (7). The narrator pushes through the “dark road” (7) or “forbidding and forbidden ground” (7). He becomes more emotional and loses his ability to think rationally.

As Burke indicates, the landscape that holds terror is inspiring and appealing. If the narrator did not recognize that it is a “forbidding and forbidden ground” (7) filled with terror, his mind would not be stirred up. Therefore, at this point, the mountain is still an object of art for the narrator and it is worth viewing.

There is another wordless warning from the mountain that the narrator perceives. The “red apple” (7) that the narrator calls “Eve’s apple” (7), named “seek-no-furthers” (7), tasted “of the ground” (7), so there is no food for living creatures, which points to a wrongdoing by the narrator. However, he does not give up his hope of seeing “one spot of radiance” (4). He plans to continue his journey until he sees the fairy, the center of the “fairy land” (7), believing the center of the pictorial landscape is worth perceiving. The narrator’s interest is directed toward what is called “sublime.” The narrator is half-terrified but excited to report on whatever he sees on the mountain.

#### **IV. From the Sublime to the Ridiculous**

In addition to the idea that Melville’s sublime is regarded as a message from nature, or as a warning, or that it sometimes reflects the protagonist’s innermost feelings, the narrator’s idea of the sublime turns into the ridiculous after his encounter with Marianna, whom he calls

Una, or a fairy, at first. Ironically, the narrator's expectation is betrayed by his seeing a "rotting" (10), "mossy" (10) house that should not be stared at so that it might maintain its artistic value. The narrator should have stayed at the border between the real and the imaginary world to cure his weariness because what he sees is far from the pictorial landscape in his imagination. Melville uses puns on the names Una and Marianna. In Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Una gets over her grief and is adored as a queen in the woods. There is a happy ending with the knight (*FQ1*. 6.1–13). In contrast, the Una-like Marianna is left alone and the knight-like-narrator is weary of Marianna's face even after he gets back to his piazza.

The name Marianna is also ironic. According to Darryl Hattenhauer, her name reminds us of the Virgin Mary and of her mother "Anne" (74). Hence, "this tale is an allegory of rebirth," and the narrator renews his artistic creativity after seeing Marianna (74). However, it is not a tale of renewal but rather of death in the sea or barrenness. Also, the narrator's way of thinking is not renewed, but runs back and forth like a "wheel" (12). The description "nun-like" (8) of Marianna's house evokes an image of celibacy and infertility, that is, of having no future descendants. Contrary to her name, however, which suggests birth, the landscape is lifeless, and it ironically leads to the narrator's separation from the imaginary and the artistic world.

Marianna's name also suggests "Marina" in William Shakespeare's *Pericles*. Born during a journey across the seas, Marina endures a parentless girlhood but is finally saved by an

encounter with her father Pericles. While Shakespeare saves Pericles and Marina from extreme helplessness and loneliness, Melville makes no changes in Marianna's life.

In "The Piazza, the narrator's effort to meet a fairy is in vain. Marianna's "blessed" name indicates that she has the potential to become a savior, a friend to cure the narrator's depressed feelings and give him a new life in the same way Marina spiritually saves Pericles. However, Marianna can never be such a friend to the narrator. Before the journey, they look at each other only through their artistic imaginations. Marianna's imagination mirrors that of the narrator. In her weariness and revolving, wheel-like thoughts, she has been staring at the narrator's house.

Marianna is also looking for a savior-friend in a "marble" (9) palace visible only from her house. She does not know that the house actually belongs to the narrator, the man in front of her; she describes the house as follows:

"Do you know," said she at last, as stealing from her story, "do you know who lives yonder?—I have never been down into that country—away off there, I mean; that house, that marble one," pointing far across the lower landscape; "have you not caught it? there, on the long hill-side: the field before, the woods behind; the white shines out against their blue; don't you mark it? the only house in sight." (9)

Marianna believes “some happy one” (9) lives there, and the narrator identifies the building as his own old farmhouse.

When both houses are seen from different angles, each looks extremely different with the effect of the “mirage” (9) and the radiance from the mountain. The mountain not only creates vertical intervals between the narrator and Marianna’s place but also works as a lens to distort the image of their houses. When the narrator reaches Marianna’s place and sees her without looking through the lens, she is identical to him. In other words, the mountain and its radiance have triggered the narrator’s and Marianna’s imaginations. He snaps out of his daydream by seeing his own house from Marianna’s house. He never tells Marianna that he is the “happy one” (9) in her imagination because he has realized that his own imagination is ridiculous and that Marianna’s place is not worth visiting. Therefore, Marianna is a reflection of the narrator and she represents a negative example of his imagination.

If Marianna is an image of the sea and the water reflects the narrator himself, then his staying close to Marianna or reflecting this self-image to her is dangerous because he may come to share a common destiny with Narcissus. Her name thus indicates fear of water and death. Scott A. Kemp says, “Marianna’s disillusionment with her world should affect the narrator like a mirror” (71). Kemp does not further discuss how the narrator and Marianna reflect each other and maintain a similarity, but, at the end of the story, the narrator stops sharing his feelings with Marianna. Marianna’s extraordinary imagination surprises the

narrator, and he recognizes that he is being fooled by the idealized Marianna and the idealized, imaginary fairyland. Unlike Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*, who recounts the whole experience of his voyage as a truth-teller, the narrator never recalls his picturesque travel as a memorable event.

Concerning Marianna's roles in the story, William B. Dillingham says that "Marianna's role in 'The Piazza' is twofold" (327). She shocks the narrator, which Dillingham calls "shock therapy" (327) and helps him return to a healthy state of mind. The other function is to prove "the truth of human existence" (327). According to Dillingham, "the truth of human existence includes the hopelessness, weakness, and intolerable isolation that is the inner state of Everyman" (327). Therefore, too long an exposure to that state produces woe (327). The narrator gains a realistic view, as Dillingham says. After the journey, the narrator continues watching Marianna's house from a distant place, his piazza, and he does not block her out completely. The narrator is shocked because not only is Marianna contrary to what he expected but she is also a reflection of himself. However, he learns from Marianna that he should not focus on his weariness and depend on his imagination. Indeed, his spiritual savior never appears, and he realizes that he should face the reality before him. At first, the narrator and Marianna share the psychological states of weariness and helplessness and also the same viewpoint because they have looked upon each other's house with a fantastical imagination.

The narrator finally places psychological distance between Marianna and himself and repeats, "Yours are strange fancies" (10) twice in the story. He decides to isolate himself from

his fantasy world. Marianna personifies a “shaggy shadow” (11) like “a large, black Newfoundland dog” (11), because clouds are similar to the shape of a dog when it is seen from different angles. Here again, the author uses anamorphic images such as clouds. However, now that the narrator has a cool-headed perspective, he will not be influenced or moved by Marianna’s fancy. Moreover, she also recognizes herself as foolish when she utters her wish to meet “some happy one” (9), which she later deems “a foolish thought” (12). Therefore, the conversation is based on illusion and imagination, and consequently, the narrator thinks he cannot join her in conversation anymore.

The narrator ridicules Marianna’s fancy, saying, “Have you then, so long sat at mountain-window, where but clouds and vapors pass, that, to you, shadows are as things, though you speak of them as of phantoms” (11). He tells Marianna before he leaves the mountain that “for your sake, Marianna, well could wish that I were that happy one of the happy house you dream you see” (12). The narrator departs, admitting that the journey he has taken and fancies are all ridiculous, and their communication breaks down.

After the trip to the mountain, he makes a firm decision to “stick to the piazza” (12), his “box-royal” (12). His words seemingly express adoration for Marianna but are filled with irony. John Seelye says that in a round world, the voyage out necessarily becomes homeward bound (90), but the narrator’s voyage is not a simple round trip. His point of arrival is his piazza but not the picture gallery that he portrayed it as before the trip. He arrives at the

theater in the end, so his piazza is transformed into a different spot in the narrator's mind. Now that there is psychological distance between them, the narrator says at the end of the story, "how far from me the weary face behind it" (12). "A very paradise of painters" (1) is no longer a paradise. The narrator says, "Enough. Launching my yawl no more for fairyland" (12), indicating that the true aspect of what painters paint is filled with weariness, helplessness, and lifelessness. In the center of the landscape, there is a protagonist who plays a tragic heroine, but he does not want to be a tragic hero in the play.

For the narrator, Marianna is a protagonist in an absurd play. Marianna exists in the middle of imagination, finding joy in her life and rejecting reality. Although the narrator does not feel any sympathy for Marianna, he tries to find her role in the story and give her a new life as his "prima donna" (12) after his journey. He does not want to look straight at the object with "light" (12) because with the "light," he would have to see weariness even if he decides to stick to the piazza.

But every night, when the curtain falls, truth comes in with darkness. No light shows from the mountain. To and fro I walk the piazza deck haunted by Marianna's face, and many as a real story. (12)

The narrator's imaginary "curtain" works as a border between imagination and reality. The narrator keeps a psychological distance by walking "to and fro," deciding not to walk far away from his piazza.

After the journey, the narrator recognizes that a certain distance is needed to enjoy the landscape, although he cannot enjoy it anymore after seeing the “truth” (12). Marianna, who still sees the illusion, keeps watching the narrator too. They continue watching each other without being savior friends.

#### **V. The Narrator’s Renewed View and Marianna’s Influence**

The sublime in paintings should be admired superficially. To keep a painting’s artistic value, a certain distance is needed; therefore, the distance between the narrator’s piazza and Marianna’s house is appropriate for nurturing the imagination. In this story, the mountain works as a lens to fashion anamorphic images of both houses. The narrator recognizes the function of this lens and notices that he has been fooled by the landscape, and he ridicules the imaginary world he created before his journey.

A lonely girl, Marianna lives in an isolated mountainous area; this shocks and disappoints the narrator out of his fanciful imaginings. Marianna seems to betray the narrator; however, her influence is not at all negative because her power of imagination actually endows the narrator with realistic views. After he witnesses the deserted landscape on the mountain and the mountain girl Marianna, he becomes a realist and stops his fancy imagination. Marianna helps him become a mature man. He is now ready to live in reality with practical views. Although his transcendentalist imagination does not expand further, he

becomes a realistic artist who can give another meaning to the picturesque and sublime. Thus, one can say that some barren landscapes in Melville's short stories reflect the reality of celibate women's sorrow, like a mirror, and rectify male characters' points of view.

## **Chapter 3: Silent Men and Leadership**

### **3-1) Silent Leaders: Lost Authority in Melville's "Benito Cereno"**

#### **I. The two layers of meanings of "Follow your leader"**

Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno" was first published in 1855, a time when the issue of slavery was of great concern to its readers. This story is also known to be a rewrite of Amasa Delano's *A Narrative of Voyages and Travels*. At different points in Melville's "Benito Cereno," four characters (Don Benito Cereno, Captain Amasa Delano, Captain Alexandro Aranda, and the black slave Babo) exercise their controlling power over a ship named "The San Dominick" (42). Every leader has power at some point over The San Dominick except for Captain Delano, who loses the voice of authority through death. In the plot, a leader who owns slaves loses power, and the slaves have opportunities to take over the ship. The slave owners are deprived of leadership repeatedly throughout the work. The slave Babo repeatedly says to Don Benito, "Follow your leader" (37)—an order not included in Amasa Delano's narrative. This order or advice has two layers of meanings. Readers may wonder who the leader is, perhaps the deceased Aranda or the black ringleader, Babo.

This section examines how Babo's behaviors and words influence the slave owner, Don Benito, and explores the process of the loss of Don Benito's authority. The failure of his authority is caused by his mental fatigue and by the interventions of the insensitive but

comical American leader, Captain Delano, and his miscommunications. He misunderstands Babo's behaviors and words, which cause miscommunication with Don Benito; eventually, his insensitiveness brings about a breakdown in communication and the death of Don Benito. Manhood could be proved several times through not only economic success but also political autonomy or leadership abilities. Some of Melville's sea-based novels show that the captains' leadership and trust in their crew are maintained by effective communication between the leader and his subordinates. Although "Benito Cereno" is tragic as it ends with the death of the leaders, the process of lost authority can be partly compared to patriarchy in Melville's family stories that were described in the previous chapter, *Pierre* and "Chimney."

Babo, formerly Aranda's slave, leads a slave rebellion on The San Dominick, forcing Don Benito to pretend in front of Captain Delano that Benito is the ship's captain. Don Benito, on the other hand, cannot declare that his slaves are actually controlling him. His words are repressed by the eloquence and oppressive behaviors of the slave leader Babo. However, when Delano observes Babo's behavior, Babo is seemingly "less [a] servant than a devoted companion" (40) to his supposed master Don Benito. In reality, however, Babo is actually the leader of the slaves in charge of The San Dominick. The language used on board is Spanish, which is not Babo's first language but is Don Benito's mother language. Babo's fluency in that language grants him the power to suppress Don Benito. Moreover, Captain Delano feels that it is the obedience of a slave to follow Don Benito's language. This is natural because

with his language ability, Babo occasionally shows a superficial kinship with his captain, Don Benito. Observing Babo's superficial obedience and Don Benito's silence, the insensitive Delano misunderstands the relationship between slave and master. At the end of the story, only the insensitive white American leader, Captain Delano, survives; yet, he never recognizes the cause of Don Benito's depressed mental state. Finally, Babo is executed, and his head fixed on a pole. On this point, Richard E. Ray observes, "for a brief moment, he is a man with the voice of authority" (340), but Babo meets a "voiceless end" and "is no longer the leader of revolt but once again a slave" (340). Ray sees Babo's failure in rebellion and subsequent death as only a voiceless end. However, his death is not at all a mere voiceless end. As long as part of his body remains, the spectators are influenced, who regard his passing as a sacrifice with a religious meaning.

In the story, two characters' body parts are held high above for observers to fear or revere them. The former Captain Aranda's skeleton is on the prow, and it is an object of fear for Don Benito in the first half of the story. At the end of the story, this fearful object becomes Babo's head fixed on the pole. The idea of someone's dead body upheld as a totem partly relates to Freud's idea of "Totem and Taboo," in which a totem, occasionally a sacrifice of animal, is an object of reverence, uniting family members as one blood, one tribe, or as "descendants of a common ancestor" (Freud 103). In "Benito Cereno," the slaves and the captain are not in the same tribe but are of different nationalities. Babo intends to horrify his captain Don Benito by

forcing him to recognize his kinship with the totem or sacrifice. Babo, by making Don Benito resemble the skeleton or a dead body, intends to weaken his leader's authority. The narrator describes Captain Vere's state of mind: "He [Don Benito] is like one flayed alive, thought Captain Delano; where may one touch him without causing a shrink?" (80); the words indicate how he resembles Aranda's skeleton.

Resemblance to the totem or a kinship with it is described in a positive way in "Chimney," the father of the family keeps his patriarchal authority by depending on the chimney as a center. Hence, the father's manhood in the family is not completely lost. By following Aranda and exhibiting a resemblance to him, Don Benito completely loses his manhood as a leader. Therefore, Aranda's body on the prow works as a destructive force for Don Benito's manhood but bestows leadership on his opponent, Babo, and his fellow tribe members.

Both Don Benito and Aranda cause disorder on The San Dominick, and Don Benito's death is brought about indirectly by the slaves. Their leadership is deprived and both of them are emasculated by Babo's power. In particular, Don Benito pretends to still be a leader in Captain Delano's presence; however, this is only a performance and not his true self. Babo is able to control his captain and Captain Delano without violence. He only employs obedient behaviors and words, giving out as if they show his genuine feeling. All of Don Benito's behaviors are awkward for Captain Delano because what he exhibits is not who he really is.

The following section examines how incapable leaders are portrayed in "Benito Cereno,"

taking up Don Benito's shaving scene, his attire, and the function of the silent pressure exerted by his slave on Don Benito. In this scene, his masculinity as a leader is deprived by his slave. I subsequently examine how dead bodies influence leadership and manhood in order to clarify the meaning of Babo's repeated ambiguous remark, "Follow your leader."

## **II. Insensitive and Incapable Leaders in Melville's Work**

Melville repeatedly creates insensitive but self-confident leaders similar to Captain Delano, including the lawyer in "Bartleby" and the factory supervisor Cupid in "Paradise." The lawyer in "Bartleby" shows some sympathy to the protagonist and scrivener Bartleby; however, the sympathy does not save Bartleby. The lawyer is like a factory supervisor; therefore, he tries to be kind to his worker so that his worker works effectively for him. In "Paradise," Cupid would not sympathize with the workers in the paper factory. Consequently, the factory girls, with their pale complexions, sacrifice their health. The failure of those leaders may cause the collapse of the workplace organization and the factory system. Therefore, the leaders' sensitivity and communication skills are essential to maintain the system as a whole. In "Benito Cereno" as well, Captain Delano's character reflects the self-confident American society partly controlled by contemporary ideas, including "Manifest Destiny" (Weinberg 10), which is a term coined by John L. O'Sullivan. Albert K. Weinberg defines the idea of "Manifest Destiny" as follows:

The idea of “Manifest Destiny” is that desire for land and its expansion is apparent in Americans. American history is an excellent laboratory for the study of expansionist ideology, but not because its expansionism calls for sharper moral criticism than does that of other countries. On the contrary, it is excellent because—aside from other reasons, such as the ingenuousness and loquacity of democracy—the expansion of the United States was of a character which can be viewed with minimal moralistic prepossession. In the pages of its history there is relatively little of the tragedy which, though it induces reformist emotion, interferes with correct interpretation of human motives. (Weinberg 10)

Weinberg stresses that expansionism was considered an American “mission” (128), and human superiority was advocated with ideas of transcendentalism. The theme of “Benito Cereno” is slavery, and it portrays an American leader’s insensitiveness. This insensitiveness is led astray by the slave Babo, who is stereotypically considered inferior in comparison to Europeans and Americans. This reflects Melville’s skeptical attitude with regard to expansionism and the self-confident American “mission” in general. Captain Delano has a groundless sense of superiority, favoring an obedient slave and calling him a “faithful fellow” (45). Then he calls a slave “some free man of color at his work or play” (71), and the narrator explains “Captain Delano took to negroes, not philanthropically, but genially, just as other men to Newfoundland dogs” (71). Captain Delano does not consider slaves as individuals but

treats them according to his stereotype of obedient dog-like slaves.

The insensitive American leader Delano fails to save the weakening Don Benito and eventually sacrifices the life of the intelligent slave Babo. Delano is overconfident of his nationalistic power, and his self-righteous charity does not actually work to save others.

In “Benito Cereno,” and “Bartleby,” self-righteous charity is a common and underlying theme. Captain Delano and the lawyer practice charity in ineffective ways for Don Benito and Bartleby, respectively. They never recognize their ineffectiveness; hence, they actually worsen the situations. Both works are in *The Piazza Tales*, and Lea Bertani Vozae Newman states that they are closely related (Newman 96). According to Newman, the original title was not *The Piazza Tales* but “Benito Cereno” and *Other Sketches*. Melville intended to include “Benito Cereno” as the very first story and “Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street” as the second. He later switched the order, but these works remain connected (Newman 96). Although Newman does not explain how these two stories are connected, they have three common points. First, both Don Benito and Bartleby need support but neither speaks out about what kind of support they need, nor do they accept the support or charity offered to them. Instead, both of them face death with a self-contained attitude. Captain Delano makes the following observation about Don Benito’s attitude: “there are peculiar natures on whom prolonged physical suffering seems to cancel every social instinct of kindness” (41). This makes Captain Delano think that “indulgent as he [Captain Delano] was at the first, in judging

the Spaniard [Don Benito], he might not, after all, have exercised charity enough” (41). Second, the protagonists’ names occur in the titles, and both begin with “B.” Third, they cannot accept charity in conventional ways, either from Captain Delano or from the lawyer. The charity that is offered is canceled by “Don Benito’s reserve which displeased him [Captain Delano]” (41), but it stirs up the imagination of those who offer it. This reserved attitude is like that of *Bartleby*. Although Captain Delano sympathizes with Don Benito, he does not understand the meaning of Don Benito’s reserved, self-contained attitude because of his lack of imagination.

Captain Delano’s lack of imagination guides him to the stereotypical ideas that charity should be accepted with gratitude and that the non-white shipmates are all devoted servants of the captain. This eventually leaves him with an arrogant, self-centered view. Captain Delano’s words “There is something in the negro which, in a peculiar way, fits him for avocations about one’s person” (70) shows that he has a sense of superiority not only over Spanish people but black people in general. Carolyn L. Karcher asserts that these words might even have made readers of Melville’s time uncomfortable (Karcher 131). In an instance of dramatic irony, Captain Delano furthers a stereotype, while Melville asserts that the slave’s intellectual power equals that of whites. Karcher argues that this is a crucial difference between Captain Delano and Melville (Karcher 130). Although Melville’s position on slavery is unclear, he almost always uses socially weak characters in order to throw into relief misguided charity or

the erroneous judgment made by white leaders. This story emphasizes the limited views and poor imagination of white leaders, which cause misunderstandings, and shows how Delano's self-confidence brings about failure in his leadership.

Both "Benito Cereno" and "Bartleby" portray failures of leadership or charity that bring about the protagonists' solitary death. Despite charity not being properly exercised toward Don Benito and Bartleby, their masters still boast of being pious Christians or charitable men, not recognizing their uncertainty regarding the socially weak protagonists. This insensitivity, including their callous remarks, leads to a communication breakdown. The protagonists' innermost emotions are expressed in neither story. Their silent deaths and the meanings of those deaths make various interpretations possible.

Unlike the lawyer who says "Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!" ("Bartleby" 34) at the very end, Captain Delano never mourns Don Benito's death in any way and never recognizes that his charity ends in failure. The narrator says only, "on Mount Agonia without; where, three months after being dismissed by the court, Benito Cereno, borne on the bier, did, indeed, follow his leader" (102), but the story never clarifies who that leader is. The narrator's remarks show that Captain Delano is not a capable leader, so Don Benito neither follows him as an ideal model, nor asks him for help. There is no white leader in this story. Instead, Don Benito follows his deceased former leaders Aranda and Babo, who are both non-white leaders; however, they only remain as dead bodies. Don Benito rejects the white American

Captain Delano, which has implications for Captain Delano's pride in himself as a leader, but he never recognizes this.

### **III. Interpretation of Don Benito's Costume and Silent Performances**

Babo and Aranda's remains cause Don Benito's mental condition to be unstable throughout the story. Aranda's bones bring him sorrow, and Babo's words "Follow your leader" weaken Don Benito's authoritative power on the ship. Some critics, including Robert S. Levine, argue that white American masters lived in fear of slave rebellion. This historical background is reflected in the work (Levine 166). In addition, Levine notes that since the number of immigrants increased from the 1830s to the 1840s along with industrialization, churches lost authority, consequently and ultimately weakening the family as an institution (Levine 177). Therefore, a nervous protagonist like Don Benito might be more acceptable and sympathetic to contemporary readers than Captain Delano if we regard this work as an allegory of social backgrounds in the 1850s.

Captain Delano may have a fear toward slave rebellions; however, he is more confident of his leadership skills, his insight or delightfulness, which cheers others up, and his country's superiority. In an ironic way, Captain Delano's cheerfulness is reflected in his ship's name, "The Bachelor's Delight" (81). Captain Delano invites Don Benito to his ship in order to cheer him up, but his invitation is rejected. At this point, he does not suspect the slave rebellions

that are underway on Don Benito's ship, while Don Benito is extremely skeptical and afraid of disorder on his ship if he even leaves his ship for a little while. At the end of the story, Captain Delano finally recognizes that he was careless, regretting that the temper of his mind "was more than commonly pleasant" adding to his "good nature, compassion, and charity, interweaving the three" (101), and he says "only at the end did my suspicions get the better of me" (101). At the last moment, his suspicions save his life and the slave rebellion is suppressed. Don Benito's self-contained attitude indicates the danger to the black slaves. Captain Delano's carelessness as a leader was obvious, and his lack of skill as a leader is proved by his weakening of Don Benito.

Besides that, if we interpret this story from a political point of view, the story seems to indicate the weakening of the Spanish colony. Ralph Waldo Emerson's article in the *Dial* (1844) gives us a clear image of America of that time. Emerson stresses that America is "new-born, free, healthful, strong, the land of the laborer, of the democrat, of the philanthropist...the country of Future" while Europe "staggers" under the "unsupportable burdens" of a "feudal system" of "old and odious establishments" (Emerson 492-505). This shows that America was represented by the image of vigorous youthfulness and strength while Europe represents ruin, decline, and old age. Melville might portray ruin and oldness in a comical way using Benito's attire and his shaving scene, in order that his work shows the insensitive side of self-confident American leader and his flaw.

It might be true that even generous readers might not admit that Don Benito is an ideal leader for the ship. The failure is not only Delano's but also Don Benito's. Don Benito tries to compensate for his flaws and weakness, but awkwardly performs in front of Captain Delano. His aristocratic attire ironically shows superficial power and dignity, but does not cover his weakness.

The Spaniard wore a loose Chili jacket of dark velvet; white small clothes and stockings, with silver buckles at the knee and instep; a high-crowned sombrero, of fine grass; a slender sword, silver mounted, hung from a knot in his sash; the last being an almost invariable adjunct, more for ornament than utility, of a South American gentleman's dress to this hour. Excepting when his occasional nervous contortions brought about disarray, there was a certain precision in his attire, curiously at variance with the unsightly disorder around; especially in the belittered Ghetto, forward of the main-mast, wholly occupied by blacks. (45)

His costume is of no use because he gives Captain Delano the impression of "some hypochondriac abbot" (40), "almost worn to a skeleton" (40). These quotations are an ironic reference to the split between Spanish Catholicism and white American Protestantism. While Delano views the costume in that way, Don Benito has followed the tradition of his country's leaders. Even after Delano sees the traditional authoritative costume of the Spanish leader, Delano regards America to be superior and Europe to be inferior and degraded. However, by

doing so, Don Benito unconsciously creates an ironical disparity between his costume and his mental status, contributing to Captain Delano's misconception of who he is. Don Benito neither performs perfectly as a capable leader nor reports what is happening on the ship to the American captain to obtain appropriate charity.

Moreover, Captain Delano never recognizes his fault. On this point, Leslie A. Fiedler notes that Captain Delano is "still convinced that the true source of moral infection is to be found only in the decaying institutions of Europe" (Fiedler 401); therefore, he cannot understand "why, even after the exposure of Babo, Benito Cereno continues to pine away and seems to long only for death" (Fiedler 401). Fiedler believes that Captain Delano is endowed with an "undistrustful good nature" (Fiedler 400). However, the cause of misconception should not be attributed to Captain Delano's innate characteristics or the decay of European institutions, but rather to the elaborate performance meant to conceal Don Benito's complete intimidation by Babo. Of course, Captain Delano's insensitivity contributed to the ship's anarchy, and as a consequence of Don Benito's misguided performance and Captain Delano's poor insight, Babo takes position of leader on *The San Dominick*.

Captain Delano's lack of insight is reflected in Babo's famous shaving scene. Babo intentionally, or perhaps recklessly, cuts Don Benito and stains the Spanish national flag with his blood. When Captain Delano sees this, he believes it only "antic conceits" (72) and cannot share Don Benito's fear:

Altogether the scene was somewhat peculiar, at least to Captain Delano, nor, as he saw the two thus postured, could he resist the vagary, that in the black he was a headsman, and in the white a man at the block. But this was one of those antic conceits, appearing and vanishing in a breath, from which, perhaps, the best regulated man is not always free. (72)

Don Benito cannot help indulging himself in Babo's shaving process; so, he loses his power again when Babo serves him. Captain Delano sympathizes with Don Benito's fear, but he misconceives it. As long as Captain Delano believes Babo fit only for "avocations about one's person" (70), he cannot mitigate Don Benito's fear because he is blind to its source. This particular scene indicates how Melville's American leaders poorly understand silence and behaviors taking place immediately before them.

This shaving scene is also important in interpretation of the remark, "Follow your leader." Don Benito is metaphorically on the executioner's block, about to lose his power and voice. In other words, the former leader is about to be executed by the former slave in front of the impervious American captain. Don Benito is now controlled by the intelligent black slave and is about to be killed in the same way as his friend Aranda. Thus, he is forced by his slave to follow his leader. Don Benito loses his voice at the very moment he is shaved, symbolically having his throat slit, depriving him of his voice, and silencing him. Babo loses his living voice at the end of the story, but Don Benito loses his during the shaving scene.

On the other hand, Aranda is already voiceless, and although his remains are on the prow, his power has not ended. Although Aranda cannot speak, Don Benito still hears him in his mind and is weakened. Unlike fearless Captain Delano, Don Benito is afraid of his body being cut and caped, or being exposed like Aranda. The dialog between Don Benito and Captain Delano illustrates this:

“Were your friend’s remains now on board this ship, Don Benito, not thus strangely would the mention of his name affect you.”

“On board this ship?” echoed the Spaniard. Then, with horrified gestures, as directed against some specter, he unconsciously fell into the ready arms of his attendant, who, with a silent appeal toward Captain Delano, seemed beseeching him not again to broach a theme so unspeakably distressing to his master. (49)

The former leader’s remains still have power to weaken Don Benito because he will always stare at death and be forced to look at the chalked message “Follow your leader.” Don Benito is convinced that Aranda’s bones are a figurehead and believes that Babo placed the bones to intimidate him. Babo wants Don Benito to follow his leader, Aranda, indicating that Babo is silently plotting to kill Don Benito in the near future. Babo “covers” his plot; hence, the figurehead’s true features are obscured from Captain Delano.

Whether the ship had a figure-head, or only a plain beak, was not quite certain, owing to canvas wrapped about that part, either to protect it while undergoing a

re-furbishing, or else decently to hide its decay. Rudely painted or chalked, as in a sailor freak, along the forward side of a sort of pedestal below the canvas, was the sentence, “Seguid vnestro jefe,” (follow your leader).... (37)

Captain Delano would not unveil how this figure-head was made and placed, so he would not recognize the fear of a slave rebellion. On the other hand, Don Benito feels that fear in his bones, but since he is an incapable leader, he can do nothing to prevent it. He only remains silent so that his behavior gets on Babo’s nerves. Therefore, Don Benito’s voice is repressed; insensitive Captain Delano cannot recognize the meaning of Don Benito’s silence, and consequently, his lack of insight causes Don Benito’s death at the end of the story.

#### **IV. Former Silent Leader in Skeleton**

Another implication of “Follow your leader” is that “leader” indicates Babo, and the remark means to follow Babo, who tells Don Benito to “keep faith,” both spiritually and physically, pointing to Aranda’s skeleton on the prow:

... the negro Babo asked him whose skeleton that was, and whether, from its whiteness, he should not think it a white’s; that, upon his covering his face, the negro Babo, coming close, said words to this effect: “Keep faith with the blacks from here to Senegal, or you shall in spirit, as now in body, follow your leader,” pointing to the prow. (93)

Although Babo uses the skeleton to intimidate his leader, the skeleton may have other meanings for Babo. According to Geoffrey Sanborn, there are three ways of looking at a skeleton displayed by what he calls “savages”: first, “as a symbol of cannibal desire; second, as an object sacralized by superstition; and third, as a trophy designed ‘to throw intimidation and terror upon the enemy’” (183). Sanborn argues that in “Benito Cereno,” the first and the third interpretations are possible, the skeleton symbolizing the “presence of instinctual savages” (183). However, we cannot determine whether these slaves from Africa had a man-eating culture. True, Babo did not return Aranda’s body for four days even though Don Benito anxiously asked him to do so. Nevertheless, whether Alanda’s flesh has been eaten is not clear. Therefore, the first interpretation might not be possible, but the second and third might be acceptable.

Babo may have actually retained Aranda’s skeleton to defy Don Benito’s pleading to return the remains. Babo forces Don Benito to sacralize his friend’s remains although doing so goes against Don Benito’s religion. Don Benito’s wish to bury his friend’s body is ignored, so spiritually, religiously, and culturally, Babo dominates Don Benito. Since Don Benito fears execution and a treatment similar to Aranda’s, he has no choice but to follow Babo’s orders, religion, and spirit. Don Benito remains weak and cowardly even after Babo’s death, as shown by the following conversation between Captain Delano and Don Benito:

“But these mild trades that now fan your cheek, do they not come with a

human-like healing to you? Warm friends, steadfast friends are trades.”

“With their steadfastness they but waft me to my tomb, senor,” was the foreboding response.

“You are saved,” cried Captain Delano, more and more astonished and pained; “you are saved; what has cast such a shadow upon you?”

“The negro.”

There was silence, while the moody man sat, slowly and unconsciously gathering his mantle about him, as if it were a pall. (101)

As a head on a pole, Babo continues to dominate Don Benito spiritually. Babo’s body part, like Aranda’s remains, is retained and displayed. It becomes an icon of threat and dignity. Babo’s silent body turns into an object which is similar to Alanda’s body that weakens Don Benito’s state of mind. What he is most afraid of is the dead silent body being displayed at a certain place. Although it is silent, it conveys a message to the ones who stare at the dead body. Babo had been an intelligent slave. Therefore, his head is the cause of slave rebellions, and it represents the incomparable intelligence associated with dignity that the narrator terms “hive of subtlety” (102). While alive, Babo had a voice of authority, but his corpse also has a voice with a power to dominate all races including the self-confident American: Don Benito is about to follow his dead leader, Babo, for fear of his intelligence and dignity. Babo’s gaze and Aranda’s skeleton are continuing warnings to white society, their remains endowed with

second life. In other words, Babo's head is reproduced as another leader at the end of the story.

On the other hand, Don Benito cannot follow Captain Delano, the American leader, because his mention of a "human-like healing" (101) is of no help. On this point, Richard Chase notes that Captain Delano "can rescue Don Benito bodily from the mutinous slaves; but he does not understand that spiritual rescue is necessary" (158). Although Captain Delano tries to offer "a spiritual rescue," saying that Don Benito's incessant alertness saved his life, Don Benito does not change his gloomy attitude toward Captain Delano. The rescue and Captain Delano's words are not appropriate for Don Benito. The following conversation between them shows Don Benito rejecting Captain Delano's encouragement.

"You generalize, Don Benito; and mournfully enough. But the past is passed; why moralize upon it? Forget it. See, you bright sun has forgotten it all, and the blue sea, and the blue sky; these have turned over new leaves"

"Because they have no memory," he dejectedly replied; "because they are not human." (101)

Don Benito's failure to control his slaves deprived him of his pride as a leader, and the memory sticks in his mind. His mind does not waft like "the blue sea" or "the blue sky." Once his pride as a leader is lost, he cannot laugh off his failure as light heartedly as Captain Delano does. Hence, Don Benito has changed his clothing—from his aristocratic costume into a pall.

He is ready to die and follow his deceased leaders, Babo and Aranda. Babo's head, now "fixed on the pole in the Plaza, met, unabashed, the gaze of the whites" ("Benito Cereno" 102), and his appalling stare has driven Don Benito to death. Therefore, Babo's death is not a voiceless end, but the resurgence of a sacred, appalling icon that dominates the living.

#### **V. Follow the deceased leaders**

Don Benito is followed by the stares of Babo and his friend Aranda. Don Benito's endeavor to conceal the mutiny is in vain, and this only leads to Captain Delano's misconception. Captain Delano, as a self-confident American, cannot exercise charity properly, so he fails to rescue Don Benito spiritually. As a consequence, incapable Don Benito is compelled to obey Babo's religion and spirit even after Babo's death.

Therefore, from an antislavery position, Melville stresses that Babo's authority continues even after his death, haunting slave-owning society. Although Babo's mutiny falls through, and he is executed, it is not a complete failure. He continues to exercise his power by staring at whites, even though indifferent whites might not notice. Overall, every leader in this work is imperfect and fails to preserve political autonomy. Aranda fails to control his slaves, and his death debilitates Don Benito and clouds his judgment. Leadership on board shifts from the Spanish man to the black slave Babo. His deeds bring about Captain Delano's misconception. The visible dead body held high above the viewers works as an object of fear or authoritative

power to control the viewers' emotions. The sensitive Don Benito is greatly influenced by the power of his deceased friend and Babo, enhancing the kinship with the totem-like dead body. Only death saves Don Benito's spiritual stability and erases his past failure as a leader. He was once emasculated by his slaves, but he denies his past to gain a new manhood by becoming a dead body and following the former leaders.

### 3-2) Silent Mutineers and Captain Vere's Authority in Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor*

#### I. Homosexual Desires and the Silent Plotting

Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* (*BB*) presents the protagonist Billy and his superior, John Claggart, as silent mutineers. At the end of the story, both Billy and Claggart are proved to be destructive forces with ambiguous, untold motivations, although they may have had no intention to destroy the order of the navy. To attract Billy, Claggart makes a false accusation, claiming that Billy is a ringleader of a potential mutiny and that his shipmates follow him due to his physical beauty. I propose that Claggart's otherwise inexplicable deed can not only be attributed to attracting Billy's attention but also to undermining Captain Vere's authority; Claggart is silently plotting an indirect, nonviolent mutiny by attracting Billy, who is the center of the shipmates, preserving peace in the "happy family" (47; ch.1) in the navy. Being envious of Billy's fair appearance, Claggart warns Captain Vere that "A mantrap may be under the ruddy-tipped daisies" (94; ch. 18). He also calls Billy "handsome" (72; ch. 10) to his face, in a provocative manner. Captain Vere's authority and his shipmates' unity become unstable after Billy is removed from the ship at the end of the story. Therefore, Claggart shakes Captain Vere's authority, albeit without intending to.

Critics have often interpreted that what I call Claggart's nonviolent mutiny is caused by his homosexual desire. Robert K. Martin is one critic who regards *BB* as a story of homosexuality. According to Martin, Claggart is a harmful agent who sexually provokes a boy. Martin explicates the scene where Billy spills soup and Claggart responds by saying, "Handsomely done, my lad! And handsome is as handsome did it, too!" (72; ch. 10), interpreting this remark as a sexually

provocative action, expressing a “desire to sodomize Billy.” Moreover, the violence of Billy’s fist, directed at Claggart, is regarded as equivalent to the violence of a rape (Martin 112). Martin argues that Claggart’s desire is fulfilled by being struck dead by his beloved Billy. Although the details of Martin’s interpretations indicate a certain propensity for exaggeration, as I will show below, *BB* is certainly a story of an inexplicable suppressed love between men, which possibly engenders the breakdown of comradeship. Captain Vere, for his own reasons, narrates this incident, caused by homosexual desire, as a mere violent plot. Captain Vere’s attitude reflects the persistence of the characterized military order both in England and America, which aim to obscure aspects of judgement concerning sexual preference.

In the final section of my dissertation, I examine the pervasiveness of homosexual desire in the military and clarifies the underlying reasons for considering both Claggart and Billy as destructive forces on board. Captain Vere’s leadership as a mature man is tested by an incident arising from suspicious homosexual desires on board. Melville’s preface to *BB* shows that this story was dedicated to an English man, Jack Chase, the captain of “the U.S. Frigate” in the year of 1843 (42). Robert L. Gale notes that “the U.S. Frigate” was “the naval vessel on which Melville served between 1843 and 1844” (Gale 70). On the other hand, the historical background of *BB* is set in “the summer of 1797” (54; ch. 3) in the Royal Navy of Great Britain, in the period when the two great mutinies at “Spithead” and “Nore” occurred (54; ch. 3). These facts show that the author himself wished to present persistent problems in navies and to portray how a leader can make a judgement to maintain his political autonomy or patriarchal authority within the organization. Once again, as the story “Benito Cereno” shows, the leader’s communication skills with relation to his subordinates are tested to maintain his trust and the organization’s unity.

The chapter that follows this describes the evidence of Billy's eloquence and persuasiveness to emphasize that he is a practical leader who possesses leadership ability exceeding that of Captain Vere. Although Billy is thought to be generally inarticulate and powerless, he suddenly becomes eloquent at the moment of his execution. The problem of sexuality, stemming from Claggart's untold but apparent homosexuality and his envy of Billy's appearance, and Billy's eloquence at the time of his execution confuse Captain Vere. This shows the Captain to be a weak man when he remorsefully murmurs "Billy Budd, Billy Budd" (129; ch. 28) on his deathbed. The regret the captain feels is reflected in this scene. The attendant beside him insists that the words "were not the accent of remorse" (129; ch. 28) in order to conceal his weakness.

In previous studies, critics have largely restricted themselves to underscoring similarities between *BB* and historical mutinies or incidents of cruel punishment. They have not considered the judgement of a potentially homosexual man. To take a representative example, Larry J. Reynolds points out that the cruel punishment enacted at the end of *BB* resembles that of the labor unrest in the United States in 1886, known as the Haymarket affair, in which—similar to Billy—anarchists were hanged (Reynolds 22–29). Reynold's interpretation emphasizes Billy's innocence and powerlessness and never considers the eloquence of Billy's nature, as indicated by the narrator, who states that Billy is "afloat the spokesman" (44; ch. 1). Another critic, Barbara Johnson, underscores Billy's innocence, noting his transformation through execution into a Christ-like figure and the transformation of his story into "a retelling of the story of Christ" (Johnson 186). However, in neither case is Billy's nature, which attracts his shipmates, described. Billy's attractiveness is an unwitting challenge to Captain Vere's authority. Previous interpretations do not clarify the association between mutiny and homosexuality in *BB*. Billy is not as violent as

the mutineer in the Haymarket affair. Billy appears powerless; however, his physical beauty exercises power over others, strengthening men's bonds to him even after his death. In *BB*, Melville highly emphasizes the definition of Claggart's nature and the explanation of Billy's physical beauty, which attracts a homosexual man in an erotic manner. Melville uses the example of historical mutinies only to show Captain Vere's incapacity to explain the issue before him, caused by homosexual desire. "Mutiny" is the word used by Captain Vere to delude, and he attempts to persuade his shipmates to cover up the motivations of both Billy and Claggart.

In *BB*, unities and orders on board turn chaotic due to Claggart's distorted sexual preference because he provokes Billy without reason. Moreover, Captain Vere's unclear explanation of Claggart's deeds raises doubts about the legitimacy of his judgement that Billy should be hanged. As shown below, Claggart wants Billy all to himself and attempts to remove Billy from the center of the "happy family" (47; ch. 1). Claggart's suspicious behavior confuses Captain Vere. Billy's virtue attracts the attention of the men on board as he takes unconscious leadership, and this attractive virtue is physically removed by his execution. However, Billy is subsequently apotheosized among his shipmates; he comes to be revered by. Although Billy seems to have no intention of upsetting the order in the navy, he inadvertently undermines Captain Vere's leadership after his death.

## **II. The Historical Trials in the British Navy**

The fictional naval publication "*News from the Mediterranean*" in *BB* (130; ch. 29) describes the need for personnel during wartime, and it indirectly shows the cause of disputes between shipmates and the eventual disorder. An article in the "*News*" states that "aliens" should be

allowed into the military because of “the present extraordinary necessities of the service” (130; ch. 29). As Billy was an “alien,” he would normally not have been selected to join the navy had it not been wartime when “considerable numbers” were being admitted. Generally, during times of peace, “aliens” were not welcome to join the national navy as, apparently, it was taken for granted that “aliens” always caused disorder. In the story, Billy is also variously described as a “ringleader” and “no Englishman” (130; ch. 29). The Royal Navy in the late 1700s did not inquire into candidates’ personal backgrounds or their sexual preferences during times of war when there was shortage of personnel.

The pre-modern British navy in the late 1700s, which is the background against which *BB* is set, also perceived themselves to have an issue related to homosexuality within their forces, and they severely prosecuted homosexual behavior in the ranks. According to Arthur N. Gilbert, buggery constituted a capital offense in England when it was found that higher officials often seduced boys on board (Gilbert 75). In contrast, in *BB*, Captain Vere attempts to maintain silence regarding Claggart’s motivation for provoking Billy. Captain Vere’s instinctive reaction to Claggart’s death, namely calling him “Ananias” (100; ch. 19) and calling Billy, “an angel of God” (101; ch. 19) shows his disgust and prejudice against what he suspects to have been homosexual desire. Captain Vere struggles to find ways to prevent or exclude homosexuals without decreasing the number of the military personnel.

Captain Vere struggles to settle conflicts peacefully and quickly in order not to manifest his innermost emotions in public. The process of the burial of Claggart’s body is explained by the narrator, only in a few sentences in chapter 23, in order “not to clog the sequel with lateral matters” (117; ch. 23). Contrary to the precise explanation of Billy’s hanging and burial, Claggart’s death is

depicted to have been less important. To the narrator, Claggart is a nuisance, getting in the way of the dramatic ending of the story. General homophobic attitudes are noticeable in the remarks of both Captain Vere and the narrator.

### **III. Homosexuality and Mutiny on Board**

The historical background of *BB* is the Royal Navy in “the summer of 1797” when two mutinies at “Spithead” and “Nore” occurred (54; ch. 3). During this period, punishments for “buggery” were usually severe. Gilbert notes, “after the great mutinies at Nore and Spithead in 1797, execution of sodomites began in earnest” (87). In *BB*, Captain Vere too becomes sensitive and strict in making judgments, following this general trend in the navy. A product of the environment in which a same-sex relationship constituted a crime, Claggart resembles the higher officials of the time. His manner is considered to be “rather queer at times” (88; ch. 17), which is attributed to “the monomania in the man” (90; ch. 17) by the narrator. No one decisively states that he is a homosexual man; however, his shipmates’ and Captain Vere’s suspicions are reflected in the ambiguous description of Claggart.

Claggart is considered to be a homosexual man, by unspoken agreement, and can be compared with a historical homosexual figure, Dr. Titus Oates (64; ch. 8). While Billy isolates abominated homosexuality from the male bonds, by becoming a god-like supernatural figure, Claggart is developed as an evil image with a potential homosexual nature in both Captain Vere and the narrator. Dr. Titus Oates was infamous for his role in the national emergency known as the “Popish Plot” (64; ch. 8). According to Wayne C. Bartee and Alice Fleetwood Bartee, Oates falsely accused five Catholic noblemen of plotting to assassinate the king (114), just as Claggart

falsely accuses Billy. Ian McCormick notes that Oates was notorious not only as a traitor but also for his homosexual orientation (51). Claggart's evil and Billy's high morals are brought into sharp relief by the references to biblical and historical figures.

Therefore, Captain Vere cries out, "It is the divine judgment on Ananias!" (100; ch. 19) in front of Claggart's dead body, thereby acknowledging Claggart's guilt. Captain Vere's warning to Claggart that "there is a yardarm-end for the false witness" (95; ch. 18) thus becomes a reality. Billy uses his own physical strength for the punishment, and Captain Vere agrees that Billy's decision is ethically right. As Billy does not pursue reporting his officer's sexual provocation, the process followed is not exactly the same. Hence, as Gilbert illustrates, death is brought to Claggart as a moral offense. Captain Vere is relieved of the burden of judging a man he has suspected to be homosexual. Captain Vere's threat of "a yardarm-end" is brought to Claggart by Billy's fist in a manner similar to the execution in British judicial records. Claggart's homosexual desires are reflected in his reference to Billy's "youth and good looks" and "fair cheek" (94; ch. 18) in his warning to Captain Vere. Claggart displays his "envy" and "antipathy" (77; ch. 12), breaking his silence by expressing interest in Billy's physical appearance. Claggart's statements show his erotic nature, and overwhelm Captain Vere with a feeling of repulsion.

Although Claggart's deed is far from the sodomy feared by the criminal code, his action toward Billy is equally provocative. Claggart wishes to attract Billy's attention and establish a one-to-one relationship. As another old shipmate notices, Claggart shows Billy that he hates Billy and is "down on" (72; ch. 10) him, although Billy has had "never come into any special contact" with Claggart (73; ch. 11). He dramatizes his emotions to attract Billy's attention. Gilbert notes that boys who were victims of rape often had them removed from their positions through legal

action. Furthermore, perpetrators are occasionally regarded as deserving of the death penalty (Gilbert 75). Hence, boys who are victims of a provocative act or a rape have the right to complain about their officers. Through complaint to an appropriate authority, an abused victim can damage a perpetrator's career, resulting in the perpetrator's demotion. Boys can often be threats to their officers, when they possess a voice with which to accuse them. Considering Claggart as a man with "a touch of soft yearning" (88; ch.17) for Billy, his statement, "Handsomely done, my lad! And handsome is as handsome did it, too!" has an erotic and sexually provocative overtone in that an adult man calls a boy "handsome," focusing on his physical appearance. Hence, innocent Billy would have a right to complain to an authority if he felt annoyed about being called "handsome," and accordingly, Claggart deserves punishment if his words are to be taken as sexual harassment. Captain Vere understands why Billy is annoyed and that Billy's violent reaction toward Claggart, which causes his death, is a form of punishment.

A prevalent ideology that exists states that men's homosexual desires for boys brings about disorder, and eventually the men in higher positions who provoke the boys are discharged or sentenced to death. Attractive boys who stir up other men's homosexual desires are capable of overturning the order within groups. An incident similar to the one mentioned in *BB* has been recorded in British Naval history. In 1762, Robert Garbutt, a boatswain, was convicted of attempted sodomy, primarily based on the testimony of a boy, John Pyle. However, initially, Pyle did not complain to the ship's officers because he was afraid the boatswain would punish him (Gilbert 75). Due to his fear, he initially refused to reveal what had happened to him. Similarly, Billy's guardian-like Dansker tells Billy that "he [Claggart]'s down on you [Billy]" (71; ch. 10) implying that Claggart intends to set a trap for him out of hatred. Therefore, Billy knows in

advance that he is going to be a victim of Claggart's hatred. While Pyle was the victim of sodomy, Billy is the victim of a false accusation resulting from Claggart's harassment. Considering this, Pyle's and Billy's cases are not exact parallels. However, if readers assume Claggart's statement about Billy's physical appearance to be a sexually provocative action, Billy in fact partially shares Pyle's experience. Billy's stammer is equivalent to Pyle's initial confusion, in that both result in silence. However, if they are allowed to speak out, boys have the power to get rid of the erotic man, who is harmful to men's bonds. Boys who are provoked by their superior officers commonly become witnesses, and they must be eloquent enough to explain what has happened to them. Therefore, if Billy had had the ability to defend himself with words, not violence, he could have dealt with Claggart in a legal manner.

Though some boys, such as Pyle, testified in trials, leading authorities were reluctant to convict homosexual men due to suspicious behaviors that probably did not deserve punishment (Gilbert 72-74). Gilbert notes that in the British Navy—the setting of this novel—when a captain judged certain behavior to be suspicious but was unable to assert that it was homosexual, he could make an independent judgment (Gilbert 72). Unlike military authorities, Pyle and boys like him exhibited considerable courage in making those in higher positions understand what had happened to them. Captain Vere may have expected Billy to similarly testify to convict Claggart and show the same level of courage as those other boys in the past. Captain Vere cheers Billy up saying, “There is no hurry, my boy. Take your time, take your time” (99; ch. 19). During the trial, Captain Vere again encourages Billy, saying “I believe you, my man” (106; ch. 21). After realizing that his encouragement is futile and that Billy cannot testify his innocence, Captain Vere exhibits confusion. To hide his confusion, Captain Vere does not try to examine the motive of Billy's

violence. As for the judgement of Claggart's false accusation, Captain Vere merely says that this is "a matter for psychologic theologians to discuss" (108; ch. 21), and gives up on resolving the matter by himself.

It is not just Captain Vere but also the narrator who explains Claggart's nature in an ambiguous way. The narrator implies the possibility of homosexuality, speaking of "the mania of an evil nature" (76; ch. 11). Similarly, Paul McCarthy describes Claggart's behavior as manifesting signs of possible "monomania" or "symptom of moral insanity" (McCarthy 127-28). Furthermore, considering that *BB* is a story of the British Navy, Alan Bray's explanations regarding sodomy are applicable not only to British literature, but also to an American fiction like *BB*, which is set in late 1700s England. Alan Bray explains that sodomites were historically thought to be "the attendant of witches and demons," being regarded "as the force of anarchic disorder set against divine Creation" (112). However, none of these indicate how a homosexual man would engender disorder or mutiny. Critics commonly insist that homosexuality is an ethical or moral problem.

The same was true of the US military in the past, and homophobia was prevalent there as well. According to Nathaniel Frank, the first recorded incident of a discharge for homosexuality in the US military was in 1778, in which Lieutenant Gotthold Frederick Enslin was found guilty of sodomy. Despite the taboos against same-sex relationships, it has simultaneously been knowingly tolerated—and even deeply relied on—in the US military history (Frank 1-2). Against such a common historical background, it is natural for the American Captain Vere to think of leaving the case to a "psychologic theologian." This basic concept is similar to Bray's as well. Bray states that Elizabethan theology considered homosexuality to be "a temptation common to our fallen human

nature” (105). Captain Vere makes his own judgement on the basis of what actually happened and stops examining the psychological aspects of both sides.

Reluctant to explain Claggart’s motivation publicly, Captain Vere elides the case into a common mutiny to make it more comprehensible:

Will they [shipmates] not revert to the recent outbreak at Nore? Ay. They [shipmates] know the well-founded alarm—the panic it struck throughout England. Your clement sentence they would account pusillanimous. They would think that we flinch, that we are afraid of them—afraid of practicing a lawful rigor singularly demanded at this juncture, lest it should provoke new troubles. (112-13; ch. 21)

Publicly, Captain Vere speaks of the case of Nore, which was a major mutiny by sailors of the Royal Navy in 1797. Although Captain Vere certainly knows that Billy is not at all like the sailors at Nore, the captain deceives his shipmates with fair words, giving his decision the appearance of a reasonable and understandable justification. Thus, Captain Vere decides to maintain silence to smooth things over.

In the same way as Captain Vere instinctively understands Claggart’s evil nature, the narrator also notices Claggart’s inexplicable abnormality. The narrator notes that “Claggart could even have loved Billy but for fate and ban” (88; ch. 17), knowing that military policy rejects homosexuality. We cannot be sure of the narrator’s perspective on homosexuality, but there appears to be an expression of homophobia in the use of the words “monomania,” “queer,” and “insanity” to describe him.

As Captain Vere does not explain the motives for Claggart’s false accusation, Billy too cannot find the right words to explain why he is provoked. Billy’s confusion causes his

stammering, which is described by the narrator as a “vocal defect,” “organic hesitancy,” or “more or less of a stutter or even worse” (53; ch. 2). Violence takes the place of words. However, if Billy could have found the right words to denounce Claggart’s homosexual desire, he would not have become violent. The blow of his fist operates in place of words, thus displaying his anger and protest against Claggart. While male victims pass through the legal system, as we can observe from judicial records, with authorities finally punishing the perpetrator of their rapes, Billy himself punishes his perpetrator directly. Captain Vere regards this scene as an execution “by an angel of God” (101; ch. 19). Captain Vere considers Billy ethically and theologically right; whereas, Claggart is considered morally wrong.

Therefore, in the eighteenth century, the captains in the Royal Navy were able to conceal their crews’ “suspicious” behaviors in the same manner as is seen in Melville’s fiction. In general, authorities are tolerant of homosexual abuse and officers’ sexual provocation toward boys, hesitating to take legal action on such matters. Thus, the topic of homosexuality in *BB* is explained on the basis of the historical background, and *BB* portrays how officers’ manhoods are lost due to their sexual desire.

#### **IV. A Silent Leader and the Subversive Leadership**

Historically, in the military, some boys accused their officers of sexual misconduct, and their outspokenness led to demotions for the concerned officers. In *BB*, Billy’s stammer prevents him from testifying for himself. However, at the end of the story, it is proved that his vocal defect does not reduce him to a mere helpless being. Above all, Billy’s hanging scene demonstrates that he is not completely silent and powerless.

In this story, the seemingly obedient, powerless Billy is compared to a powerful historical figure: “the comely young David” (78; ch. 12). David was loved by Jonathan, son of King Saul, and was given clothing and weapons. “Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle” (*King James Version*, Sam. 1.18-4). Furthermore, Billy is not only compared with David but, to reinforce the parallel, Claggart’s envy toward Billy is likened to that which Saul felt toward David. Saul commissioned David as a military officer, a position in which David was successful (Sam. 1.18-5). David also played music to alleviate Saul’s torment by an evil spirit sent from God (Sam. 1.16-23). Thus, both Billy and David share the quality of attractiveness, and their attractiveness helps strengthen fellowship, especially during wartime. Considering such comparisons made to a biblical figure wielding considerable political power, Billy’s image is not at all powerless, at least in the symbolic realm.

According to Sarah Cole, war literature presents such inexpressible matters as friendship in war along with the unfamiliarity, ineffability, and horror of war; therefore, writers require the cultural authority of the Greek and the Bible to create new and cryptic language (473). The impossibility of speaking about male intimacy is presented in *BB*, although the horror of war is not touched upon in this story. Given the Biblical images of the narrator that are attached to Billy, readers might interpret his beauty as a cause of Claggart’s homosexual desire. With desire and admiration of Billy, war helps Billy’s appearance gain political power over other shipmates.

Billy’s hanging is associated with Christian self-sacrifice; his shipmates keep pieces of the spar from which Billy was suspended, like pieces of “the Cross.” “The Cross” reminds “the fresh young image of the Handsome Sailor” (131; ch. 30). The yearning of his shipmates toward Billy is

not at all sexual or erotic. However, the bond between the shipmates created by Billy is not weakened after his death, thanks to the images that remain of Billy and “the Cross.” Since Billy’s virtue is described in a rather mystical or supernatural way, Billy is able to separate homosexuality from male bonds and denies the possibility of harmful desire among the shipmates. The desire could occasionally be harmful; a suspicious homosexual man such as Claggart provoking Billy causes the hierarchy in the Royal Navy to be overturned. The bonds of his shipmates are not erotic, and their comradeship does not evaporate with the passage of time as Billy’s image and the abiding memories remain in their minds, strengthening their bonds.

Billy occasionally exhibits his eloquence and dignity: as the narrator describes, “ashore he was the champion; afloat the spokesman” (44; ch. 1). Billy is said to be “illiterate; he could not read, but he could sing, and like the illiterate nightingale was sometimes the composer of his own song” (52; ch. 2). Even if he cannot appropriately articulate words, he can use alternative methods to persuade and influence his fellow crew members. The following lines express his dominating power and silent eloquence:

But Billy came; and it was like a Catholic priest striking peace in an Irish shindy. Not that he preached to them or said or did anything in particular; but a virtue went out of him, sugaring the sour ones. (47; ch. 1)

Billy calms down the irritable crew members; his presence has the result of “sugaring the sour ones” with wordless persuasive power. His silent virtue has a religious persuasiveness, similar to that of a Catholic priest. The following passage describes how his shipmates show their admiration of Billy:

But they all love him. Some of 'em do his washing, darn his old trousers for him; the carpenter is at odd times making a pretty little chest of drawers for him. Anybody will do anything for Billy Budd; and it's the happy family here. (47; ch. 1)

Thus, Billy takes the place of his captain and is in control of his shipmates. He is an indispensable being for the maintenance of order. His shipmates' admiration is unrelated to eroticism, and does not require any secrecy. Hence, in this case, the men's affection for Billy is not a dangerous destructive force endangering the military order. Rather, their affection for him becomes an indispensable source of strength for the ties between the men.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's argument in *Between Men* helps explain the relation between mere friendship and homosexuality. Claggart fully utilizes this relation in his plot for a silent mutiny. Further, following Sedgwick's argument helps us recognize the function of patriarchal leadership exerted by Billy on board.

We can go further than that, to say that in any male-dominated society, there is a special relationship between male homosocial (*including* homosexual) desire and the structure for maintaining and transmitting patriarchal power: a relationship founded on an inherent and potentially active structural congruence. For historical reasons, this special relationship may take the form of ideological homophobia, ideological homosexuality, or some highly conflicted but intensively structured combination of the two. (25)

While Billy maintains "patriarchal" power through manipulating his shipmates' "homosocial" desires, Claggart's hatred toward Billy displayed in public space takes the form of "ideological homophobia," described among his shipmates as "queer" (88; ch. 17) or "insanity" (McCarthy

127-28). Sedgwick's theory explains how Claggart's provocation of Billy impedes the transmission of Billy's leadership. Billy is made to be a convict or a mutineer, and shipmates are denied the ability to demonstrate their admiration of Billy in public. However, in their minds, his shipmates follow Billy despite his youth. Billy unconsciously succeeded in creating and maintaining what Sedgwick terms a "special relationship" (25). Billy is thus an essential being, who maintains a bond among men. Similar to the way the biblical figure of David is taken care of by Jonathan, Billy is well taken care of by his fellow members.

Not only his fellow shipmates, but also the sailing master from the side of authority cares about Billy. Billy's execution attracts sympathy from the authorities, and the sailing master asks, "Can we not convict and yet mitigate the penalty?" (112; ch. 21). When Reynolds compares *BB* to the Haymarket Affair in the United States, he refers to Illinois Governor, John Peter Altgeld's comment that "the defendants might be innocent victims of a biased judge" (27). The governor's comment reminds the readers of the sailing master's call for mercy. Officially, Billy is hanged to maintain discipline: the hanging is intended to silence and tame the sailors, the way the punishment in the Haymarket Affair quieted unrest. Ironically, however, Billy's punishment does not horrify the spectators. While the execution of the anarchist in the Haymarket Affair was cruel, Billy's execution scene is peculiar, as the narrator explains it as "so anticipated" (123; ch. 25), with the articulation of effective words or "syllables" (123; ch. 25). There is, therefore, a great difference in the result that follows Billy's execution. Billy bears some narrative and symbolic similarity to historical conspirators convicted of violence, but the difference in this case lies in Billy's obedience. He is totally obedient to his captain's authority, while the historical conspirators mentioned in the text exhibited dissatisfaction toward their respective authorities.

Billy's final words, "God bless Captain Vere!" (123; ch. 25), spoken clearly, deny his stammering and show his persistent obedience to the Captain; at the same time, this could be regarded as a non-violent protest against those who watched the public flogging. Through his own actions and words, Billy reduces the cruelty of his punishment. Unlike the punishment in the Haymarket Affair, which showed the complete victory of the state over anarchists, Billy acquires considerable influence at his hanging scene. The following lines demonstrate how the cruelty is reduced by his behaviors and appearance:

Syllables so unanticipated coming from one with the ignominious hemp about his neck—a conventional felon's benediction directed aft towards the quarters of honor; syllables too delivered in the clear melody of a singing bird on the point of launching from the twig—had a phenomenal effect, not unenhanced by the rare personal beauty of the young sailor, spiritualized now through late experiences so poignantly profound. (123; ch. 25)

His words demonstrate his eloquence, reminding readers of the narrator's descriptions: "ashore he was the champion; afloat the spokesman" (44; ch. 1) and "a Catholic priest striking peace in an Irish shindy" (47; ch. 1). The comparison of his voice to the melody of birds enhances the effect of his words. His personal beauty is emphasized again, using images drawn from natural phenomena. Silently uniting the crew, Billy becomes spiritualized and acquires the power to refute the leader's authority and rules. In this context, the words, "God bless Captain Vere!" or "Syllables" contain several meanings. There is the possibility of different interpretations of his words both among spectators and readers. Captain Vere commits a sin by executing and betraying Billy for official

reasons. Only God and Captain Vere know that Billy has made “the divine judgment on Ananias,” and Captain Vere is at Billy’s side when Claggart is struck dead.

Instead of remaining silent, those who have witnessed Billy’s execution gain a voice, as they sing Billy’s ballad at the end of the story. They demonstrate unity, which is interpreted as a eulogy for Billy or at the very least a minor disobedience of the authority that judged him, as they sing the ballad of the dead convict, Billy Budd. Although this is not at all the violent act of a rebel, his shipmates begin to worship Billy and not their captain. Unintentionally, Billy deprives Captain Vere of his authoritative power. The powerless authority held by Captain Vere reminds the readers of Melville’s other fictional characters, such as the lawyer in “Bartleby” or Captain Delano in “Benito Cereno” The extraordinary execution scene indicates that Billy is not the victim of authority. Captain Vere’s famous remark, “forms, measured forms” (128; ch. 27), is denied by Billy’s deeds in the final scene. Captain Vere seemingly undermines his own authority by executing an innocent party, although he is not insightful enough to recognize his mistake. Through Captain Vere’s error, Billy unintentionally becomes both a leader and an unintentional silent mutineer by showing his obedience to the captain with the cry of “God bless Captain Vere!” After seeing Billy’s hanging, his shipmates “instinctively felt that Billy was a sort of man as incapable of mutiny as of wilful murder” (131; ch. 30). His shipmates’ anger is not described, but this shows, at least, that they do doubt the judgment regarding Billy’s guilt.

## **V. Eloquent Silence and the Captain’s Misjudgment**

Billy’s stammering in the first half of the novella causes Captain Vere to misjudge him. If Billy had not said “God bless Captain Vere!” at his hanging, things would have been different.

Captain Vere could have justified his decision and have maintained a level of trust among his crew by stressing Billy's violence and the possibility of mutiny. However, as Billy unexpectedly shows his great obedience in public, the level of distrust of captain rises. Although Billy cannot articulate an answer when asked to testify regarding his innocence, his innermost intentions are manifested to his shipmates through his "rare personal beauty." Billy's punishment seems less extreme when compared to the crucifixion of Jesus when "the fleece of the Lamb of God" appears and Billy ascends while taking "the full rose of the dawn" (124; ch. 25). Captain Vere's intention to demonstrate his power through a cruel punishment fails. His authority is denied by Billy's divinity that occurs at his execution. Billy becomes the object of everyone's gaze.

Considering that *BB* is set in pre-modern Europe, namely in England, sympathy for a hanged criminal was not unusual. According to Pieter Spierenburg, in the late eighteenth century, executions and punishments were routinely repeated rituals and unremarkable shows. Ironically, with the occurrence of riots, the executed would even sometimes garner public sympathy instead of the antipathy intended by the authorities; when rioters rebel against public authority, they also may garner public sympathy (51–52). In *BB*, his shipmates, as spectators of the execution, strongly sympathize with Billy even though they do not know the motive for his crime. Hence, the negative side of the public execution is partly reflected in this story. Captain Vere obscures the fact that Claggart may be homosexual, and that his erotic desire caused a false accusation. Unable to provide proof of original guilt of Claggart, he covers up Claggart's suspicious provocative behavior by only referring to Billy's violence and shifting all blame to Billy, in principle at least.

Billy invalidates Captain Vere's "form" (128; ch. 27), or his discipline, which indicates a complete hierarchy. In *Epistemology of the Closet*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick describes Captain

Vere's discipline as associated with two methods of "physical elevation" (106). They are described as follows:

First, his preferred form of discipline depends, as we have seen, on positioning some male body not his own in a sacrificial "bad eminence" of punitive visibility, an eminence that (in his intention) forms the organizing summit of what thereby becomes a triangle or pyramid of male relations.... In another version of Vere's disciplinary triangle, however, his own seeing eye, not the looked-upon body of some other man who has been made an example of, makes the apex of the disciplinary figure. (106)

Sedgwick illustrates how spectators become subordinate to the man forming the "summit" and how Captain Vere exercises his power from the top of a triangle. However, Captain Vere's misjudgment prevents him from perfecting his "preferred form of discipline," the triangle. Billy is placed at the top of the triangle as a mere sacrifice. However, Billy is not degraded to a mere sacrifice. Captain Vere is also at the top of the triangle, expecting that everyone will observe how Billy pays for his crime; however, everyone's eyes are not on Captain Vere but on Billy. Therefore, even if Captain Vere looks down from the apex of his triangle after the public flogging, no one feels his political power. Captain Vere fails to exercise his authority and recognizes his failure and misjudgment. Billy's own seeing-eye forms the apex, and physically, Captain Vere is only a witness of the hanging and is not as important as Billy. Billy is at the highest place on the naval ship at the moment of his hanging, not only physically but also metaphorically. Billy's final moment is so impressive that his shipmates forget the existence of the navy's strict rules for a moment. Hence, Billy invalidates the laws and rules that control the spirit and behaviors of the shipmates, and his shipmates superficially return to a disciplined order after the execution. Captain

Vere's manhood or his place in the patriarchy as a political leader on board the ship is lost as he begins to realize his own misjudgments and faces the reactions of Billy's shipmates. The whole incident, caused by Claggart's homosexual desire, emasculates the captain and he feels remorse.

According to Sedgwick, "the last third of the novella, the shockingly quick forced-march of Billy to the mainyard gallows and his apotheosis there: wholly and purely the work of Captain Vere, these represent the perfect answer to a very particular hunger" (109). Sedgwick does not discuss further the function of Billy's apotheosis; however, Captain Vere does not intend to make an apotheosis of Billy in his execution. Billy's articulation of the words "God bless Captain Vere!" is incidental to his plan; they are the "syllables so unanticipated." Their spontaneous nature grants Billy his omnipotence.

Captain Vere's preferred triangle does not work as he expected because the crew do not follow the strict structure of naval rules. Colin McGinn mentions that "the ideas of an inversion of the usual laws of interpersonal feeling" are reflected in *BB* (64). McGinn raises questions regarding malevolent motiveless action and the character from which such action springs, concluding that Captain Vere "must exact the required punishment on Billy for striking an officer, namely death, all the while knowing that Claggart had evilly plotted against him" (64). Captain Vere neglects to understand the interpersonal feelings of Billy and Claggart. He never asks whether Claggart has an erotic desire toward Billy or whether Billy took his provocation to be sexual or erotic. Neither Claggart nor Billy conveys what caused them to do some particular actions. While each character has their own motives, Captain Vere pretends ignorance of their innermost emotions. The historical policy of the Royal Navy silenced the expression of sexual

preference. Captain Vere treated the cause of the disorder on his ship in the same manner as the policy and eventually failed to deal with the case.

Captain Vere makes a crude decision. Clare L. Spark compares Captain Vere's quickness and carelessness with the insensitive Captain Delano in "Benito Cereno," stating that "Vere lacked insight into the psychology of the unshackled lower orders" (399). However, these two leaders are not exactly the same. Captain Vere is more sensitive and considerate than Captain Delano, and he confesses his personal feelings to his subordinate, Billy. Captain Vere spares time for "the closeted interview" for "less than an hour and a half" (116; ch. 23). This can be interpreted that Captain Vere needs private space and time with Billy to disclose his emotional struggles. The captain's struggles are originally caused by the suspicious behaviors of Claggart, and his struggle or "the agony of the strong" (115; ch. 22) is witnessed by the senior lieutenant when leaving the closet-like compartment. At this point, Captain Vere is careless and incapable. Originally, his inability to deal with the potential homosexual man, Claggart, causes his agony, and his agony makes him less impassive.

## **VI. Persistent and Universal Sexual Issues in the Military**

Billy displays his nobility to his captain through his cry of "God bless Captain Vere!" When Billy cries out, everyone stares at Billy with admiration. All eyes are on Billy and not Captain Vere. Billy's extraordinary hanging scene was not created intentionally by Billy; however, ironically, what Sedgwick termed "Vere's preferred form of discipline" collapses. The spectators confirm Billy's attractiveness once again, strengthening their bonds by worshipping him. There is no further reference to Billy's physical attractiveness by the narrator until the end of the story.

Harmful homosexual desires are removed from men's comradeship as both Claggart and Billy disappear. In this way, ill-planned punishment leads to the distrust of their leader. Another mutiny may occur if the shipmates remained dissatisfied with Billy's verdict and direct their anger toward their captain.

Overall, Billy unconsciously gains political power over his shipmates and becomes a silent mutineer without any clear intention of being one. Hence, *BB* shows that erotic homosexual desires become a cause of instability in authority, or even great mutinies. Incapable historical leaders and the captain in *BB* cannot speak openly about suspicious erotic desires, which are harmful to the organizations, and they have failed to eliminate those desires. Occasionally, what Sedgwick termed "homosociality" works effectively to create a family-like relationship within the navy, if the term "homosociality" does not include homosexuality. Therefore, *BB* presents to us persistent sexual problems throughout the military, all of which result from maintaining silence about Claggart's sexual preference and Billy's stammering and Captain Vere's misjudgments. Thus, *BB* reminds us of past incidents of homophobic abuse, disorder, and lack of leadership displayed by military officers in Britain, all of which are caused by the silence about sexual preferences within the forces.

**Conclusion:**

Lost manhood or manhood different from the traditional aristocratic idea could be regarded as the central themes of Melville's later works. British aristocracy was no longer dominant when Melville wrote these works; therefore, some critics find these works to be portraying a weakened manhood. However, these works could also be regarded as indicating another form of manhood that emerged in nineteenth-century America, which cannot be termed "weak." Some male characters never believe in their manhood, and leaders are not horrified by their subordinates. Their carelessness and insensitivity eventually cause the employers or slaves to protest.

The first chapter examined the relationships of fathers with their family members through their interactions with these family members to highlight how manhood has transformed and how female members of the family challenge patriarchy itself. In "Pierre" and "Chimney," Melville portrayed dominant mothers to illustrate the authorities of the suppressed fathers. Therefore, fathers in Melville's work lost their ability to persuade and control their family members. In these two works, Melville denied the importance of the fathers' eloquence for exercising authority. Rather, unexpected objects such as portraits and an old chimney have influential power over family members.

Although the father in *Pierre* has a negative influence on his family members, especially the protagonist Pierre, his images in the different portraits still have some power to control the

emotions of his family members, even after his death. The portraits which Melville depicts in this fiction are not only used to hold the memories of the past but are also used as evidence of someone's secret activities, similar to criminal records. Hence, in Melville's works, eloquence is not always important in order to exercise patriarchal authority. The father's non-existence means that he is no longer the central power in the family; however, he still exerts an influence on his immature son, Pierre, as a role model.

A father's superficial weakness or nonexistence does not always mean the loss of patriarchy if the father can laugh off his struggle or agony. Laughter is more important than literal words to show his spiritual strength and authority. Some critics interpret "Chimney" as a story of weakening patriarchy, or offering a warning about American family relationships. Others believe that the removal of the chimney and the father's fear of it reflect the castration anxiety of the boys. However, the father, who is the narrator, pretends to be a philosophical old man, not a young boy. The father has the strength to laugh off his weakness and make the audience laugh while maintaining family bonds. In his superficial immaturity, the father becomes similar to his immature young daughters and behaves like their friend. He also pretends to be subordinate to his wife to satisfy her sense of superiority. This is how he maintains his family bonds. His sense of humor and wit assist in reducing the seriousness of his quarrel with his wife. Words that elicit laughter can have a controlling power that attracts an audience as well. Although the protagonist

of “Chimney” is outside the market economy and his economic success as a family man is not portrayed in this story, his patriarchal role as the head of his family is somehow maintained by his humorous, optimistic views.

The second chapter explored how men’s ideals and yearnings for the beauty of nature are betrayed by Melville’s female characters.

In “Paradise,” the insensitive factory supervisor’s pride of maintaining the factory system is ridiculed by the narrator since the supervisor does not notice the sickness of the girls or their tuberculosis (TB), possibly caused by the poor ventilation in the paper factory. Melville portrayed TB as being disgusting and harmful to factory workers in an implicit way. The female factory workers have “blank” faces, meaning that they have no passion at all, and the factory systems with their good wages do not always satisfy the factory girls. Rather, the system makes them emotionless and sick. This indicates that the workforce will be lost sometime in the future, and the seemingly well-established factory system will be destroyed by the supervisor’s excessive pride.

In “The Piazza,” another one of Melville’s short works, the author not only subverted the prevalent European idea of picturesque and sublime beauty but also demonstrated how a male protagonist’s aberrant views are rectified and how he matures after an encounter with a mountain girl. In this work, the male protagonist, who is the narrator, shows great admiration for natural landscapes, adding another meaning to these concepts. The sublime beauty of an abandoned house

is the object that stirs up the narrator's imaginations, and he believes his weariness can be removed by an encounter with a fairy-like girl in a mountain. However, barren nature makes the narrator face harsh reality. Therefore, what were generally considered beautiful were not at all objects of beauty in Melville's short works. The protagonist was fooled by his fancy imaginations at the beginning of the story, and he opens his eyes to reality in the end. Hence, the female characters in these works have the power to modify men's concrete ideas. Although, Cupid in "Paradise" does not change his ideas at all, the narrator of the story, at least, changes his ideas and pays homage to the factory girls' fragile workforce.

The final chapter illustrated the power of eloquent silence of some subordinate shipmates or slaves and the emasculation of the captains due to the followers' powers. Political autonomy and leadership abilities are tested and proven several times by the captains' followers. Melville's works show the importance of leaders' sensitivity and communication skills with regard to their subordinates.

In "Benito Cereno," Babo is not at all a practical leader of the ship, but the shaving scene shows his menace in an implicit way. Babo pretends to be an obedient servant of Don Benito when he shaves the latter's beard, but for Don Benito, it feels like his neck is being cut. What Babo does in this scene is to show his power, and his deed is more powerful than words in exercising leadership. He needs no words to horrify his captain. Aranda's skeleton and Babo's

head in the final scene damage Don Benito spiritually, and it causes his death. Therefore, again, words are not always necessary to exercise practical leadership.

In the same manner, in *BB*, Billy unintentionally becomes a silent plotter, causing silent mutiny on board. He also brings confusion to his captain, Vere. Due to this confusion, Captain Vere makes the wrong judgement in sentencing Billy. Billy's unexpected cry during his flogging, "God Bless Captain Vere!" attracts the audience, depriving Captain Vere of his dignity and authority. Captain Vere fails to prove his political autonomy in front of his shipmates. Instead, Billy's images are always in his shipmates' minds, making Billy's final image their object of admiration. Whereas Billy intentionally plots to deprive his captain of his leadership, he also unintentionally gains power to control his shipmates. Both Billy and Babo manage to cause the same result, which is doubt about the white captains' correctness of judgement. They reduce the authoritative power of their captains or white leaders either intentionally or unintentionally, leading to the possibility of chaos in the order of their respective ships.

Overall, the manhood of Melville's characters either face the threat of deprivation or are already being deprived. Female force is one of the reasons damaging the pride of men. On the ship, the captains' followers unexpectedly gain the power to attract other crew members, overturning the authority of the captains. Therefore, Melville showed a variety of manhood in his later works that are totally different from the traditional aristocratic idea. These deviated forms of manhood

are themes worthy of portrayal in literary works; they represent a democratic America and its manhood in the mid-nineteenth century.

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