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# Narrative Reflection and Anatomical Introspection in Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*

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NARRATIVE REFLECTION AND ANATOMICAL INTROSPECTION IN THOMAS  
CARLYLE'S *SARTOR RESARTUS* AND HERMAN MELVILLE'S *MOBY DICK*.

By

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Narrative Reflection and Anatomical introspection in Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*

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Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1831) and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick or, the Whale* (1851) combine the novel and the anatomy, creating a plot as well as a reflection on the human condition. The result of this combination produces a narrator whose single-minded focus on an object both propels events forward while at the same time stalling the progress of a traditional plot. The aspects of the text that connect to the novel, such as character and plot, offer a reflection of the effect truth and society have on character. Aspects that connect to the anatomy, such as the exhaustive knowledge of a particular subject, allow for an introspection of that reflected truth.

Published twenty years after Carlyle wrote *Sartor Resartus*, Melville's *Moby Dick*, through his characters Ahab and Ishmael, picks up the threads of identity and the quest for truth and meaning that Carlyle examined with the characters of Teufelsdröckh and the Editor. Looking to combat feelings of hopelessness stemming from society and the self, each narrator—the Editor and Ishmael—begins a figurative journey in which he attempts to understand the inner-workings of man through the intense study of someone else. In this thesis I argue that the combination of the novel and anatomy as both plot and knowledge based allows the narrator to lose himself in his subject's identity while still remaining central. Through the lives of Teufelsdröckh and Ahab respectively, each narrator examines the shaping of identity and self. Resulting from his role as the informant and observer as well as the singular nature of his inquiry, the narrator exposes his quest for his own identity, and in the process, he unintentionally takes on the self of his subject. Not simply narrators who tell someone else's story, the Editor and Ishmael, become the very men who stand "fixed in ocean reveries"(Melville 4) in search of a "new Truth"(Carlyle 8) that will shape and inform their identity.

## Introduction:

### The Anatomy of a Narrative

Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick or, the Whale* ask fundamental questions about identity and self in a scientifically mechanistic world, a world in which industrialization and science minimize the significance of the self by dissecting and exploring a person's inward<sup>1</sup> (soul and self) and using a person's body as a machine to help create and propel society and economy. In other words, the metaphysical self becomes lost in the mechanistic view of humanity. In attempting to discover the metaphysical significance of the self, to find as Carlyle states a "divine ME," the texts *Sartor Resartus* and *Moby-Dick* combine the narrative and the anatomy, creating both a plot and a reflection on the human condition. This combination produces a narrator whose single-minded focus on an object propels events forward while at the same time stalling the progress of a traditional plot. The combination of these two forms also allows for an in-depth investigation of the self and metaphysical truth as it affects the course of one's life.

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<sup>1</sup> When discussing identity and self, I use the term inward to refer to the soul and spiritual truths in man. I use the term outward to refer to body, characteristics, and actions of an individual.

<sup>2</sup> In *Sartor Resartus* a German scholar by the name of Diogenes Teufelsdröckh examines the problems of contemporary society through a study and philosophy of clothing. Teufelsdröckh chooses to examine clothing as "in all speculations [scientists and philosophers] have tacitly figured man as a *Clothed Animal*; whereas he is by nature a *Naked Animal*; and only in certain circumstances, by purpose and device, masks himself in Clothes" (4).

<sup>3</sup> I use the term selfs rather than selves as I am referring to each man's desire to discover his metaphysical self. The term selfs, then, indicates two distinct metaphysical selfs.

<sup>4</sup> In his in-depth study on Carlyle's works and his contribution to the modern novel, Albert J. LaValley, asserts that "the source for the new religious myth is simply the self, and it is this belief which Carlyle has emphasized in branding Teufelsdröckh's experience

The question of identity and the self often begins with a central question, such as the question Carlyle's Clothes philosopher<sup>2</sup>, Teufelsdröckh, asks at the beginning of his philosophy: "who am I; this thing that can say I" (*Sartor* 42). This question, as philosopher Charles Taylor claims, "can't necessarily be answered by giving name a genealogy" (27). Melville's narrator reiterates this point at the beginning of *Moby-Dick* when, as an "Usher to a grammar school," he initially attempts to find the meaning and significance attached to the term *whale* through the word itself. However, he finds the study of the word, as an indication of the whale's significance, inadequate. Though the grammar book asserts that to fully understand the word, and thereby (at least according to the grammar book) the whale, "leaving out, through ignorance, the letter H, which almost alone maketh up the signification of the word, you deliver that which is not true" (MD xxxvii). The Grammar book suggests that the only way to understand the whale is through the pronunciation of the word. The narrator, however, quickly contradicts the grammar book passage by providing a list of words that mean "whale" in other languages. Therefore, the name does not make up "the signification of the word" or give insight into the truth or meaning of the whale. Similarly, the question of "who am I" goes beyond the name. Taylor, in his study on the creation of identity, establishes that "identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon" from which a person can determine "what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose" (27).

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<sup>2</sup> In *Sartor Resartus* a German scholar by the name of Diogenes Teufelsdröckh examines the problems of contemporary society through a study and philosophy of clothing. Teufelsdröckh chooses to examine clothing as "in all speculations [scientists and philosophers] have tacitly figured man as a *Clothed Animal*; whereas he is by nature a *Naked Animal*; and only in certain circumstances, by purpose and device, masks himself in Clothes" (4).

In using the terms "frame" and "horizon," Taylor refers to the institutions and systems of belief with which a person identifies, and which provide a perspective on the world, acting as a place from which an individual is "capable of taking a stand" (27). Taylor examines the way this question of identity and self places a person in "moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad . . . what has meaning and importance for a [self] and what is trivial and secondary" (28). While Taylor considers the question of self and identity with a moral philosophic lens, Carlyle and Melville examine the question of self and identity through the relationships of their main characters and the structure of their texts. When a person knows and has a firm grasp of his/her framework, the question "who am I" does not present a problem for the individual.

The question of "who am I" becomes particularly salient and problematic, however, when a person "lack[s] a frame or horizon with which things can take on a stable significance" (Taylor 27). Having events and objects in one's life take on a "stable significance" allows a person to evaluate his or her choices based on a consistent framework of meaning, and aids in the understanding, and potential reformation, of his or her "I" and "self," thereby moving his or her life-narrative forward. Carlyle's Editor and Melville's Ishmael, however, have each come to a point in their lives in which they lack a clear framework or horizon. Having lost their "commitment or identification, they [are] at sea," and they don't "know anymore, for an important range of questions, what the significance of things [is] for them" (27). The Editor and Ishmael, in aiming to discover

their selves,<sup>3</sup> look to find an idea or framework to which they can anchor their selves. This process of self-discovery, however, cannot be taken as a solo journey. “The question Who?” as Taylor asserts, “is asked to place someone as a potential interlocutor in a society of interlocutors” (29). In asking this question, then, a self requires another self off of whom “Who?” can reflect. In understanding that “one is a self only among other selves” (35), then, the Editor and Ishmael attach the search for their selves to other selves—the Editor to Teufelsdröckh, and Ishmael to Ahab—as a way to discover their identities in relation to and with other identities.

Both Teufelsdröckh and Ahab seem to have a clear sense of self as indicated by their firmly established frameworks through which they view the world: one through a Philosophy of Clothes, the other on a hunt for a white whale. Attaching to another, more firmly established self allows both the Editor and Ishmael to ask not “who am I?” but “who is Teufelsdröckh?,” “who is Ahab?,” thereby displacing the study of their selves by studying—and taking on—the selves of other people. As the Editor and Ishmael attempt to discover and study the self of someone else, they study the other person’s narrative. According to Taylor, in order to make “sense of ourselves . . . we grasp our lives in a *narrative*” (47). In looking at the self, and to “have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going” (47). The narrative allows people to examine where they stand in their attempt to assess their progress toward their view of “what is good.” An individual can’t see growth toward a higher good without viewing the events that may suggest growth in the context of “his/her surrounding life” (48). Whether events and feelings in one’s life are “illusions” or “reflect

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<sup>3</sup> I use the term selves rather than selves as I am referring to each man’s desire to discover his metaphysical self. The term selves, then, indicates two distinct metaphysical selves.

real growth” (48) can only really be assessed when considering “what part they play in a narrative of this life. We have to move forward and back to make a real assessment” (Taylor 48). Unsure how to apply this study or ask these questions of their own narratives, the Editor and Ishmael study the narratives—the lives—of Teufelsdröckh and Ahab. As the Editor and Ishmael have lost their sense of a framework or “horizon” from which they can garner the “significance of things,” they don’t trust the meaning or truth in their own narratives. In studying another’s narrative, then, they endeavor to understand or discover a “significance of things” from another’s narrative framework. In this way, they attempt an in-depth study of the objects and events of the other’s narrative through the anatomy.

The anatomy, according to Northrop Frye, comes out of the tradition of the Menippean satire in which, unlike the “novelist” who “sees evil and folly as social diseases[,] . . . the Menippean satirist sees them as diseases of the intellect” (309). In an attempt to reveal the intellectual disease, the Menippean satire “presents us with a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern” (310). The novelist, as Frye asserts, “shows his exuberance” for particular “ideas and cultural interests” through “exhaustive analysis of human relationships . . . or social phenomena” (311). The Menippean satirist, on the other hand, “dealing with intellectual themes and attitudes, shows his exuberance . . . by piling up an enormous mass of erudition about his theme” (311). As Frye examines the Menippean satire, he asserts that Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* works as “scholarly distillations of Menippean forms” in which “human society is studied in terms of the intellectual pattern provided by the conception of melancholy” (311). The term “anatomy,” as Burton uses it, “means a dissection or



analysis, and expresses very accurately the intellectualized approach of his form” (311). The term anatomy works for Frye as “a convenient name to replace the cumbersome and in modern times rather misleading ‘Menippean satire’” (312).<sup>4</sup> Eventually, as Frye states, the anatomy “begins to merge” with the novel, allowing “characters [to become] symbols of social or other ideals” (312). In merging the various novel forms with the anatomy, the hybrid texts can view “evil and folly” as diseases of both society and the intellect. In giving examples of the novel-anatomy hybrids, Frye considers *Moby-Dick* to be a “romance-anatomy” (313) and *Sartor Resartus* to be a “confession-anatomy,” thus establishing the split form of the texts. However, given the role of a narrative as Taylor defines it and the Editor and Ishmael’s anatomical study of another’s narrative, *Sartor Resartus* and *Moby-Dick* can also be considered narrative-anatomies.

In the case of *Sartor* and *Moby*, the disease, which results in an inability to know and understand one’s inward—the self or the spiritual—stems from society’s belief that through science a person’s soul can be discovered and dissected. Metaphysical truth, then, becomes a mechanistic endeavor rather than a spiritual one. In its attempt to understand truth, science fragments the body into parts, but fails to see humans and Nature as part of a whole. Both the Editor and Ishmael, on the other hand, want to understand the self as a part of the whole in hopes of discovering and reclaiming truth and meaning from science and mechanism. Therefore, they make use of the anatomy as

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<sup>4</sup> In his in-depth study on Carlyle’s works and his contribution to the modern novel, Albert J. LaValley, asserts that “the source for the new religious myth is simply the self, and it is this belief which Carlyle has emphasized in branding Teufelsdröckh’s experience as paradigmatic, symbolical myth. Myth for Carlyle and the modern mind becomes a pattern that one creates out of the depths of the self rather than a pattern to which one submits oneself” (LaValley 84). Therefore the “intellectual pattern” used to understand society and humanity addressed in the Menippean satire becomes in the anatomy an “intellectual pattern” to understand the self and by extension society.

they try to dissect and analyze the narratives and selves of two men—Teufelsdröckh and Ahab—who seem to have succeeded in this endeavor. Ironically, though, to understand the whole, the narrative must be studied in fragments. In this thesis, I argue that the dual structure of the narrative and anatomy, as both plot- and knowledge-based, allows for the narrator to lose himself in his subject's identity—taking on his “I” as well as his gaze—while still remaining central.

In *Sartor Resartus*, the Editor's life work revolves around understanding and internalizing Teufelsdröckh's views of society, humanity and self. While Carlyle creates a clear, distinct voice for both the Editor and Teufelsdröckh, the Editor's identity begins to merge with his subject's. As a result, the Editor's sense of self and meaning, stemming from his exhaustive study of his subject's life, reflects in Teufelsdröckh's life. Melville, heavily influenced by Carlyle (as well as other writers), complicates the structure utilized by Carlyle by creating a more complex plot. In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael takes on the goals and ideals of Captain Ahab. As Ahab's voice and identity becomes Ishmael's, Ishmael's physical presence in the narrative decreases. Only in the chapters on the anatomy and significance of whales—an obsession that mirrors Ahab's monomaniacal hunt for Moby Dick—does Ishmael remain prominent. The combination of the narrative and anatomy allows both Melville and Carlyle to examine the loss and creation of the self. The narrative, the outward quest for identity, as well as the outward reflection of the effects that truth and society have on an individual, propels events in the text forward. The anatomy, an in-depth study of events and objects in the narrative, allows for an introspection of that reflected truth and identity.

Each narrator begins a figurative journey that looks to combat feelings of

hopelessness stemming from society and self. The Editor struggles to find meaning in a world where “pure Science” and reason “cramps the free flight of Thought” (Carlyle 5). Likewise, Ishmael finds life in the city “grim” and “requires a strong, moral principle” to keep from killing himself or starting a fight with someone else (Melville 3). Each looks elsewhere for meaning. The Editor turns figuratively to a “sea of Thought” (Carlyle 6) in the Philosophy of Clothes, and Ishmael goes literally to the “watery part of the world” (Melville 3) in a whaling boat. The sea journey, both figurative and literal, becomes significant as an “image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and [the sea] is the key to it all” (Melville 5). In psychoanalyzing Ishmael’s quest, critic Mary Pitts examines the significance of the ocean. Although Pitts’s analysis focuses on Ishmael, her argument about the ocean metaphor can also be applied to the Editor. Pitts asserts that “Ishmael perceives in the archetypal fascination with water . . . a deeper meaning . . . closely associated with identity” (Pitts 175). In making this argument, Pitts draws on the works of psychoanalysts Gaston Bachelard and Leo Marx who “associate the reflecting water [in the story of Narcissus to which Ishmael alludes] with the possibility of penetrating nature’s surface, yet with the tantalizing effect of reflecting the individual’s image” (175). Though I am not psychoanalyzing either the Editor or Ishmael, Pitts’s article offers insight into the possibilities for truth that the sea offers to philosophers and sailors alike.

“Penetrating nature’s surface” requires going beyond what is reflected in the hopes of finding truth and meaning. In its dual structure, the narrative-anatomy combination allows for the kind of inquiry that creates both introspection and reflection. Through the lives of Teufelsdröckh and Ahab respectively, both the Editor and Ishmael examine, through the combination of narrative and anatomy, the shaping of

identity and self. Stemming from his role as the informant and observer as well as from the singular nature of his inquiry, the narrator exposes his quest for his own identity. In the process, he takes on the self and narrative of his subject. Not simply narrators who tell someone else's story, the Editor and Ishmael become the very men who stand "fixed in ocean reveries" (Melville 4) in search of a "new Truth" (Carlyle 8) that will shape and inform their identities.

## Chapter 1:

“The Heroic Heart, the Seeing Eye” (*Sartor Resartus* 187)

In *Sartor Resartus* Thomas Carlyle creates two individual voices in Teufelsdröckh and the Editor. Though Teufelsdröckh’s philosophy and life maintain a central position in the text, the Editor, despite his anatomical study of Teufelsdröckh’s life and philosophy, remains present. Instead of disappearing, he creates his own narrative: an account of his struggles to understand Teufelsdröckh’s philosophy and piece together the biography. The Editor studies Teufelsdröckh’s narrative and philosophy as a way to better understand his own narrative and self; in order to stay present in the text, therefore, he must tie his identity to Teufelsdröckh’s identity.

*Sartor Resartus* begins with an unnamed editor’s discovery of a Philosophy of Clothes by a German philosopher Teufelsdröckh. The Editor feels unsatisfied with the way “Man’s whole life and environment have been laid open and elucidated” (*Sartor* 3) in a purely scientific way without an adequate philosophical model by which the soul, and thereby the metaphysical significance of humans, may be understood. Unfortunately for the Editor, however, “Professor Teufelsdröckh is not a cultivated writer” (24). He is required, in order to make sense of the Philosophy of Clothes (also referred to as the Clothes Volume, the Clothes Philosophy or simply the Philosophy), to edit the Philosophy so he can “bring what order [he] can out of this Chaos” (27). While he tries to piece together the Philosophy, he also attempts to create a biography of the philosopher through fragmented pieces of autobiographical information. The structure of *Sartor* alternates between excerpts—chosen by the Editor—from Teufelsdröckh’s Clothes Philosophy and autobiography, and the Editor’s commentary on the philosophy and his

attempts at biography.

*Sartor Resartus* is broken up into three sections. In “Book One” the Editor introduces the Philosophy and the philosopher, Teufelsdröckh, while also establishing the difficulty in editing and understanding the Clothes Volume. The Editor believes that to have a better understanding of the Philosophy he needs to know the man called Teufelsdröckh. The first book ends with the arrival of the autobiographical fragments of Teufelsdröckh’s life. “Book Two” consists of Teufelsdröckh’s autobiography and the Editor’s biography of Teufelsdröckh. The combination of the autobiography and biography shows both why and how Teufelsdröckh came up with his Philosophy of Clothes and also takes the Editor, and the reader, on Teufelsdröckh’s journey from unbelief in the “Everlasting No” to belief in the “Everlasting Yea.” Teufelsdröckh’s personal journey to a whole, believing self constitutes the goal of his Philosophy. “Book Three,” the final book of *Sartor*, moves from Teufelsdröckh’s life back to his Philosophy as the Editor attempts to find his own way to the “Everlasting Yea.” *Sartor* ends with the Editor feeling that he has presented both the Philosophy and the philosopher to the best of his ability, and in this way, having made the German Teufelsdröckh more accessible to the English public, he can emerge from his study.

Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* highlights the need for a fundamental change in a mechanistic society. Teufelsdröckh’s autobiography of his life’s wanderings and the Editor's struggle to piece together Teufelsdröckh’s biography and Philosophy function as the narrative and propel events forward. Teufelsdröckh’s Philosophy on clothes and the Editor’s study of the Clothes Volume and Teufelsdröckh’s life make up the anatomy and offer a reflection on the human condition and the potentiality for change. The narrative-

anatomy form also takes place on a more fundamental level in which the Editor, who exists in society and acts and thinks literally, represents the narrative, while Teufelsdröckh, who exists in the Philosophy and acts and thinks metaphorically, represents the anatomy. Paradoxically, the Editor's creation of Teufelsdröckh through his anatomical study of the autobiography and Philosophy has Teufelsdröckh creating the Editor. Teufelsdröckh, the anatomical figure, represents the metaphorical as he delves into the inner workings of humans, society and spirituality; the Editor, the narrative figure, represents the literal as his comments and actions reflect the inner truth that Teufelsdröckh aims to uncover. The Editor only reflects the inner truth that Teufelsdröckh explores and reveals, thereby giving Teufelsdröckh ultimate control of the text and the Editor.

The Editor seems to understand, perhaps unconsciously, the danger inherent in tying his identity and the creation of his self to the ideas and self of another individual.<sup>5</sup> When introducing Teufelsdröckh's Philosophy, the Editor acknowledges that “it had even operated changes in [his] way of thought,” and that it also “promised to prove, as it were the opening of a new mine-shaft, wherein the whole world of Speculation might henceforth dig to unknown depths” (22). The Philosophy, and by extension the philosopher, as a “mine-shaft” suggests the potential for great rewards, but only when the mine is placed in the appropriate location. The mine-shaft could also produce nothing,

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<sup>5</sup> Jeremy Tambling offers a dyspeptic reading of the text in “Carlyle Through Nietzsche: Reading *Sartor Resartus*.” Tambling argues that throughout *Sartor*, as with some of Carlyle’s other works, “there is a fear of being devoured” (331). This fear establishes itself in the writing/editing process as well as the attempts to discover the self. Tambling asserts that “Nietzsche sees Carlyle as producing a ‘counterfeit’ solution in what can be seen as a pumped-up self, described as a ‘Man’ in reaction to fear of being devoured” (338).

notwithstanding the actual physical danger of a mine. The mine might not contain any valuable mineral, but the time, effort, money, and hope that go into the digging make giving up the search difficult. Scientists, through careful observation and study of the environmental and geographic characteristics of a given area, suggest where to dig. Unfortunately, the most sophisticated techniques in examining geographical characteristics do not always mean that the depths of the earth produce the expected mineral. In other words, the outward does not always reflect the inward despite a promising prospect. While the Philosophy needs to be mined for its ideas, the Editor's description of the Clothes Volume with its "boundless, almost formless contents" more closely resembles "a very Sea of Thought; neither calm nor clear" (8). Like the mine metaphor, the Editor believes that the man willing to delve into such content "may dive to his utmost depth, and return not only with sea-wreck but with true orient" (8). In either case, the Philosophy, like the philosopher, offers "promises of revealing new-coming Eras" leading away from the mechanical and into the spiritual but only for those willing to dive into the metaphysical realm (62). Willing to take the risk, the Editor "endeavor[s] to evolve . . . printed creation out of a German . . . Chaos" (62). In doing so, the Editor also runs the risk that "his whole Faculty and Self are like to be swallowed up" by Teufelsdröckh's inward (his anatomy on Clothes) and his outward (his autobiographical biography). While the Editor could potentially lose his self in Teufelsdröckh's self, Teufelsdröckh runs the risk of having his Philosophy misunderstood. Despite the risks of this connection, each case of the narrative/anatomy split serves to connect the "I" and self of the Editor and Teufelsdröckh more fixedly.

In examining the creation and consumption of identity between the Editor and



Teufelsdröckh, I first contextualize *Sartor* in relation to Carlyle's critique of contemporary English society which expresses Carlyle's, like the Editor's, dissatisfaction with the current state of a non-believing, mechanistic society. Connecting Carlyle's and the Editor's desire for societal change helps to establish the reasons the Editor turns to Teufelsdröckh and his Philosophy in order to find a new truth. Examining the Editor's desire to find meaning through his study of Teufelsdröckh and his Philosophy requires an examination of the dual structure of the text as the Editor and Teufelsdröckh enact it. The Editor's monomaniacal study of Teufelsdröckh, in which he carefully sifts through six bags of chaotic information, causes him to take on Teufelsdröckh's vision. In trying to obtain a similar gaze—a term I use in referring to Teufelsdröckh's ability, at least according to the Editor, to look into the inward of man and society—the Editor appropriates Teufelsdröckh's eye/I, thus losing his self in Teufelsdröckh; adopting Teufelsdröckh's gaze keeps Teufelsdröckh in control of the text. To see this control, we must examine how Teufelsdröckh's and the Editor's parallel journeys of self-discovery actually put control of the text, and the Editor, in Teufelsdröckh's hands. Teufelsdröckh maintains control, I argue, as he embodies the function of the anatomy, in which he delves for an understanding of the human condition. The Editor, representing the function of the narrative, takes Teufelsdröckh's metaphorical statements and questions literally—as the mechanistic age does not encourage metaphoric thinking—in an attempt to discover a deeper truth. Finally, I assert that in order for the Philosophy to have meaning, the Editor has to regain his individuality. Therefore, Teufelsdröckh must relinquish control of the Editor's self, requiring the Editor to emerge from Teufelsdröckh's autobiography and understand the philosophy on his own terms.

## Mechanistic Dissatisfaction

In *Sartor Resartus* (1833),<sup>6</sup> two distinct personalities emerge: Teufelsdröckh, the clothes philosopher and autobiographer, and the Editor, the compiler of the Philosophy and biographer of Teufelsdröckh. These personalities, though distinct, become inexorably intertwined as one creates and reforms the other. The creation of identity becomes central to the ideas of the Philosophy. George Scott Christian examines the role the Editor plays in creating humor in the text but more importantly, for my purposes, his role in creating Teufelsdröckh. Christian argues that the Editor controls Teufelsdröckh's revealing, but that with Teufelsdröckh, no real identity exists. In making his argument, he asserts that “Carlyle's enigmatic Tailor becomes a paradigm for all Victorian seekers of self-consciousness” (Christian 8) and that “writing the self in Victorian fiction thus becomes an exercise in listening for and trying to find the ringer of the bell, the self's spectral counterpart” (Christian 10). In describing the tailor, Christian refers to Teufelsdröckh. In the context of the text, however, the Editor could also be a tailor making the term somewhat, and perhaps intentionally, ambiguous. In desiring a non-materialistic identity, the Editor discovers a personality in which to assert and assess his own individuality. Christian argues that “the Editor is decidedly anti-comic, a false voice, a teller of untruths” as he “misread[s] Teufelsdröckh's narrative of self-recognition through self-annihilation” (17). The misreading, Christian asserts, helps to create the humor and false laughter that causes Teufelsdröckh to remain “completely illusive” as his “self-identity,

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<sup>6</sup> Carlyle wrote *Sartor Resartus* in 1831. It was published serially beginning in 1833. *Sartor* was first published in book form (by Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1835) in America, where it went through two editions. It was eventually published in book form in England in 1838 (Kaplan 232-33).

the ostensible subject of the text, recedes further and further from view until the Professor disappears altogether” (18). His conclusion sees no real possibility of an “individuated entity,” and claims that individuality “is ultimately a false construct [that] only exists in a disinterested, loving relation to other selves” (19). Christian's article establishes the desire to find self and identity in *Sartor Resartus*, but I do not see the Editor's difficulties with Teufelsdröckh's text as a drawback, nor do I believe that Teufelsdröckh disappears from the text. The reliance on another individual to help create and establish a new self is not, as I read Carlyle, a negative idea.

In “Sign of the Times” (1829) Carlyle considers the “notable absurdity!” of the social assumption “that mind is opposed to mind, as body is to body; whereby two, or at most ten, little minds must be stronger than one great mind” (Sign of the Times 19). In this case, the individuality of a person does not help create a better society or soul. Rather, Carlyle asserts, “minds are opposed to minds in quite a different way; and *one* man that has a higher Wisdom, a hitherto unknown spiritual Truth in him, is stronger, not than ten men that have it not, or than ten thousand, but than *all* men that have it not” (19). He believes in the nature of a mind or individual whose sense of spiritual truth makes him superior to all other people who do not see the truth. This superiority does not mean that other individuals cannot obtain a heightened sense of self. In “Characteristics,” (1831) Carlyle asserts that the “Duties of Man to himself, to what is Highest in himself, make but the first Table of the Law” (Characteristics 44). What he considers the “second table” addresses “the Duties of Man to his Neighbour; whereby also the significance of the First now assumes its true importance” (44). While the individual must look to better himself spiritually in order for that

spirituality to be significant, he must also aid his fellow human in bettering himself. In that way, “Man has joined himself with man; soul acts and reacts on soul,” and “the lightning-spark of Thought, generated, or say rather heaven-kindled, in the solitary mind, awakens its express likeness in another mind” (44). This chain-reaction of thought only becomes stronger as “it acquires incalculable new light as Thought, incalculable new heat as converted into Action” (44). The connection between Teufelsdröckh and the Editor represents the beginnings of this relationship. Teufelsdröckh does his “second Duty” to the Editor, and the Editor to the English public. The self improves as it attaches to and learns from a more enlightened self. The ideas and thoughts of Teufelsdröckh, represented through his philosophy and autobiography, become reflected in the Editor’s self. Through its structure as a narrative and an anatomy and its dual narrators, *Sartor* demonstrates the risk—the loss of self—as well as the reward—a new understanding of self—of such a connection.

Lamenting the characteristics of his age, “the Mechanical Age,” Carlyle believes that this era represents “the Age of Machinery, in every outward or inward sense of that word” (Sign 6). The material world, with its “means to ends,” allows for the movement of “mountains, and make[s] seas our smooth highways, nothing can resist,” including the soul and religion (6). The finite, visible world of machines and science replaces the infinite, invisible world of wonder and religion. As a result, people “have lost faith in individual endeavor, and in natural force, of any kind” and now strive, “not for internal perfection,” but for external gratification (8). The mechanistic society affects the individual, who no longer desires “internal perfection,” but rather vainly struggles for “Mechanism” (8). As a result of this mechanist society, the “Metaphysical and Moral

Sciences are falling into decay” (9), and “men have lost their belief in the Invisible, and believe, and hope, and work only in the visible” (17).

Despite his concern for the present mechanistic state of society and man, Carlyle also believes in the possibility of reform. Christianity “spread abroad by the ‘preaching of the word’” through “individual efforts; and flew, like hallowed fire, from heart to heart, till all were purified and illuminated by it” (Sign 15). Christianity, which fundamentally concerns the condition of the soul, spreads as a result of individuals seeing beyond their limited time in the physical realm and into the soul's eternal existence in the invisible realm. The importance of this revelation lies not with society but with the individual. In order to “reform a world, to reform a nation...the only solid, though a far slower reformation, is what each begins and perfects on *himself*” (25). As Carlyle asserts in “On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History,” (1841) the reformation of the individual, and ultimately society, begins with the study of “Great Men” (*Heroes* 4).

Carlyle asserts that “worship” consists of “admir[ation] without limit” and that “Worship of a hero is transcendent admiration of a Great Man” (*Heroes* 10). As such, he considers “Hero-Worship to be the grand modifying element in that ancient system of thought” (10). In *Sartor*, the Editor finds an “almost unexampled personal Character” (8) in Teufelsdröckh, but given that he lives in an age “that as it were denies the existence of great men; denies the desirableness of great men” (11), his worship takes on a different form, than the “Hero-Worship” of the past. Patrick Brantlinger explores the connection between Carlyle's views on heroes and the relationship between the Editor and Teufelsdröckh. In “‘Romance,’ ‘Biography,’ and the Making of *Sartor Resartus*” Brantlinger acknowledges that “the Editor’s Hero-Worship [of Teufelsdröckh] is more

complex” as the biography shows not only his worship of Teufelsdröckh, but also his “struggles and backslidings as Hero-Worshiper and biographer” (117). While “the Editor’s Hero-Worship is lukewarm, it is still a step in the right direction, and his efforts to bring order to chaos are ironically noble” (117). The Editor’s “biography is both the record of heroism and itself a heroic act, the hero being one who has achieved self-renunciation and acquired faith” (117). Each—Teufelsdröckh and the Editor—becomes a hero in his own right, though not without the help of the other. The Editor, in celebrating Teufelsdröckh, looks to also celebrate himself. In building on Brantlinger’s argument, then, the great men like Teufelsdröckh, “taken up in any way, [are] profitable company,” and other men like the Editor, “cannot [but] look, however imperfectly, upon a great man, without gaining something by him” (*Heroes* 4). In other words, a man can be considered great only if he enacts change in others. Teufelsdröckh’s effectiveness and success as a philosopher depends on the change/reform he enacts in others, specifically, in this case, the Editor.

The Editor, also unsatisfied with the mechanistic age, begins his own reformation by bringing Teufelsdröckh’s Philosophy to the English public. He acknowledges that the “Book had in a high degree edited us to self-activity, . . . that it had even operated changes in our way of thought” (*Sartor* 24). The Editor, as a product of his age, becomes aware that there is “scarcely a fragment or fiber of [a person’s] Soul, Body, and Possession, but has been probed, dissected, distilled, desiccated and scientifically decomposed” (4). Until reading Teufelsdröckh’s Clothes Volume, he never considered “the vestal Tissue, namely, of woolen or there Cloth: which Man’s Soul Wears as its outmost wrappage and overall” where “his whole Faculties work, his whole Self lives,

moves, and has its being” (4). Teufelsdröckh’s Philosophy and autobiography give the Editor hope that faith can exist and be reclaimed in such a mechanistic age. In order to have a full understanding of Teufelsdröckh’s works and life, the Editor believes he needs to streamline the ideas presented in the Philosophy into a more comprehensible form, which requires a tremendous amount of editing on the part of the Editor.

In his Philosophy, Teufelsdröckh aims to explore the way “clothes gave [man] individuality, distinctions, social polity; [and] have made Men of us,” and how they now “threat[en] to make clothes-screens of us” keeping men from seeing beyond the material meaning of clothes (32). In the current age, humans assume superiority in their ability to dissect and control Nature. The individual seems to have forgotten that his “Vestments and his Self are not one and indivisible [but] that *he* is naked without vestments, till he buy or steal such” (33). Unlike the cow or the horse who “is his own sempster and weaver and spinner, [and] bounds free through the valleys [and] is not wanting,” the human covers his vulnerability to nature and the elements with clothes (44). A person’s vulnerability, however, extends beyond the physical and into the spiritual. Therefore, a person should look for ways to clothe and understand the spiritual/inward realm. As Teufelsdröckh acknowledges, society and people have progressed in the scientific understanding of life, which causes society and people to conclude that we can now understand the inward of humans and the universe. In the mechanistic age, the individual fails to see his vulnerability, and in fact clothes his vulnerability with science and claims an understanding “as if [he] knew right hand from left” (43). All the scientific and technological progress does not get to the question of “Who am I; this thing that can say ‘I’” (42). In fact, when this question comes up, “the world, with its loud trafficking,

retires into the distance” and “the sight reaches forth into the void Deep, and you are alone with the Universe” (43). In this instance, the physical nature of clothes, or other mechanistic inventions, will not help answer the questions that deal with the spiritual nature of existence. The materiality of clothes and the spirituality of Me address the issue for which “there are no true sciences; that to the inward world (if there be any) our only conceivable road is through the outward” (*Sign* 11). Teufelsdröckh wants to get at the spiritual through the only available course, the material. In this way, he looks at the state of both the outward and inward. This outward/inward dualism that Teufelsdröckh—and Carlyle—asserts exists in society and individuality also emerges in the structure of his Philosophy and the overall textual structure of *Sartor Resartus*.

### The Dual Form

Having established the discontent displayed by both Carlyle and the Editor with the current mechanistic age, we can now turn to the Editor's desire to find meaning through his intense anatomical study of Teufelsdröckh's Clothes Philosophy and autobiography. This avenue of inquiry requires an examination of the way in which the text's dual form of the narrative and anatomy connects Teufelsdröckh and the Editor's identity. As we have already established, the Editor keeps the narrative moving forward by creating the biography of Teufelsdröckh, explaining how he came to write his philosophy, and following him as he wanders in a conversion from an “Everlasting No” to an “Everlasting Yea.” Teufelsdröckh, on the other hand, philosophizes about clothes, the “I,” and society. (Later in this thesis, I will examine the Editor as narrative and Teufelsdröckh as the anatomy when arguing that Teufelsdröckh maintains control in the



text.)

Leonard W. Deen, examining the structural duality in *Sartor*, argues that Carlyle uses “symbolism, apparent disorder, and...biography” as a way of sifting through the problems and potential solution of his age (439). Deen’s argument clearly delineates a duality of form, specifically that of the anatomy and the autobiography, that permeates *Sartor’s* structure as well as the overall argument presented in the philosophy. Deen’s argument centers on the character of Teufelsdröckh and his enactment of the dual structure, allowing for an exploration of the increased complexity of form inherent with the inclusion of the Editor. Janice L. Haney picks up the strand of duality and connects it to the idea of a dual vision shared by Teufelsdröckh and the Editor. Unlike Deen, she posits the Editor, not Teufelsdröckh, as the central character. Her argument does address two decidedly distinct individuals who work to create meaning. My argument, however, diverges from hers in that she considers the relationship between the emerging selves of the Editor and Teufelsdröckh to be more antagonistic. In addressing both the duality of form and the creation of self, I look to build on the arguments of both Deen and Haney. First, we turn to Deen’s analysis.

Deen examines *Sartor’s* disordered structure and alternating expectations of a biography, autobiography, and philosophy steeped in symbolism and the search for inner truth. In considering the structure and goal of the text, he focuses on the dualisms, not only in Carlyle’s main idea of symbolism, of which, he argues, Teufelsdröckh is the ultimate symbol, but also in the ways that Teufelsdröckh represents “both skeptical and prophetic, revolutionary and conservative, destructive and re-constructive” (Deen 443). These dualisms also serve as Carlyle’s distinction of an “inner and outer reality,” which

Teufelsdröckh, through his experiences and his Philosophy manages to erase (Deen 448). The spilt form of the narrative into “the autobiography and the ‘anatomy’” reinforces Teufelsdröckh’s duality. The two “are quite different ways of getting at the same essential reality—the emptiness of a world without belief” (443). Deen focuses mainly on the relationships and similarities between Teufelsdröckh and Carlyle, considering the “autobiographical revelations of suffering and rebirth” (Deen 451) as Carlyle’s revelations about society. Deen also argues that “from a rational point of view, *Sartor* is genuinely disordered; but . . . deliberately and defiantly so” (449).

In his brief discussion of the Editor, Deen asserts that the Editor sees in the Clothes Volume “the unique and eccentric[,] . . . the formula of an individual personality,” and his “comments, suggestions, and explanations are necessary” in the communication of Teufelsdröckh’s Philosophy (446). The editorial notes also help “keep our attention on the ‘figure’ of Teufelsdröckh” (446). Deen considers the Editor and Teufelsdröckh as representing the “conservatism and [the] radicalism” of Carlyle. By Deen’s reasoning, then, the Editor exists as a translator of the Philosophy for the reader and not as his own person.<sup>7</sup> Deen’s acknowledgement of *Sartor* as “a work of self-identification and self-organization” does not lead him to identify the Editor as a man who works through Teufelsdröckh’s writings and life to achieve a self-identity (447). While the Editor does discover “a quite new human Individuality,” the frequency of his interruptions and the opinionated nature of his comments throughout Teufelsdröckh’s Philosophy help reveal

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<sup>7</sup> More recent criticism on *Sartor* such as Tom Toremans’s “*Sartor Resartus* and the Rhetoric of Translation” and James Treadwell’s “*Sartor Resartus* and the Work of Writing” examine the role writing and translation play in making meaning for Teufelsdröckh, the Editor and the reader.

the Editor's individuality as well (*Sartor* 8). The role of the Editor further complicates the structure and form of *Sartor*. Identifying and recognizing the Editor as a character in the text allows us to explore the relationship between Teufelsdröckh and the Editor, and more importantly, how each creates and is created by the other. With Deen's analysis in mind, we can now turn to the work of Janice L. Haney.

The Editor "is the primary fiction," according to Haney, as "only through his attempt to order the chaotic Clothes Volume and the autobiographical fragments is Teufelsdröckh allowed his say" (319). In situating *Sartor* in its historical and social context, Haney convincingly argues that Schlegel's "alternative conception of reality: not *being* but *becoming*" (312) as well as his theory that "in Romantic Irony, the creating self is neither unified nor stable; rather, it is in the process of creating itself" imbues *Sartor Resartus* and establishes both Teufelsdröckh and the Editor as makers of meaning (316).

Haney clearly delineates two separate selves, arguing that Carlyle "pits self against self" with "an empirical self, the editor, facing a metaphysical and aesthetic self, Teufelsdröckh" (319). Each self must work to self-create. Teufelsdröckh creates through his metaphysical and actual wanderings, while the Editor creates through editing and translating Teufelsdröckh's obscure and difficult writings. In her analysis of the creation of self, Haney refers to "a double vision" (321) required of both Teufelsdröckh and the Editor when examining the self. The Clothes Philosophy "holds in balance two conceptions of man and reality—a finite and infinite" (321). Teufelsdröckh uses this double vision as his "work falls into two sections: Historical-Descriptive and Philosophical-Meditative" (322), while the Editor uses the double vision to "explore both

Teufelsdröckh and his philosophy” (326). Her argument establishes that discovering the nature of self, at least according to the German romantics, requires more than just a single perspective. The vision to which she refers also reaffirms the dual form of the text, and “affirms a dynamic process and with it the *possibility* of making meaning; it affirms a metaphysical becoming and a literary self in the process of creating itself by means of ‘self-culture’” (327). While Haney acknowledges the similar journeys of each character, she considers the exchange between Teufelsdröckh and the Editor as a “face-off” between the two to which the “[E]ditor does not capitulate” (Haney 330). I am not disputing her claim of meaning making/self-creation inherent in Teufelsdröckh and the Editor's dual vision, but I do argue that the relationship between the two selves seems more symbiotic than Haney suggests. The creation of self, I argue, occurs while creating the other. The Editor begins the creation process, for both selves, by identifying the significance of the Philosophy and by piecing together Teufelsdröckh’s biography.

### Biographical Intentions

Having established the dual form of the text, we can examine how, through the making of the biography from the autobiography, the Editor enacts the duality of the text, which eventually causes him to take on Teufelsdröckh’s gaze. The Editor considers himself “a man of confirmed speculative habits” (*Sartor* 6) whose dissatisfaction with the current Mechanical Age causes him to look elsewhere for truth and meaning. The Editor admits that with the “Torch of Science” nothing in “Nature or Art can remain unilluminated” (3), including man's “spiritual faculties” (4). None of the inquiries have satisfactorily, at least for the Editor, established the nature of the self. The Clothes

Philosophy as well as the philosopher fascinate the Editor because they promise to examine the “tissues [where man’s] whole Self lives, moves and has its being” (4). The Philosophy, however, shows “an almost total want of arrangement” (26), and the Editor endeavors “to bring what order we can out of this Chaos” (27). In using the pronoun “we,” the Editor suggests that this journey through the chaos will be taken in conjunction with the reader. However, the Editor has already sifted through the chaos for the reader, hence the text of *Sartor*.

As a part of the lengthy preface to Teufelsdröckh’s philosophy and biography, the Editor warns the reader to “keep a free, open sense” (13), and to stay attentive to the “Book itself than to the Editor of the Book” (10) because “who or what such Editor may be, must remain conjectural, and even insignificant” (10). Such a statement, however, also forces the reader to ask that very question. Vanessa L. Ryan addresses the prominence and unreliability of the Editor in the biographical process. She asserts that in creating the biography, the Editor “is certainly not respectfully inconspicuous: he calls attention again and again to his perplexity, conspicuously narrating . . . his difficulties in assembling an adequate biography” (Ryan 303). Ryan also argues that precisely because of his commentary the Editor “can hardly be fully explained as merely mediating between Teufelsdröckh and the reader” (303). Recognizing the Editor’s contributions “reveals new ways in which the work itself addresses the question of the relationship between the clothes philosophy and the editorial commentary” (305). In examining Carlyle’s critique of contemporary biographies, Ryan establishes the significance of the Editor’s commentary in bringing forth Teufelsdröckh, but does not examine the reasons for the Editor’s continual interruptions, which I argue shows his desire for meaning and

identity. As the Editor does continually insert himself and his opinion into the text, ignoring the “who or what” of the Editor becomes increasingly difficult.

Though he never uses the first person, the Editor constantly refers to himself (“the compiler of these pages,” “the present Editor”) and frequently reminds the reader of his effort in bringing the Philosophy of Clothes and its philosopher to the English public. Patrick Brantlinger, who also examines the role of the Editor as biographer, argues that “all of Carlyle’s biographies are to some extent autobiographical” (114). While Brantlinger focuses on the ways that Carlyle uses biography in *Sartor* as a contrast to romance, he considers the biography in *Sartor* to be partly autobiographical of Carlyle, not the Editor. Certainly, the many similarities between Teufelsdröckh and Carlyle merit such a reading. In my reading of *Sartor*, Carlyle, twice removed from Teufelsdröckh, has the Editor create the biography. In creating the biography, the Editor “daily and nightly” sits trying to “deciph[er] these unimaginable [autobiographical] Documents from their perplexed *cursiv-schriftz*” (*Sartor* 61), and he “sees himself journeying and struggling” towards the “dim infinitely-expanded region” of Teufelsdröckh’s philosophy and autobiography (58). In using Brantlinger’s reasoning as well as the Editor’s account of his own journey, I argue that Teufelsdröckh’s biography also works partly as an autobiography for the Editor in which he forms his own “shadowy likeness” (58).

In addressing his editorial difficulties, he forces himself into the text and not merely as a compiler of information, but as a man on a journey struggling for understanding. The Editor suggests not that the reader ignore his editorial asides or the potential problems he has in translating the text, but rather not to be concerned with the “who or what” of the Editor. As the question “who am I; what is this Me? A Voice, a

Motion, an Appearance” (42) emerges as one of the central questions of the text, the Editor’s initial insistence on his “insignificance” becomes difficult to take seriously. Often, his comments regarding Teufelsdröckh and the Clothes Volume make connections between his self-description and Teufelsdröckh’s statements in the Philosophy. The Editor makes such a connection when Teufelsdröckh, in explaining his reasons for writing about clothes, asserts that for “men of a speculative turn, . . . there comes a season, meditative, sweet, yet awful hours, when in wonder and fear you ask yourself that unanswerable question: Who am I; the thing that can say ‘I’” (42). Previously establishing himself a “speculative” man, the Editor takes Teufelsdröckh’s question to heart. The Editor wants to discover the answer, or find meaning in the “unanswerable question,” of his “I” where “his whole Self lives” (4). Therefore, though he encourages the reader to focus on the Philosophy rather than the editor of the Philosophy, he cannot follow his own advice. Significantly, for the Philosophy and the philosopher to have meaning, the Editor cannot remain conjectural. The Editor’s identity and self becomes closely associated with Teufelsdröckh’s identity, causing the “I,” both the Editor’s and Teufelsdröckh’s, to become central to the meaning of the Philosophy. Likewise, the success of Teufelsdröckh’s Philosophy depends upon the Editor’s reformation of his “I.” The title of the text plays with this dual formation of identity. *Sartor Resartus* translates into “The tailor retailed.” On the surface, the work “is a patchwork of excerpts from Teufelsdröckh’s Philosophy of Clothes, Hueschrecke’s anecdotal reminisces, and the English Editor’s copious commentary, interspersed with attempts at biography” (Ryan 289-90). In other words, the tailor’s ideas have been retailed by others in an attempt to make them accessible to all. By this logic, however, the biography

and Philosophy have been tailored by the Editor whose understanding of life and himself has been retailored by Teufelsdröckh's Philosophy and autobiography. Therefore, the identity of Teufelsdröckh becomes inexorably fixed with the Editor.

### Teufelsdröckh's Eye/I

The chaos of the autobiography and the efforts required to piece together a biography allow for a paralleling of experience between Teufelsdröckh and the Editor. The shared experience, I assert, allows the Editor to align his compass, vision and journey with Teufelsdröckh's. Doing so, however, causes him to examine not his own inward and outward but Teufelsdröckh's, tying him more securely with Teufelsdröckh's self. The Editor meets Teufelsdröckh only once, but the power of Teufelsdröckh's vision and appearance remains with the Editor who, years later when he edits the Philosophy, states, "Wise man was he who counseled that Speculation should have free course, and look fearlessly towards all the thirty-two points of the compass" (5). As he has now reached the time of his own speculation into life, the Editor wants to learn the who and the what of the man who, in observing humanity from a seemingly remote position, came to a more enlightened sense of self. Teufelsdröckh's impressive ability, at least according to the Editor, to gaze equally at the sea of humanity below his watchtower causes the Editor to trust and follow Teufelsdröckh's compass. In aligning his compass with Teufelsdröckh's, the Editor takes cues from Teufelsdröckh's Philosophy, which encourages the Editor to look inward to find meaning. Not trusting his own gaze/eye, however, The Editor's speculation does not turn toward his own inward but towards Teufelsdröckh's. In this way, the Editor attempts to "see it all" through his



speculation of Teufelsdröckh's inward and outward, further tying his understanding of life and his self to Teufelsdröckh. Following Teufelsdröckh's compass, the Editor appropriates Teufelsdröckh's gaze, and he takes on Teufelsdröckh's eye/I.

In order to fully incorporate an understanding of this Philosophy into his life, the Editor needs to know and understand the man to whom he entrusts his identity. As "a young enthusiastic Englishman" (16) the Editor meets Teufelsdröckh, but does not appreciate the significance of such a meeting. In the Editor's recollection, Teufelsdröckh appears to have "boundless learning" (24), which seems reflected in his physical appearance and demeanor. The Editor observes that Teufelsdröckh's look "is probably the gravest ever seen" but not a "cast-iron gravity" (25). Teufelsdröckh's "look" or gaze takes on the "gravity as of some silent, high-encircled mountain-pool, perhaps the crater of an extinct volcano; into whose black deeps you fear to gaze" (25). In his reflections, the Editor associates Teufelsdröckh's solemnity with the deep abyss of the mines and oceans. Likewise, "lights that sparkle" in his eyes "may indeed be reflexes of the heavenly stars, but perhaps also glances from the region of Nether Fire!" (25). The Editor associates Teufelsdröckh's appearance with the "black deeps" of a "crater," much like the Clothes Volume, which exhibits a "mine-shaft" or "boundless sea" needing to be unearthed and explored. He connects Teufelsdröckh's physical appearance with the depths of the Philosophy, thereby justifying the anatomical exploration of both. The Editor sees in Teufelsdröckh the "singular attraction" (24) of a man who, from the windows of his "watch-tower" apartment<sup>8</sup>, which "looked towards all the four *Orte* [points of the

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<sup>8</sup> Ralph Jessop's "'A Strange Apartment': The Watch-Tower in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*" argues that the watch-tower "symbolizes Teufelsdröckh's mind and that this symbol incorporates eighteenth-century mechanical metaphors for the mind, most notably

compass]” (16), can "look down into all that wasp-nest or bee-hive" of humanity and "see it all" (18). The Editor desires a similar vision. He attempts to appropriate this vision in his appraisal of Teufelsdröckh.

Teufelsdröckh's physical characteristics, including his gravity and silence, all suggest his wisdom. So too, his Philosophy, "whether be understood or not, [can] not even by the blinded be overlooked" (6). Despite his belief and confidence in Teufelsdröckh's "remarkable Treaties" (6) and transcendent vision, the Editor still exhibits an apprehension of the "black deeps" where he "fears to gaze" (25). As such, the Editor feels he cannot promote or internalize the "ideas of Teufelsdröckh without something of his personality" in fear of a "misapprehension" of both (9). Feeling that Teufelsdröckh reflects a certain understanding and spirituality that the Editor would like to obtain, requires that the Editor delve into the depths of Teufelsdröckh's life. His trust in Teufelsdröckh's "new Truth" and vision makes him desperate to understand the man to whom he ties the understanding of his self. In his initial inability to obtain "adequate documents" (9) that will expose the "Life, Fortunes, and Bodily Presence" (21) of Teufelsdröckh, he retires to the "dark depths of his own mind" (9). Though he admits to his own "dark depths," seemingly not unlike Teufelsdröckh's, the Editor does not apply Teufelsdröckh's vision in an attempt to understand his own inward self, suggesting that in taking on Teufelsdröckh's vision/gaze/eye, he cannot properly analyze his own self. Thus, he delves into Teufelsdröckh's life rather than his own. The autobiography that finally arrives resembles, at least according to the Editor, the "black

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the camera obscura and its constituents of a mirror to reflect images from the external world admitted through an inlet or tiny window” (119).

deeps" of Teufelsdröckh's appearance, allowing the Editor to mine the autobiography for meaning in a way similar to Teufelsdröckh mining of society.

The material for Teufelsdröckh's biography and autobiography arrives in "Six considerable PAPER-BAGS," containing "miscellaneous masses of Sheets, and oftener Shreds and Snips written in professor Teufelsdröckh's scarce legible *cursive-schrift*" (60). Other than the obscure labeling of zodiac signs,<sup>9</sup> the bags lack any order or organization and only represent, much like the Clothes Volume, a formless sea of information. Among the undated and unconnected sheets of obscure information "are also long purely Autobiographical delineations yet without connexion, without recognizable coherence" (60). The Editor acknowledges that only through "unheard-of efforts, partly of intellect partly of imagination" will "some sketchy, shadowy, fugitive likeness of him" "rise up" (61). In order to make meaning out of these sheets, "daily and nightly" must the Editor sift and "decipher . . . these unimaginable Documents" (61). The sheer mass of unorganized information perhaps hints at the futility and ridiculousness of such an endeavor. His efforts certainly show an immense trust in Teufelsdröckh's introspective vision.

In the first several chapters of the Philosophy, Teufelsdröckh continually asks, "Who is this me?" (22), and while I established earlier that the Editor took this as a

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<sup>9</sup> In "On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History" Carlyle calls the number Twelve the "divisiblest of all, which could be halved, quartered, parted into three, into six, the most remarkable number—this was enough to determine the *Signs of the Zodiac*" (19). Interestingly, the labeling of six bags containing the autobiography uses the six southern signs starting with Libra and ending with Pisces. Not only are these the fall and winter signs, but also the information in the bags becomes ordered only when the Editor arranges them. While signs are never associated with the Editor, the Philosophy and autobiography become completed only with the Editor's effort to bring order, perhaps alluding to the Editor as the embodiment of the six northern, spring and summer signs.

calling for his own understanding of self, Teufelsdröckh shares a similar desire. His questions and statements regarding the significance of his inward, his soul, encourage the Editor to shape the form/body. Teufelsdröckh asserts, before the Editor has the biographical materials in hand, that "all visible things are Emblems" and that "all Emblematic things are properly Clothes" (56). This assertion only emphasizes the importance of the biography. The Editor, believing that Teufelsdröckh's "soul lie[s] enclosed" (21) in the Clothes Volume, endeavors to create the tissue that clothes Teufelsdröckh, hence the Editor's role as tailor. The Editor's speculation of self begins with his outward self and works inward, while the Editor's speculation of Teufelsdröckh begins inward and works outward. Teufelsdröckh, however, does not wait to be created; instead he continually demands and encourages the Editor in the process of creation. For his part, the Editor, trusting in Teufelsdröckh and his Philosophy, hopes to discover Teufelsdröckh's, and by extension, his own emblematic nature. As the Editor pieces together the autobiography and biography while also presenting and commenting on specific passages from the Clothes Volume, he appears to have an impressive amount of control in presenting Teufelsdröckh. However, he pieces Teufelsdröckh and the Philosophy together through the questions and comments that Teufelsdröckh poses in his Philosophy. Teufelsdröckh does not speak directly to the Editor. The literal-minded Editor, however, who, in living in a mechanistic society embodies mechanistic thinking, takes the Philosophy as a guide to a spiritual epiphany. He forms his actions, reactions, and opinions based on Teufelsdröckh's assertions and statements in his Philosophy. Thereby Teufelsdröckh maintains considerable control in the Editor's process of revealing a new persona and a new truth.

The nature of “I,” both his and Teufelsdröckh’s as discussed above, marks the main question that both characters attempt to answer. Teufelsdröckh not only poses questions, but he also makes statements and suggestions that encourage the Editor in his speculative search for meaning and self. I am not asserting that Teufelsdröckh speaks directly to the Editor; rather, he poses the questions and statements in his Philosophy towards humanity, not one individual. (He does, however, believe that change and reformation happen on an individual basis and travel from person to person.) I am arguing that the Editor—as one who approaches the world literally—considers Teufelsdröckh’s life and Philosophy as a guide to help him come to a new truth. The Editor interprets Teufelsdröckh literally, which allows Teufelsdröckh to maintain significant control in the text and also creates a teacher/student relationship. In working on the biography, the Editor tries to follow, literally, Teufelsdröckh through “his so unlimited Wanderings, [which,] toilsome enough, are without assigned or perhaps assignable aim” as he just “wanders, wanders” (115). Teufelsdröckh’s preambles reflect and parallel “the chaotic nature of [the] Paperbags” (115). Experiencing a similar lack of clarity in purpose ties Teufelsdröckh’s figurative and literal wanderings in life to the Editor’s figurative and literal wanderings through the Philosophy and autobiography. At this point Teufelsdröckh’s “Life has become wholly a dark labyrinth,” and both characters “stumble about at random, and naturally with more haste than progress” (118). These similarities in confusions and wanderings make the advice of Teufelsdröckh, as someone who has reached the “Everlasting Yea,” more salient.

Teufelsdröckh’s anatomical search for meaning emerges through his metaphorical musings and leads, in a literal way, the Editor through the experiences of conversion. In

examining the way Teufelsdröckh and the Editor work to convert the reader of *Sartor*, Lee C. R. Baker argues that Teufelsdröckh “never openly tells us his own opinions. Instead he asks questions . . . to get his interlocutors to discover the truth of the matter along with him” (225). Baker refers to the reader as the one to whom Teufelsdröckh poses his questions. In actuality, with his comments and his method of editing, the Editor, as a reader, internalizes the questions and attempts to respond through actions—the attempt at order, the discovery of the “I,” and the creation of the biography—suggested in the Philosophy. Therefore, the success of Teufelsdröckh’s Philosophy in England depends, to some extent, on the Editor’s ability to navigate and internalize the ideas. As a result of this dependency on the Editor’s understanding, Teufelsdröckh seems to sympathize with the Editor’s sense of peril in his introspection of self through someone else. He also seems to understand the amount of faith required in the Editor’s efforts.

#### Teufelsdröckh's Outward Gaze

Teufelsdröckh, through his philosophical statements and questions, conducts and guides the Editor through the autobiography and Philosophy as well as the biographical process. I am not suggesting that Teufelsdröckh sends the Editor the autobiographical bags, or that he expects a biography to be created. Rather, I argue that Teufelsdröckh’s assertion of the “miraculous virtue [that] goes out of man into man” (*Sartor* 163) suggests to the literal-minded Editor the necessity of discovering the man behind the Philosophy. Teufelsdröckh’s comments and questions about the nature of the “I” and the ability to create some order out of chaos incite the Editor to the action of discovery. Understanding that both the Editor and Teufelsdröckh take on and use the dual form to create meaning

helps to explain the Editor's need to take on Teufelsdröckh's identity as well as establishing the Editor as an individual. Earlier I asserted that to see the Editor as the narrative and Teufelsdröckh as the anatomy reduces the complex interconnection and form inherent in the relationship between the Editor and Teufelsdröckh. Arguing that Teufelsdröckh maintains control in the text, however, requires an exploration of the dual form at the surface level: the Editor as representative of the narrative and Teufelsdröckh as representative of the anatomy.

Teufelsdröckh works in and embodies the metaphysical and metaphorical realm of the Philosophy, and so delves into the inner workings of man and society. The Editor, on the other hand, works in and embodies the literal realm of society and represents the outward reflection of society's, and the individual's, inner workings. The literal-minded Editor takes Teufelsdröckh's metaphorical statements and rhetorical questions as commands, and he follows the Philosophy as he would a map or a compass. As a product of the mechanistic society, the Editor thinks and speaks literally (making language mechanistic as well). As such, he understands and tries to apply Teufelsdröckh's metaphorical thinking in a literal way. Thus, in reading the Philosophy more literally, the Editor hands over control of meaning and the make up of his identity to Teufelsdröckh.

Teufelsdröckh, in his Philosophy, considers the ways that the past, both people and events, informs his own sense of truth. Teufelsdröckh considers his influences when answering his self-imposed question, "Who printed thee . . . this unpretending Volume of the Philosophy of Clothes?" (186). He notes that the responsibility of the Philosophy comes not from the publisher or even the writer but from "Cadmus of Themes, Faust of Mentz and innumerable others whom thou knowest not" (186). Past philosophers and

truths inform the ideas and truths addressed in the Clothes Volume. This sentiment echoes Carlyle's argument in "On History" where he asserts that "every single event is the offspring not of one, but of all other events, prior or contemporaneous, and will in its turn combine with all others to give birth to new: it is an ever-living, ever-working Chaos of Being, wherein shape after shape bodies itself forth from innumerable element" (History 29).

Teufelsdröckh understands his debt to past philosophers and knows that for his Philosophy to be effective the ideas have to resonate with those of the present, like the Editor. As the past informs the present, then, the Clothes Volume, like the "wondrous Individual, Mankind" (187) is created by "so many life-streams that are not palpable" (187). Though unseen, these other "life-streams" help create and inform Teufelsdröckh's Philosophy as well as the inward and outward of a self. Teufelsdröckh lauds the beauty "to understand and know that a Thought did never yet die: that as thou, the originator thereof, has gathered it and created it from the whole Past, so thou wilt transmit it to the whole Future" (187). Not only does Teufelsdröckh seem to be conversing with the Editor by making use of "thou," but he also asserts that the creation of society, thought, or individuality does not take place in a vacuum but depends on the connection to and with past events, ideas and persons. In other words, the present Editor sees and reorganizes Teufelsdröckh's previously published Philosophy in a way that will help to affirm and inform the present and eventually the future.<sup>10</sup> Thus, forming Teufelsdröckh's biography and identity from the Philosophy and autobiography makes the Philosophy

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<sup>10</sup> In his discussion in "On History" Carlyle asserts that "before Philosophy can teach by Experience, the Philosophy has to be in readiness, the Experience must be gathered and intelligibly recorded" (Carlyle 27).



more applicable to other men, including the Editor. Teufelsdröckh understands the significance of past philosophers on his present ideas.<sup>11</sup> His appreciation for past philosophers leads him to find his true calling: to help others reform their way of thinking.

In "Getting Under Way," Teufelsdröckh establishes a need for a Volume on Clothes, and he asserts that "not what I Have, but what I Do is my Kingdom" (94), and "to each is given a certain inward Talent, a certain outward Environment of Fortune" (94). By understanding the nature of the inward and outward and through a "wisest combination of these two, a certain maximum of Capability" (94) can be ascertained, and one can discover his "kingdom" or his self. Teufelsdröckh discovers his "Calling" (151) and capability after reaching his 'Everlasting Yea.' After finding his way spiritually, Teufelsdröckh learns that "Writing of mine, not indeed known as mine (for what am I), have fallen, perhaps not altogether void, into the mighty seedfield of Opinion; fruits of my unseen sowing gratifyingly meet me here and there" (151). Discovering that his writings and ideas have circulated into the masses, and in some cases, helped to shape the opinions and ideas of individuals, he finds his purpose. In looking towards the future, he can see how "like a grain of right mustard-seed once cast into the right soil," his truths can grow, and "stret[ch] out strong boughs to the four winds, for the bird of the air to lodge in" (151). As happened with the "world-renowned far-working Institution" (151) of Christianity, Teufelsdröckh believes, and wants, his ideas to spread and grow from

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<sup>11</sup> Carlyle's main argument in "On History" rests on the idea that individuals are not single entities; we are a part of and informed by people of the past. The same can be said for society. In order to understand ourselves and our society, Carlyle encourages us to "search more and more into the past; let all men explore it, as the true fountain of knowledge: by whose light alone, consciously or unconsciously employed, can the Present and the Future be interpreted or guessed at" (Carlyle 30).

individual to individual.

Teufelsdröckh wants others to embrace his ideas on spirituality and religion, which will only happen if other men, like the Editor, internalize them. Teufelsdröckh's "capabilities" have him spreading his truths of human nature and spirituality. For those who want to find meaning, he provides not the answer, but a "strong bough" on which a man may sit and anchor his self. Using Teufelsdröckh's "mustard-seed" metaphor, the Editor acts as a "bird," who, by resting in a bough, comes to understand a new truth, but unlike the rooted tree, the bird can fly away and spread that truth. Teufelsdröckh has an equal stake in the Editor's mission as "bridge-builder"(52). He wants to bring change to current society's belief in the "Everlasting No" in which "doubt" in God and the soul, created by logic and science of the mechanistic age, has "darkened into Unbelief," as "shade after shade goes grimly over [the] soul, till [it has] the fixed starless, Tartarean black" (124). Teufelsdröckh wants society to see the possibility of the 'Everlasting Yea,' "wherein all contradiction is solved; wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him" (146), and he sees the "Universe is not dead and demoniacal, a charnel-house with specter; but god-like" (143). When Teufelsdröckh gazes into society and the soul, he sees the "dark depths" that the Editor notes when he physically appraises Teufelsdröckh and his autobiography. As the Editor also notes, however, Teufelsdröckh's eyes have "lights that sparkle," which could be the reflections of "the heavenly stars," suggesting that Teufelsdröckh sees through the darkness.

Teufelsdröckh recognizes the disorder of life and the spiritual inward and sees the difficulty of the task before him in creating a Volume on Clothes. He also, however, sees the possibilities in taking on such an endeavor and asks, "Does not the very Ditcher and

Delver, with his spade, extinguish many a thistly and puddle and so leave a little Order, where he found the opposite?”(92). Teufelsdröckh does not expect a perfect solution, but he does believe he will help create some order. Despite the potential problems he will encounter, Teufelsdröckh wants to go beyond the material and literal “Clothes of a Man (the woolen, and fleshly, and official Bank-paper and State-paper), [and] into the man himself” (52). Teufelsdröckh’s rhetorical questions and statements reveal his purpose and intent, and for the Editor, these statements also provide a sense of purpose, but he approaches the task literally. As a man who thinks literally and lives in a materialistic world, the metaphorical comments about the “clothes of a man” suggest to the Editor the importance of creating Teufelsdröckh’s biography. Likewise, the rhetorical question about creating order causes the Editor, once the six unorganized bags arrive, to work “patiently,” without anger, “under these incessant toils and agitations” as he tries to “piec[e] the Why to the far-distant Wherefore” (62). Teufelsdröckh considers the man who can look through the vestments of man “happy” (52). He also acknowledges that the search may yield “a more or less incompetent Digestive-apparatus” (52), like that of a mine-shaft, which could swallow the speculator whole, or “an inscrutable venerable Mystery” offering a potential truth. Taking his cue from Teufelsdröckh, the Editor’s task in understanding requires the autobiographical “materials...to be fished up from the weltering deep,” “and cunningly cemented” (61-2). The Editor trusts Teufelsdröckh as a teacher and works to create meaning and order from the chaos of both the Philosophy and the autobiographical extracts; Teufelsdröckh’s comments promise his efforts will create some order, though not perfect order.

Despite taking on his eye/I, sharing the experience of wandering and carefully—

and literally—following Teufelsdröckh’s philosophy, the Editor does not come to the “Everlasting Yea” at the same time as Teufelsdröckh. Having the Editor reach a spiritual epiphany at the same time as Teufelsdröckh would make the Clothes Volume mechanistic. The Editor and Teufelsdröckh, like Carlyle, believe that “everything” including “the internal and spiritual” has a mechanical approach (Signs 7). As such, “Instruction, that mysterious communing of Wisdom and Ignorance, is no longer an indefinable tentative process, requiring a study of individual aptitudes, and a perpetual variation of mean and methods, to attain the same end” (Signs 7). Teufelsdröckh acts not as a machine dispensing wisdom; rather, he acts the instructor. The internal and spiritual meaning of the “Devine Life” that Teufelsdröckh asserts will bring new truth and individual reformation becomes powerful and transcendent only when “inmost ME is” “brought into contact with inmost ME!” (163), not when Me replaces Me. As a result, Teufelsdröckh can no longer be the clothes for the Editor’s self. After his own conversion, Teufelsdröckh’s statements and questions shift from “what is this I” to statements encouraging one “to find by study of yourself, and of the ground you stand on, what your combined inward and outward Capability specially is.” (*Sartor* 93). In this way, he relinquishes his command over the literal-minded Editor’s identity. Teufelsdröckh’s statements guide the Editor away from the autobiography, from which he would not find his self, but only continue in a “spiraling self-consciousness” (Haney 321) towards Teufelsdröckh’s self, and encourages him to discover and reform his own self.

“Inmost Me” and “Inmost Me”

Teufelsdröckh understands that the "Idea" for change and a new truth begins "in some single Head," so asks, "why not from some Idea in mine?" (151). Teufelsdröckh does not need the idea to be associated with him, because it is his Idea, not his Me, that has significance. He considers his Me unimportant because he exists in the metaphorical realm; in the physical/literal realm, where the Editor resides, the Me needs to be known in order to understand and incorporate the ideas. Before enacting the truths Teufelsdröckh's Philosophy espouses, the Editor needs to see them reflected in the philosopher therefore requiring the Editor to bring forth Teufelsdröckh's Me. Teufelsdröckh wants his ideas to spark reform and change; the Editor sees the potential for reform in the Clothes Volume, but as a product of his age, he must understand and enact Teufelsdröckh's ideas in literal and actual ways for the Philosophy to have value. In following literally the Philosophy, he discovers, but is consumed by, Teufelsdröckh's self. By uncovering Teufelsdröckh, he also discovers Teufelsdröckh's calling and capabilities of espousing new truths, and by extension, he discovers his calling: to bring forth the ideas in the philosophy to aid in the reformation of the individual and society. To enact this role, however, requires that he separate from Teufelsdröckh.

Initially, the Editor wants to build the bridge toward Teufelsdröckh's soul so that he may have the same sense of silence and gravity that Teufelsdröckh exhibits. In following Teufelsdröckh's compass through his autobiography, however, he begins to lose his self. Teufelsdröckh guides the Editor back towards his self, thus fulfilling the goal of the Philosophy. As the Editor emerges from Teufelsdröckh's inward and takes on his own eye, he can establish his self "kindled" with Teufelsdröckh's self, and see not only the questions of "I" in the philosophy, but also the issues pertaining to change in

society. In taking a step back from Teufelsdröckh, the Editor can now examine the Philosophy with a more impartial gaze and enact and reflect its meaning.

Teufelsdröckh finds meaning and truth in the 'Everlasting Yea,' realizing that he must "love not Pleasure; [but] love God" (146). As stated above, his newfound insight into man and society helps him find his inward and outward capabilities. He now follows advice given to him previously to "*Do the Duty which lies nearest thee.*" Teufelsdröckh comes to the realization that his "duty," his "second Duty" (148), requires that he share his newly discovered truth with his fellow man. He encourages the Editor to do his "second duty" when he asks, "whilt thou help us to embody the divine Sprit of that Religion in a new Mythus, in a new vehicle and vesture, that our Souls, otherwise too like perishing, may live?" (147). In this demanding question, Teufelsdröckh asserts that he needs the Editor, and men like him, to help him spread the "new Mythus" that will help others "love God." This question asserts not the importance of Teufelsdröckh's Me, but the importance of his ideas and truths. Teufelsdröckh has no use for "Only a torch for burning" (147), which the Editor has been using to examine the depths of Teufelsdröckh. Rather, he needs someone with a "hammer for building" to help him spread his "new Mythus," otherwise "Take our thanks, then, and—thysel away" (147). In other words, Teufelsdröckh requires another Me to whom he can do his second duty. He needs the Editor to recognize and reform his "inmost Me."

Teufelsdröckh asserts at the end of "The Everlasting Yea" that "the thing thou seekest is already with thee 'here or nowhere,' couldst thou only see," and that "the Ideal is in thyself, the Impediment too is in thyself: thy condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same ideal out of" (149). The Editor's labors and gaze must turn towards

himself; he needs to stop looking towards Teufelsdröckh's inward and start looking towards his own if he is to obtain any sense of understanding from the philosophy or if the philosophy is to have any meaning. Teufelsdröckh wants to induce the speculative man to action. The Editor initially took this demand for action literally and created the biography. Teufelsdröckh negates this type of action when he asks, "What are your historical Facts; still more your biographical?" (153). He asserts that one cannot "know a Man, above all, Mankind, by stringing together bedrolls of what thou namest Facts," but that "Man is the spirit he worked in; not what he did, but what he became" (153). Naturally, Teufelsdröckh's denouncing of biography after the Editor has laboriously compiled Teufelsdröckh's biography, leads him to a "painful suspicion" that the "Autobiographical Documents are partly a Mystification!" (153).

This suspicion or doubt that Teufelsdröckh instills in the biography arises at the same time that Teufelsdröckh commands the Editor to "Awake, arise! Speak forth what is in thee" (151) and to "betake himself to the *Concurrenz* (Competition)" (152) and causes the Editor to find his self as an entity separate from Teufelsdröckh's. The Editor, heeding this advice, "determines here to shut these Paper-bags" (154) and goes back to the Clothes-Philosophy in order to "discern some beckonings towards the true higher purport" (156). As the Editor comes to view the Clothes Philosophy with his eye/I, Teufelsdröckh begins to address him as an equal telling him to "Gaze thou in the face of thy Brother," and in doing so, "feel how thy own so quiet Soul is straightaway involuntarily kindled with the like, and ye blaze and reverberate on each other" (162). In telling the Editor to "gaze" at his contemporary, Teufelsdröckh encourages the Editor, with his own eyes, to feel how his "inmost Me" becomes stronger when brought into

contact with "inmost Me." The doubt in Teufelsdröckh's autobiographical delineations keeps him from being entirely swallowed up in Teufelsdröckh. The Editor can now examine and apply the ideas of the Philosophy to his own understanding of his self as well as act the guide to subsequent selves in search of meaning.

While the Editor initially wants to deliver the man and Philosophy, both of which he believes hold the key to a new spiritual truth, to the English public, in "Incident in Modern History" he recognizes that a spiritual truth cannot be hand delivered; the truth must be earned and felt. Accordingly, he now wants to " guide [his] British Friends into the new Gold-country" and show them "the mines nowise to dig out and exhaust its wealth, which indeed remains for all time inexhaustible" (157). Having formed Teufelsdröckh to the best of his ability, he now understands that he has to let "each dig for his own behoof, and enrich himself" (157). Here, the Editor does his "second duty" to the English public. In re-establishing his identity, decidedly separate from Teufelsdröckh, the Editor comments, as he continues to reproduce the Philosophy, that "to state his whole doctrine,[on symbols] indeed, were beyond [his] compass" (165).

He does not try to follow exactly Teufelsdröckh's compass: rather he accepts that his role requires he "study to glean . . . what little seems logical and practical, and cunningly arrange it into such degree of coherence as it will assume" (165). His duty and action of arranging into coherence the Philosophy show in his reprinting the story of George Fox's suit of leather. The Editor sees the idea as "ridiculous in extreme" (161), yet manages to see Teufelsdröckh's desire of "leveling Society" (161), and can, as Lee Baker asserts, engage in a "playfulness" that "coincides with the Professor's 'deeper intentions'" (230) to develop and discover a new truth. While Baker uses the story of Fox



to suggest the “professor would laugh at those who so literally interpret” (230), I use this story to show evidence of the Editor’s growth. The Editor does not literally interpret this story, otherwise he would be making a suit of leather in much the same way that he created a biography. Teufelsdröckh, as a philosopher, works in the world of ideals; the Editor lives and works in reality, and so recognizes that society, in its current state, would distort the ideal and recreate “all the old Distinctions” (161) of class and society. While the Editor can recognize the faulty logic, he can also now appreciate the lofty aspirations of the Philosophy, but he has to establish a practical way of understanding and recreating them for society to benefit.

In separating his self from Teufelsdröckh, the Editor can instruct the reader on the true value of the Philosophy. As he finishes the biography and Philosophy, the Editor "sees his general Day's work so much the lighter, so much the shorter" (221), and feels he can emerge from the "laborious, perhaps thankless enterprise"(221), but with a better understanding of self. Teufelsdröckh’s Philosophy and life became his life’s work, and in "working over Teufelsdröckh's German," the Editor, by his admission, loses "much of his own English Purity" (220). This loss of "English Purity" is not as distasteful as the Editor would have us believe. Though he asserts that in taking on certain aspects of Teufelsdröckh's German identity, he finds “unhappily [that Teufelsdröckh] has somewhat infected” (204) him, he now speaks in metaphor. His ability to speak in, and to some extent understand metaphor, however, also allows him to begin to understand the emblematic nature of clothes, Teufelsdröckh, and society. Though he looks to regain his Englishness, the Editor also comes to understand that “infinite is the help man can yield to man” (223). As such, the Editor admits that “no firm arch” (203) can be built between

Teufelsdröckh's philosophy and the English society because of the individual nature of the journey required to understand the Philosophy and the self. The Editor only leaves "some zigzag series of rafts floating tumultuously" above the abyss in order to aid others in their quest to their metaphysical selves. He, like Teufelsdröckh, considers his labors as the starting point for others, and he now knows that "New Labourers will arrive; new Bridges will be built" (204) until the individual reforms enacted on the self result in a reformation of society.

In the writing of *Sartor Resartus*, with its aims for the discovery of the self and the path to the "Everlasting Yea," Carlyle hoped that people "would recognize that under the aspect of eternity no one has anything but temporary occupancy of property," thus allowing "a moral renovation, . . . which would so soundly reject materialism and mechanism" (Kaplan 156). In order to incite change, Carlyle, like Teufelsdröckh, needs readers. Carlyle's biographer Fred Kaplan asserts that with *Sartor Resartus*, as well as his contemporary essays, Carlyle "felt that he had risen to the strength of voice and personality which made him an independent force, a presence of power and originality with a message so important, whatever the Germanic influence, that it deserved an audience of its own" (170). In an 1849 interview, as quoted by Kenneth Marc Harris, the interviewer asked "if [Ralph Waldo] Emerson's ideas could be regarded as original," to which Carlyle responded, "Emerson had in the first instance, taken his system out of 'Sartor' and other of his (Carlyle's) writings, but he worked it out in a way of his own" (Harris 27). In his book, *Emerson and Carlyle: Their Long Debate*, in which he examines the life-long relationship between Emerson and Carlyle, Harris takes issue with the lack of "accuracy" and "modesty" (27) of such a response. The statement, however, suggests

that Carlyle sees his relationship with Emerson not entirely unlike that of Teufelsdröckh and the Editor. So while Harris appropriately sees the hubris in this statement, it could also be argued that this response shows Emerson's significance to Carlyle and the spread of his ideas.

In this way, Emerson acts as one of these "new Labourers" (*Sartor* 204) as he brings Carlyle's writings and ideas to the American public. The friendship between Carlyle and Emerson, as documented through letters and journal entries, has been well established. They first met at Carlyle's home in Craigenputtock in 1833 (Harris 8). Examining the similarities and differences in style, ideas, and personality through their life long exchange of letters, Harris notes that in their "brief first meeting . . . [the conversation] ranged over a variety of topics, from the ingenuity of Carlyle's pig . . . [to] the immortality of the soul" (Harris 8); the latter subject of particular "great interest to Emerson" (Harris 8). Emerson, like Carlyle, was "painfully conscious of living in an age when one such ideology had lost that power to console, and they desperately wanted to assist in the discovery of another" (Harris 6).<sup>12</sup> Though Emerson has a wide variety of sources, Harris notes that both Carlyle and Emerson's writings "can in fact be reduced to

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<sup>12</sup> Emerson discovers in Carlyle an individual who, like himself, "wants to communicate new [and re-invented] truths" but in order to do so they discover that "making their words one with things demanded new words, almost a new language" (Harris 11). Harris seems reluctant to give too much credit to Carlyle for Emerson's American transcendental ideas. Harris asserts in his introduction that for both men, "the ideas on which they based their fancies and speculations were not their own" but that most "came from German philosophy" (Harris 6). Harris also acknowledges, however, that because Carlyle knew German, "he had more direct access to German thought than did Emerson" (6) and that Carlyle "depended heavily on secondary sources," but he did "read around in the originals, and he forcibly wrenched out whatever appealed to him, often at the cost of outrageous distortion" (6). I am not asserting that Carlyle was Emerson's only source for the German Philosophers or that he was the only source of all of Emerson's ideas. However, relying in part on Carlyle for an introduction to these ideas does make Emerson dependent on Carlyle's translations of the philosophers.

roughly the same abstract system” (Harris 27). Like Carlyle, Emerson attempts to find meaning and truth in society as well as the self, which may also be the reason he was drawn to Carlyle’s work in the first place. Emerson was the first to have *Sartor Resartus* published in America and the first to have it published in book form, as Carlyle originally wanted it. Emerson’s belief in “*Sartor* [as] a major book, [and] its author [as] a man who deserved recognition and support,” caused him to have two editions—500 copies apiece—published; both editions sold out in a matter of months (Kaplan 232). Though neither man profited from the sales, “the American public was actually reading Carlyle” (232). The American readers of Carlyle included Herman Melville. Though Melville bought a copy of *Sartor Resartus* while traveling in London (Parker), it is likely that his first exposure to Carlyle resulted from Emerson’s efforts to introduce him, and his ideas, to the American public.

Like Carlyle’s and Emerson’s, Melville’s ideas come from a wide variety of sources; Hershel Parker, F.O. Matthiessen, and David S. Reynolds all explore and establish Melville’s various influences. Significantly, they all list Carlyle as one. While Carlyle and Emerson seem to want to discover or re-create an “abstract system” of belief that will help bring meaning and truth to a mechanistic, industrial, unbelieving age, Melville seems to be putting these newer beliefs, or systems, to the test. Albert J. LaValley makes a similar link in his analysis of *Sartor Resartus*. LaValley establishes the contradictory nature inherent in the form of Teufelsdröckh’s Clothes Philosophy and the attempt to discover the self. He asserts that once the “Clothes Philosophy has achieved its fullest expansion, once the total living vision of man and the universe is attained, new problems arise. Expansion no longer appears merely as expansion but also as its opposite,

contraction” (LaValley 77). Teufelsdröckh and the Editor must contend with the “possibilities of a total self” mixed with “the danger of dissolution and collapse” (76). In this way, the discovery of self means “chaos is transformed . . . into an organized world and an organized self, yet it is equally true in a deeper sense that darkness is maintained and with it the possibility of chaos” (LaValley 82). LaValley’s argument about the desire to find the self in *Sartor* centers on this tension. LaValley claims that the “problematic rendering of the book’s central quest, this simultaneous espousal and questioning of the search for unity and significance, sounds a new note in literature” (99).

With *Sartor*, LaValley argues, Carlyle sees the need to “link method with vision,” but he also sees “the infinite possibilities of an open and organic universe militated against the stability of meaning and the self and render[ing] the possibility of artistic form itself questionable” (100). In other words, while Carlyle has both Teufelsdröckh and the Editor wind up in the “Everlasting Yea,” he does recognize the possibility of never reaching that Yea. Emerson, on the other hand, attempts to see the possibilities of the “open organic universe,” a desire that had Carlyle calling him ““a *Soliloquizer* on the eternal mountain-tops”” (Harris 52). Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, according to LaValley, is “united” with *Sartor* “not merely by a kind of surface chaos or experimentation with new forms” but by their “basic literary typology for dealing with the problem of meaning” (LaValley 100). While he sees similarities between Ahab and Teufelsdröckh’s quests as well as the Editor and Ishmael’s desires to find “the possibility of attaining an ordered and complex vision of the self, society, and nature” (LaValley 101), he does not expand on these connections. While aware of the dangers of finding meaning in and for the self, Carlyle sees the possibilities in the “Everlasting Yea,” as both the Editor and

Teufelsdröckh find their way to a new understanding of self. Melville, who wrote to Nathaniel Hawthorne after he finished writing *Moby-Dick*, claiming, “I have written a wicked book, and feel as spotless as a lamb” (Parker 758), keeps Ishmael from ever discovering the meaning of his self or finding a way into the Everlasting Yea in which meaning and self, the metaphysical, and God become clear. Instead, Ishmael, having seen glimpses of the “Everlasting Yea,” cannot seem to reach it. Therefore, he remains a wanderer in the “Center of Indifference,” leaving him unable, but continuously attempting, to find meaning within his journey and his self.

## Chapter 2

### "Despot Eye" (582)

*Moby-Dick* or, *The Whale* utilizes some of the themes and structure of *Sartor Resartus* but creates a more complex plot. Like Carlyle's Editor, Ishmael, too, has reached that speculative time in his life, and in order to cull the "damp, drizzly November in [his] soul" (3), Ishmael goes to the ocean where, "as everyone knows, meditation and water are wedded forever" (4). The Editor turns to the German philosophers, who can "fish in all manner of waters, with all manner of nets" (Carlyle 6) in order to find the truth. Ishmael, on the other hand, goes to sea "as a simple sailor" (Melville 6). Though he desires to learn the way "his whole Faculties work, his whole Self lives, moves and has its being" (Carlyle 4) so he can try and grasp the "ungraspable phantom of life" (Melville 5), Ishmael, unlike the Editor, does not go on a figurative journey through the writings of someone else. Rather, his speculations have in a "high degree excited [him] to self-activity"(Carlyle 23), and he takes to the sea.

Published twenty years after Carlyle wrote *Sartor Resartus*, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851) picks up many of the threads of identity and the quest for truth and meaning that Carlyle examined with Teufelsdröckh and the Editor. In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael and Ahab constitute two distinct voices looking for truth, and while Ahab's narrative and voice seems to overtake Ishmael's, and though Ishmael may disappear from the narrative, he nevertheless maintains his voice with the anatomy. Ahab's monomaniacal quest for Moby Dick, the whale that took his leg, does not leave room for the narrative of others, and Ishmael does lose his self—his eye/I—in Ahab's self. Though

he manages to eventually emerge from Ahab's "I," he remains unsure of the identity he (re)claims. Tying his identity and narrative to Ahab's allows Ishmael to maintain a presence in the text through his anatomy on whales and whaling. Losing his identity through Ahab but maintaining some sense of self through the anatomy, Ishmael eventually takes on a new identity, which, though associated with a name, Ishmael, the truth and meaning behind the newly reflected self and name, both at the beginning and the end of *Moby-Dick*, remain uncertain.

In his quest for meaning, Ishmael, like Carlyle's Editor, takes on the dual vision of the narrative and anatomy. His journey to the *Pequod* and the forming of an altered identity/self called *Ishmael* mark his narrative; his intense study of whales and whaling marks his anatomy. His dual vision issues from his desire to understand his new self as well as the man, Ahab, who in subsuming Ishmael in his own identity, prompts/helps to create this new identity in Ishmael. As Ishmael's narrative, self, and vision align and seem overtaken by Ahab's, Ishmael remains present in the text through the anatomy. Ishmael's anatomy also takes on a duality in that he views events and objects from both a speculative—forward-looking—and a reflective—backward-looking—perspective. This dual speculative-reflective perspective imbues objects and events simultaneously with hope and dread: hope that he will find meaning and identity, and dread of the impending loss of identity.

Ahab, as he attaches all meaning of his self to *Moby Dick*, does not differentiate between the narrative and anatomy. In other words, he takes on not a dual vision, but a single gaze. Ahab does not question or examine the motives or meaning behind his narrative; likewise, he does not consider the way his linear mission/narrative creates the



meaning in his life. Combining his vision into a single gaze, he creates a monomaniacal vision and goal leading ultimately to his death and the death of his crew. His monomaniacal gaze is only forward-looking though in a definitive rather than speculative way, thereby moving events and Ishmael's wavering narrative forward. The narrative/anatomy form also exists on a more fundamental level with Ahab, with his linear and singular mission controlling the narrative, while Ishmael, delving for the meaning behind that mission, controls the anatomy. With Ahab in charge of the narrative and Ishmael using the anatomy to discover the meaning and truth behind that narrative, Ahab and Ishmael both create and are created by the other. In this way, *Moby-Dick* takes on a similar structure to *Sartor Resartus*. In *Sartor*, however, the dual vision and the narrative/anatomy split have both Teufelsdröckh and the Editor discovering a higher purpose in the "Everlasting Yea." Unlike Carlyle's Philosopher and his Editor, neither Ishmael nor Ahab ends up in the "Everlasting Yea." Ahab, unable to see anything but death at the end of his quest for Moby Dick, exists in the "Everlasting No," and therefore does not, and can not, do his "second duty" to his fellow man. Ishmael, on the other hand, wants to find a deeper meaning to life and his self, yet ties his identity to a self-doomed man. Therefore, Ishmael survives but exists, in Carlylian terms, in the "Center of Indifference."

The issue of identity and self has been exhaustively studied and written about in the analysis of *Moby Dick*. The opening sentence, "Call me Ishmael" (3), invites an examination of identity as it plays out in the text. Melville's opening statement coincides with the questions of the era in which Emerson, in appropriating Teufelsdröckh's question "what is this I; this thing that can say I" (*Sartor* 42), asks "Who is the Trustee?"

and "What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded?" (Emerson 141). This question becomes all the more salient for Melville, and other American writers, as he was writing in a time that called for a distinctly American voice in the creation of a national literature. While my purpose is not to examine *Moby-Dick* as an American text, Melville's assertion in his essay "Hawthorne and His Mosses" (1850)<sup>13</sup> that "we want no American Goldsmiths; nay, we want no American Miltons. Call him an American, and have done; for you can not say a nobler thing of him"<sup>14</sup> (Melville 6), brings to the forefront not just the question of an American identity but identity in general.<sup>15</sup>

Familiar with Emerson's essays and lectures, Melville acknowledges in a letter to his friend and publisher Duyckinck that "he did not 'oscillate in Emerson's rainbow, . . . [he] had found him quite intelligible'" (Parker 617), and that he "love[s] all men

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<sup>13</sup> Melville wrote "Hawthorne and his Mosses" in the same summer he was writing *Moby-Dick*.

<sup>14</sup> It seems appropriate that the grandson of Thomas Melville, a man who participated in the 1773 Boston Tea Party (Parker 2), should encourage writers to avoid "this Bostonian leaven of literary flunkeyism toward England" (Mosses 6). The goal of the Boston Tea Party was not to rid America of tea, but rather a protest over England's "heavily taxed tea" (Parker 2). Likewise, Melville urges readers, writers, and especially critics not to qualify good American writers with an English counterpart in order to consider them great. Melville believes good or great American writing (he uses Hawthorne as the example) stands on its own merit. Melville does, however, understand the significance of European writers as he was heavily influenced by the classics.

<sup>15</sup> In his reasoning, he believes that American writers should not strive to imitate the greats of Europe. His demand that "it is not meant that all American writers should studiously cleave to nationality in their writings; only this, no American writer should write like an Englishman, or a Frenchman; let him write like a man, for then he will be sure to write like an American" (6), echoes Carlyle who asserts that "it is a great thing for a Nation that it get an articulate voice; that it produce a man who will speak forth melodiously what the heart of it means!" (Heroes 72).

who *dive*. Any fish can swim near the surface, but it takes a great whale to down stairs five miles or more" (Parker 617). Melville wrote this letter when he was working on his first attempt<sup>16</sup> at fiction, *Mardi* (1849).<sup>17</sup> Though *Mardi*'s narrator, Taji, philosophizes about life and identity while circumnavigating a group of islands in the Pacific, the idea of diving into the metaphysical and metaphorical sea of life materializes with a more sound plot in *Moby-Dick*. Melville's extensive reading of philosophy and classical literature began at twenty-five when he was writing his first novel, *Typee*. His new knowledge found its way into his writing as he tried to incorporate the discovery of new

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<sup>16</sup> Though *Mardi* is his third book, critics consider his first two books, *Typee and Omoo*, autobiographical travelogues. That being said, current discourse acknowledges the artistic license Melville took when writing about his South Pacific adventures. As such, *Mardi*, becomes his first attempt at fiction.

<sup>17</sup> Matthiessen's chapter "*Mardi: A Source-Book for Plenitude*" argues that "*Mardi* could serve as a source book for reconstructing the conflicting faiths and doubts that were sweeping this country at the end of the eighteen-forties" (Matthiessen 378). Reynolds builds upon this point in arguing that in "*Mardi* Melville expands greatly upon the dark-temperance mode" explored in *Omoo*, but he "broadens his ironic reapplications of several other reforms, including socialism, anti-Catholicism, and anti-slavery" (Reynolds 142). He goes on to argue that in "*Mardi* [Melville] is stepping beyond the dark-temperance mode toward a poeticizing of the creative powers this mode releases. *Mardi* also marks a deepening in Melville's reflections upon debated social realities such as class divisions, Roman Catholicism, and slavery" (143). Not only does this show, as Reynolds and Matthiessen suggest, an understanding of both the popular styles and political issues of his day, but *Mardi* also shows, as Parker asserts, "Melville's ambition: this was the book by which he took bold aim at high literary status" (Parker 576). Desiring to write a book of "high literary status" coincides with his reading at the time of writing *Mardi*. Melville's reading list, according to Parker, "though continuing his reading of travel literature with Barnard or Bouganinville, ranged far afield with Shakespeare, Montaigne, Seneca, and Browne, Ossian, Coleridge, and Rabelais" (Parker quoting Merrell R. Davis 577) as well as Burton and Dante (Parker 577). Though disliked by the critics, his first attempt at fiction corresponds with his reading of more philosophical texts and classic literature and deals with questions of the self and truth.

ideas into the structure and themes of his texts.<sup>18</sup> F.O. Matthieson points out that unlike that of his contemporaries, "the bulk of Melville's reading came in the reverse sequence from that of most writers: it followed rather than preceded his experience of the world" (Matthiessen 121). In this way, Melville's writing takes on Ishmaelian qualities as he tries to incorporate philosophy and literature as a way of understanding the truths he observed and discovered while sailing the globe. Hershel Parker's biography highlights Melville's growth as a writer and the development of his ideas and themes over the course of his writing career. Parker convincingly shows that the more time Melville spent reading, the more philosophical his writing became. Parker also highlights the influence of other writers on Melville's style. In contemporary reviews of his novels, reviewers note his stylistic similarities to other authors, in several cases his Carlylian style and phrases (Parker). Like Ishmael, who tries to connect his experiences aboard the *Pequod* with the "Etymology"(xxxvii) of the word whale and the "Extracts" of "what has been promiscuously said, thought, fancied, and sung of Leviathan, by many nations and generations" (xxxvii), Melville attempts to incorporate his newly acquired knowledge of philosophy and literature into his experiences as a way of examining truth and the self.

In *Moby-Dick*, Melville appropriates Emerson's symbol of the transparent eyeball in which the individual becomes a part of the all; Melville inverts this image with Ahab's "despot eye" in which the all becomes part of the one. He also makes use of Carlyle's

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<sup>18</sup> In considering Melville's use of classical, often European sources, David S. Reynolds asserts in his introduction to *Beneath the American Renaissance* that in *Moby-Dick* Melville "gives a fully Americanized version of Shakespeare and other classic sources precisely because it democratically encompasses a uniquely large number of antebellum textual strategies" (5). These textual strategies were used by the writers and readers of popular literature of the nineteenth century, and, as Reynolds asserts, utilized by authors such as Hawthorne, Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau, and Melville, allowing these authors to create great American works.

emblematic view of objects and creates the less hopeful idea of objects as “pasteboard mask”—an argument explored in more detail below. Engaging with the metaphysical discussion of his era, Melville highlights the dangers of losing oneself in the search for the self. While he makes use of the Emersonian eyeball and Carlylian objects, he also creates a relationship between Ahab and Ishmael that echoes the relationship—albeit a less positive relationship—between the Editor and Teufelsdröckh in *Sartor Resartus*, a book he purchased and read shortly before starting *Moby-Dick*. In *Moby-Dick*, Melville accomplishes the examination of the self by making use of the forms of the narrative and the anatomy as a way of exploring the deeper truth and meaning behind a reflected self.

In examining the quest for self and truth, I first establish Ishmael’s desire to go to sea and his use of the dual—speculative-reflective—perspective as he describes and looks for meaning and his self in events presently unfolding and previously unfolded. This desire to place meaning on events through his dual perspective comes across in his desire to view objects as emblematic, not unlike Carlyle’s Teufelsdröckh. His view of objects as emblems places him in contrast to Ahab who views objects as “pasteboard masks” (178). Establishing Ishmael and Ahab’s views, we can turn to an examination of Ishmael’s fascination and desire to know the emblematic nature of Ahab, and how this desire for knowing leads him to lose his self in Ahab’s self, and at the same time causes him to take on the study of whales. The difference in Ishmael and Ahab’s views also helps establish their role in the narrative/anatomy split, thus allowing us to examine Ahab’s control of the narrative as he follows a course and line that leads to *Moby Dick*, as well as Ishmael’s use of the anatomy as he tries to understand the narrative course, Ahab, and the whale. Finally, we can examine how their views of objects and their course

along the narrative-anatomy lines lead Ahab to the “Everlasting No” and Ishmael to the “Center of Indifference.”

### "The dignity of our calling"

In going to sea, the man who now calls himself Ishmael is prepared to discover a new sense of self. Besides feeling melancholic and "grim about the mouth" (3), he admits that taking to the water "is [his] substitute for pistol and ball" (3). Therefore, he casts off his mainland identity in order to find a new understanding of self. Going to sea becomes an opportunity for re-birth. By his initial statement of "Call me," rather than "I am," Ishmael suggests that even after many, "never mind how long precisely," years since his voyage to sea, he still lacks a firm understanding of self.

Having reached a speculative time in his life, and "having nothing particular to interest [him] on shore" (3), Ishmael, formerly a grammar teacher and a “sub-sub-librarian,” decides to go to the "watery part of the world" (3) in order to find a renewed sense of self and meaning. Unsatisfied with the current state of his life, Ishmael finds himself "involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral [he] meet[s]" (3). He also requires "a strong moral principal" to keep from killing himself or starting a fight with someone else (3). Significantly, Ishmael does not go to sea as a passenger, who "themselves must pay" (6). Rather, he goes to sea as one who will be paid, because, he claims, "there is all the difference in the world between paying and being paid" (6). Though he accepts that "old sea-captains...may thump and punch [him] about" (6), he believes that everybody, passengers and sailors alike, in either "a physical or metaphysical point of view" (6) receives a "universal thump" (6). With this

reasoning, therefore, he prefers to get paid for his physical and metaphysical thumps. For his physical thumps, he will earn a wage; for his metaphysical thumps, he will earn a better understanding of life and his self.

Ishmael's need for experience in order to find meaning reiterates the sentiments of Teufelsdröckh who asserts that "experience is the grand spiritual Doctor" (*Sartor* 138), and "doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by action" (*Sartor* 148). Action and experience allow, eventually, for a sense of conviction. This sense of "conviction," however, "is not possible" until "convert[ed] into conduct" (*Sartor* 148). In Teufelsdröckh's reasoning, "all Speculation is by nature endless, formless, a vortex amid vortices: only, by a felt indubitable certainty of Experience, does it find any center to revolve around, and so fashion itself into a system" (*Sartor* 148). Building on Carlyle, Emerson encourages the individual to "Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself" (Emerson 136). Emerson begrudges the man who gives to charities and considers paying a virtue (136). In considering these virtues, Emerson asserts that "Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. . . . Their virtues are penances" (136). Emerson, unlike these men, does not "wish to expiate, but to live"(136), therefore he "much prefer[s] that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal" (136). In other words, true virtue is not obtained through paying, but must be earned through work.

Ishmael earlier admits to having "little or no money in [his] purse" (Melville 3), and that to go to sea "as a passenger you must needs have a purse" (5). While on a first voyage as a passenger one "feel[s] such a mystical vibration, when first told that you and your ship were now out of sight of land" (5), subsequent trips as a passenger, one who

must pay, are “perhaps the most uncomfortable infliction that the two orchard thieves entailed upon us” (5). Wanting to earn his “thumps” rather than be smote by them, Ishmael echoes the sentiments of both Carlyle and Emerson, who consider experience as a way to cure spiritual ills. Ishmael prefers “*being paid*” (6), so he can earn, and perhaps understand, his “metaphysical thumps.” Contradictorily, he acknowledges that “receiv[ing] money is really marvelous” (6), but as society “earnestly believes money to be the root of all earthly ills, [no] monied man can enter heaven” (7). In earning his metaphysical thumps, he “consigns [himself] to perdition!” (7). Thus, he foreshadows his current state of wanderer in the “Center of Indifference.”

In earlier claiming that “water and meditation are forever wedded” (4), Ishmael justifies his desire to go to sea as a sailor. Knowing also that “landsmen” view whaling as an “unpoetical and disreputable pursuit” (118), Ishmael defends whaling as his “Yale College and [his] Harvard” (122). Whaling, he claims, “has been the pioneer in ferreting out the remotest and least known parts of the earth” (120) and “has explored seas and archipelagoes which had no chart” (122). In this way, Ishmael claims that “whaling may well be regarded as that Egyptian mother, who bore offspring themselves pregnant from her womb” (121-2). In other words, the whale ship, wedded to the water, produced new lands and colonies. Ishmael applies this reasoning to his search for metaphysical truth. The physical world having been discovered and explored with the help of whaling, Ishmael, wanting a fuller understanding of self, hopes that going to sea on a whale ship will help him to explore and chart the metaphysical world. In going to sea, he hopes to experience a re-birth that will give him a renewed sense of self. In reflectively considering his narrative, Ishmael also hopes to recover the identity he lost at sea.



In the justification of his journey, Ishmael also acknowledges the "magic" (4) of the water that causes "the most absent-minded of men . . . plunged in his deepest reveries" to "infallibly lead you to water" (4). At the same time that he describes the magic quality of water, Ishmael also wonders "why is almost every robust healthy boy with a robust healthy soul in him, at some time or other crazy to go to sea?" (5). Instead of giving a satisfying answer, Ishmael merely asserts that "surely all this is not without meaning" (5), suggesting that he has not yet found an answer to his own question. As a potential response to his question, he invokes the story of Narcissus, thus reinforcing the opening sentence—"Call me Ishmael"—as well as the undeniable draw of the water in trying to find one's identity. Narcissus, who "could not grasp the tormenting, mild image" of himself, "plunged into it and was drowned" (5). Never able to reach his image, Narcissus dies still trying to obtain the very thing just beyond his grasp.

The image of Narcissus, as Mary Pitts asserts, "further underscores the creative/destructive, understanding/self-deconstructing nature of identity" (Pitts 175). Pitts argues that "Ishmael, who is both Melville and all human kind . . . assumes the identity of the outsider, of the traditional wanderer. His fragmentation becomes his fetish and his identity" (177). Pitts also argues that "the phantom that Ishmael seeks—that we all seek, in his account—is . . . the (recovered) self" (178). Using a psychoanalytic approach, Pitts asserts that Ishmael becomes the assumed identity of a man fragmented by the events in this narrative. Pitts uses Frederic Jameson's phrase "line of fiction," defined as "the psychic function of narrative and fantasy in the attempt of the subject to reintegrate his or her alienated image" (Pitts 176). In taking on his "ambiguous . . . identity, Ishmael not only declares himself an outsider, but points to his narrative and his

journey . . . as a quest for identity" (Pitts 177-8). Pitts interprets the narrative as Ishmael's way of recovering/discovering his newly formed identity, but she never expands on what he discovers or his process of discovery. Though Pitts also establishes Ishmael as a "wanderer/wonderer" (179), Ishmael does not seem as content with this new identity as outsider as Pitts suggests. Unlike Narcissus who drowns because he cannot hold the image that he loves, Ishmael sees reflected in the water not his image or his newly assumed image, but "the image of the ungraspable phantom of life" (*Moby* 5). He wants to grasp not his image, but the meaning behind the reflecting image. His quest for identity, which began when he was schoolteacher and "sub-sub," remains unsuccessful, and this narrative becomes yet another way to try and make sense of his identity or lack thereof.

The first twenty-eight chapters read like an autobiography as Ishmael leads the reader from New Bedford to his appointment on the ill-fated *Pequod*. As Ishmael establishes his journey to the *Pequod*, he maintains his presence as narrator, though the identity and "I" of that narrator remains elusive. His uncertainty becomes evident with his initial use of the pronouns "you" and "I." As he searches for lodgings while still in Bedford, he asserts "wherever you go, Ishmael, said I to myself, as I stood in the middle of a dreary street shouldering my bag . . . wherever in your wisdom you may conclude to lodge for the night, my dear Ishmael, be sure to inquire the price, and don't be too particular" (10). The combination of the pronouns "you" and "I" and the appositive "Ishmael," repeated several times as he looks for lodging, suggests the confusion of identity. His pronoun confusion also establishes the speculative-reflective aspect of his narrative. In speculating about his impending voyage, the narrator refers to the "I" that

journeys to the *Pequod*. Reflectively, however the “I” connects to a still uncertain identity, “Ishmael.” Though he is the “you” that the speculative narrator becomes, the reflective “I” remains uncertain of this identity. The constant wavering between the speculative and reflective shows the attempt to reconcile the “you” and the “I” into a unified “Ishmael.”

As the narrator speaks to Ishmael in both the first and second person, he sees himself as both Ishmael and as other. Significantly, the "I" here does not necessarily signify Ishmael. In journeying to the *Pequod*, he both attempts to shed his land identity as well as conform to his new identity, Ishmael. The uncertainty of his “I” becomes apparent in these early chapters, when after waking up in bed with Queequeg "hugg[ing] [him] tightly, as though naught but death should part us twain" (30), he watches Queequeg dress and states, "Thinks I, Queequeg" (30), a statement he repeats before the end of the chapter. Attaching the name Queequeg to the “I” not only shows the relative meaninglessness of a name to the meaning of a self, but also indicates the “I’s” willingness and ability to take on another name/identity in order to find meaning. The "I" then becomes uncertain both to the narrator and to the reader. In his narrative, then, he wants to grasp the "one grand hooded phantom" (8) of his self, his “I,” behind his newly reflected image, Ishmael.

#### Emblematic Pasteboard Masks

Having established Ishmael’s need and desire to go to sea, we can turn to his experience aboard the *Pequod*. First, however, we must establish how Ishmael attempts to find his self. As well, before we can look at how he takes on Ahab’s eye and the

implication of that relationship, we must establish the differences in the way Ahab and Ishmael view events, objects, and people, thus also determining their narrative perspectives. Ahab, who has a definitive forward-looking narrative perspective, views objects as “pasteboard masks” that obscure truth. Ishmael, on the other hand, takes both a speculative and reflective perspective and views objects as “emblems” that embody truth. Their various narrative perspectives also help determine their roles in the narrative/anatomy split, and eventually help us to understand their metaphysical outcomes.

Ishmael looks speculatively as he explains his reasons for leaving land and as he delves for an understanding of his completed and unfolding journey. In his reflective perspective, he examines his travels from land to sea and tries to discover a deeper meaning to his newly acquired self. This simultaneously past and future narrative shows both a hope of discovering and recovering his identity and dread at the eventual loss of his identity, through the events about to be and already unfolded. He also shows his dual vision as he narrates and delves for a meaning behind his narrative in order to understand how he came to lose his self in and through Ahab's “I” as well as to try to reclaim a self. Ishmael allows/needs Ahab to control the narrative, because from a speculative perspective, he believes in and takes on Ahab’s cause as his own; from a reflective perspective, Ishmael needs to understand the cause and therefore, as the cause is not his own, he cannot take sole responsibility for moving events forward.

Understanding the cause, however, also means uncovering Ahab. Unlike Ishmael, Ahab does not have a double vision; he does not look for meaning behind his narrative. He believes he will not obtain an understanding until he kills Moby Dick, making the

anatomy, delving for meaning, useless to him. His definitive purpose allows him to take on a single, linear gaze, a gaze that becomes most apparent in the quarter-deck scene. Here, Ahab asserts that "all visible objects . . . are but pasteboard masks" (178), and he wants to "strike through the mask" (178). Significantly, he does not consider "visual things Emblems" that exist "only spiritually, and to represent some Idea" in order to "body it forth" (*Sartor* 56). The emblematic nature of things means that "no meanest object is insignificant" because "all objects are as windows, through which the philosophic eye looks into infinitude itself" (*Sartor* 56).

In the emblematic view of things, "man himself, and his whole terrestrial Life [make up] but an Emblem . . . for that divine ME" (*Sartor* 57). Ahab, however, views things/objects as a prison keeping him from the truth. As a "prisoner" he must, in order to "reach outside" the mask, "[thrust] through" the thing, which he views as "the wall" (*Moby* 78) that ultimately keeps him from, rather than informing him of, his ME. Visible things do not help him understand his self, but rather, he believes, keep him from his self and inward. Therefore he does not ask, "what is this I; this thing that can say I" (*Sartor* 42); he asks instead "who's over me" (178). He wants to "strike" and "thrust," rather than delve or dive, through the wall that keeps him from finding meaning and truth. Ahab believes that in order to obtain the truth of self, he must break through the things he sees as above him, namely "the inscrutable thing," (178) *Moby Dick*. Just as he determines that he has no "business . . . with [his] pipe" (141)—a "thing that is meant for serenity" (141)—so decides he will "smoke no more," he does not question his desire for revenge. His narrative takes on a similar certainty. Interested only in his own truth, Ahab strikes through the narratives of others, and in doing so, draws them into his own linear mission

for Moby Dick. As his linear mission does not require introspection, at least not until after he manages to break through "the wall." Ishmael, because he takes on Ahab's eye and because of his dual perspective, sees both "the magnitude and malignity" (194) of Moby Dick. While taking "oaths of violence and revenge" (194) and nominally taking on Ahab's "I," Ishmael remains uncertain of the "I."

While Ishmael sees objects as emblems, he also views Ahab as emblematic, though he is unsure of what he emblemizes. Therefore, Ishmael wants to discover Ahab's "divine ME," so he may have a chance of discovering his own. In understanding objects as emblematic, such as the "*That*" of the Spouter-Inn painting discussed below, Ishmael wants to discover the meanings and ideas that help to bring forth and create the outward object. Using clothes as his metaphor, Carlyle's *Teufelsdröckh* articulates the sort of dive for meaning that Ishmael attempts to undertake. *Teufelsdröckh* asserts that "all Emblematic things are properly Clothes thought-woven or hand-woven: must not the Imagination weave Garments, visible Bodies, wherein the else invisible creation and inspiration of our Reason are, like Spirits, revealed, and first become all-powerful" (*Sartor* 56). In seeing Ahab for the first time, and reflecting on this first sighting, Ishmael carefully observes him and notes that the further south the *Pequod* sails, the warmer weather brought "new spells and potencies to the outward world" (*Moby* 137), which affected the "inward, [causing the spells and potencies to] turn to the soul especially when the still mild hours of eve came on" (137). In these hours, "memory shot her crystals as the clear ice" (137). Through "all these subtle agencies, more and more they wrought on Ahab's texture" (137). Ishmael attributes Ahab's more solidified texture to the mildness of the weather and memory. Significantly, however, this scene also

shows, at least according to Ishmael, how the outward—the weather conditions, the crew, the journey—affects the inward—the soul—and helps to body forth or add texture to the outward, reflected self. In this way, Ishmael considers the outward events that affect both his inward and Ahab's, and how the events bring forth a more secure identity. Therefore, he delves into the anatomy to try to attach objects and events to emblematic metaphors in order to discover his, and Ahab's, divine ME.<sup>19</sup>

Unsure of how to apply this emblematic vision to his self, Ishmael turns his double vision to objects and people outside his self. As Ishmael struggles to discover his own ME, he sifts through the fragments of his story to find and place meaning on objects, events, and people that will help body forth his identity as well as help explain and give meaning to objects, events, and people that cause him to lose his identity. The objects to which he assigns meaning seem, like the "extracts" the sub-sub librarian tries to piece together, "without connexion, without recognizable coherence" (*Sartor* 60) aside from the references to whales or the *Pequod's* voyage. In this way, Ishmael endeavors to make "form [rise] out of void solution and discontinuity; like [will] unite itself with like in definite arrangement; and soon either in actual vision and possession, or in fixed

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<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Duquette's article "Speculative Cetology: Figuring Philosophy in *Moby-Dick*" argues that "confronting the limits of human thought, Melville posits a way of thinking about our position in the world that relies upon a certain breed of skepticism, individual exploration, inquiry, and wonder" (37). While she examines the cetology chapters from a philosophic lens, considering in particular Kant, she argues that "a 'philosophy' based on digressions is subtly offered as the more fruitful model for abstract speculation" (45). In considering the cetology chapters together, Duquette insightfully argues that "if one takes the novel in its entirety, the Ahab narrative itself becomes dependent upon, even secondary to, the cetology sections and their methodological theses; to a certain extent the moral of Ahab's story can be seen as proscribed in Ishmael's examination of various approaches to truth" (46). In building on her argument then, the cetology chapter, when combined with the narrative, also works for examinations of the self.

reasonable hope, the image of the whole Enterprise," in this case the truth and meaning of the self, will "[shape] itself, so to speak, into a solid mass" (*Sartor* 10). Therefore, Ishmael, "endeavoring to evolve . . . creation out of . . . Chaos" (*Sartor* 62), views the objects he inscribes with meaning by way of "diligent study and a series of systematic visits to [them], and careful inquiry of the neighbors, [so] that [he] could any way arrive at an understanding of its purpose" (*Moby* 13).

The "large oil-painting" in the Spouter-Inn highlights his application of meaning to objects as well as his inability to move beyond the object until he feels he has established a sense of its meaning. Ishmael observes the "unaccountable masses of shades and shadows" (13) on the "defaced" and "besmoked" painting. He looks through the "black mass" until he manages, through his careful study and after dismissing other "bright, but all deceptive idea[s]" (13), to create form. In the case of this painting he determines that the "picture represents a Cape-Horner in a great hurricane . . . and an exasperated whale" (*Moby* 14). Ishmael cannot describe the rest of the Spouter-Inn until he can understand the painting. He describes the "wide, low, straggling entry" (13) of the inn, but once he sees the painting, he "fairly froze" to the purpose of finding the meaning; "That once found out, and all the rest were plain"(14). Once Ishmael discovers the "that" of the painting, he can finally continue with his description of the inn.

Though he refers specifically to the painting here, throughout his narrative Ishmael desires to find a "that" which will make his identity and purpose clear. Manfred Pütz examines the way that Ishmael responds to art and literature as a viewer, giving the reader insight into Ishmael's character. Pütz's argument centers on Ishmael's responses to art and literature, while also situating Ishmael as an audience of his own story, an



interpretation Pütz introduces but does not fully explore. In considering Ishmael's response to art, Pütz, who examines the passage describing the painting in the Spouter-Inn, asserts that though the passage initially focuses on an "object of art, it quickly shifts its main focus of orientation and emerges as a description of a viewer's *reaction* towards a specific piece of art" (Pütz 162). As such, the passage "centers upon the viewer's rumination and responses which run the whole gamut from confusion, irritation, and challenge to spontaneous interpretation" (Pütz 162), which causes the passage to highlight not the painting, but rather the "viewer's state of mind" (Pütz 162). As a viewer, according to Pütz, "Ishmael's main response consists of an imaginative search for deeper meaning, a search which is intensified by Ishmael's momentary readiness to invest anything he encounters . . . with encompassing and profound significance" (Pütz 163). However, even when he thinks he has discovered the meaning behind the painting, Ishmael makes no declarative statement that the mass is the whale. Instead, he asks, "does it not bear a faint resemblance to a gigantic fish? Even the great leviathan himself?" (14). Posing his discovery as a question shows his uncertainty in his ability to find an established, unquestionable truth, thus leaving room for the painting to be reinterpreted. Assigning no hard and fast meaning to his objects of inquiry shows Ishmael's uncertainty, but also allows him to examine and narrate his story both speculatively and reflectively.

Putz also attributes a dual vision to Ishmael. However, rather than assigning a past-future perspective, he pairs the "viewer-oriented response" with an "object-oriented response," a view, Putz argues, that Ishmael utilizes when examining and critiquing graphic art (Putz 165). Here, he does not try to find the underlying meaning of the picture; instead, he critiques the accuracy of "the object presented" as well as the skill of

the "the artist" (Pütz 165). Unlike the "viewer response" which, as Pütz asserts, focuses on the thoughts and emotions of the viewer, the "object response" focuses on the abilities and emotions of the observed (Pütz 165). In this way, Ishmael considers Ahab with both a viewer-oriented and an object-oriented response.

Jeffrey Pusch examines Ahab as a "self-absorbed, oblivious, and tyrannical" (65) artist who refuses to "yield narrative authority" because "he is obsessed with his own desires rather than those of his readers" (Pusch 65). Problematically, Pusch's argument suggests that narrativity in *Moby-Dick* belongs to Ahab, when, in fact, Ishmael narrates Ahab's story. Ahab, however, does act the tyrant as his narrative seems to overtake Ishmael's, and his "nature as a solitary artist" (68), Pusch argues, contributes to his demise. As Pusch asserts, "the Ahabian artist is so intent on completing his work his way, he cannot or will not bend to the desires of his audience" (69). Pusch establishes Ahab as an artist and narrative tyrant. Pusch insinuates the reader as Ahab's audience, while I assert that Ishmael as well as the crew become the audience of Ahab's story. In viewing Ahab as "made of solid bronze, and shaped in an unalterable mould" (*Moby* 134), Ishmael appraises him as he does the Spouter-Inn painting. In viewing Ahab as what Pusch refers to as a narrative artist, Ishmael critiques Ahab's art: his narrative. As Ishmael's self, however, forms as a result of his connection to Ahab, Ahab could also be considered Ishmael's creator or artist. Conversely, Ishmael also observes Ahab as he would a piece of art; therefore, Ishmael's responses to Ahab, both his viewer-oriented and his object-oriented responses, also show his attempt to understand his self. In building on the arguments of both Pütz and Pusch, then, Ishmael's physical, emotional, and narrative responses to Ahab's actions and speeches inform the reader of both himself

and Ahab.

*“Enter Ahab: Then, all.” (175)*

In establishing Ishmael as a viewer who desires meaning but does not entirely trust his own interpretations, we can now examine Ishmael's fascination with Ahab as one who seems to gaze perceptively into the ocean and find meaning. As well, Ahab's firm form greatly contrasts with Ishmael's uncertain and wavering identity. In wanting to understand and obtain a similar vision, Ishmael wants to understand Ahab's inward and discover his divine ME hoping that he, too, may gain a form and gaze as solid and piercing. Ishmael maintains his presence as narrator until the entrance of Ahab. With Ahab's entrance, Ishmael fades into the background of his own story, and Ahab's story becomes Ishmael's. Ishmael's failing attempt to obtain a firm sense of self while atop the mast-head causes him to take on Ahab's eye/I and narrative. Having failed on the mast-head perhaps suggests Ishmael's willingness to relinquish some control of his narrative.

As the man to whom Ishmael ties his life, identity, and story, he desperately wants to find a deeper meaning in Ahab's appearance and discover the emblematic nature of Ahab. Ishmael, however, feels Ahab's presence long before he actually has a chance to meet/see him. In signing up as a crew member of the *Pequod*, Ishmael does not meet Ahab but learns of him through Bildad and Peleg, two of the boat's owners. Bildad and Peleg offer a contradictory account of Ahab, calling him a "grand, ungodly, god-like man" (88) whose loss of leg by "that accursed whale" (89) has left him "desperate moody, and savage sometimes"(89), yet they assure Ishmael that "Ahab has his humanities" in the shape of his wife and child. Their description of the "above the

common" (88) Ahab leaves Ishmael with a "strange awe of him," but the "sort of awe, which [he] cannot at all describe" (89).

Ahab, who has "been in colleges, as well as 'mong the cannibals; been used to deeper wonders than the waves" and whose "lance! aye, the keenest and the surest that, out of all our isle!" (88), causes Ishmael to feel an "impatience at what seemed like a mystery in him" (89). Though fascinated by Ahab's story, Ishmael claims that "the present[,] dark Ahab" slips from his mind while he gets ready for the voyage. In referencing him as the "dark Ahab," however, as well as in admitting that he felt an "awe" for the "mystery" of Ahab, Ishmael evokes the "boggy, soggy, squitchy picture"(13) at the Spouter-Inn. The formlessness of the painting and Ahab is enough to "drive a nervous man distracted" (13). Peleg and Bildad sketch an outline of Ahab, which, like the Spouter-Inn painting, causes Ishmael to feel "a sort of indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable sublimity" (13) inducing him to "fairly [freeze]" before it (both Ahab and the painting) and take an "involuntary oath . . . to find out" (13) the meaning. With this initial description of Ahab, Ishmael feels a "certain wild vagueness of painfulness concerning him" (89). Though Ishmael claims Ahab "slipped from [his] mind"(89), he already feels an "impatience" to obtain a better understanding of him. In this way, Ishmael cannot move forward in his narrative until he has a firm grasp on Ahab.

Ahab's first appearance causes "foreboding shivers" to run over Ishmael (134), not because of his lack of form, but rather because his remarkable solidity stuns Ishmael and only deepens his fascination with Ahab. The stories of the missing leg, an illness, and his physical absence from the ship's deck at the start of the voyage cause Ishmael to

assume a visible frailty in Ahab. In physically apprising Ahab's first appearance, both speculatively and reflectively, Ishmael sees "no sign of common bodily illness . . . nor the recovery from any" (134). Unlike the Spouter-Inn painting whose obscurity demands Ishmael find and create a form, Ahab's "whole high, broad form, seemed made of solid bronze and shaped in unalterable mould" (134). Ahab's corporality startles Ishmael.<sup>20</sup> Ishmael does not have to create Ahab's form or outward; instead, he must discover the inward in order to apply meaning to the outward.

Struck by the solidity of Ahab's form, Ishmael fixates not on the "barbaric white leg" (135), but on the "slender rod-like mark" that "thread[s] its way out from among his grey hairs, continue[s] right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck, till it disappeared in his clothing" (134). The mark seems to "brand" Ahab in the same way lightning leaves a mark in "the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree," but "without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top to bottom ere running off into the soil, leaving the tree still greenly alive but branded" (134). Seeing him both as unalterable bronze and a damaged tree, Ishmael's appraisal of Ahab matches the

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<sup>20</sup> Sharon Cameron takes up the issue of the body and identity in her book, *The Corporeal Self: Allegories of the Body in Melville and Hawthorne*, in which she posits that "the problem of human identity considered explicitly as a bodily problem, a problem that revolves around knowing the boundaries of the body" (6). In looking at *Moby-Dick*, she focuses on "the connections between the literalization and embodiment, on the novel's crazed but repetitive notion that two persons could exist in one body and, alternately, on its suggestions that bodies may be disassembled—as the whale is disassembled—so that (a) what is inside could be viewed, and (b) what is inside could be removed" (19). Her argument centers on Ahab, the most fully formed and disfigured body. In looking at the body in its relations and connections to other bodies, she considers the relationships between Ahab and Pip, and Ahab and the Carpenter who makes his leg, but does not look at the connection between Ahab and Ishmael. Cameron argues that "the relation between interior and exterior, body and soul" becomes examined "as if, one could penetrate the body" and in examining, "one might heal the incompleteness within this world rather than in some other, might heal them actually rather than in conception" (18).

contradictory statements of Bildad and Peleg as well as mimics the wavering uncertainty of his interpretive abilities. Not knowing "whether the mark was born with him, or whether it was the scar left by some desperate wound" (134), the mystery and origin of the mark fascinates Ishmael.<sup>21</sup> Speculatively, Ishmael wants to understand how this mark contributes to the making of the man before him as well as reflectively try to decipher how Ahab's mark and Ahab's course creates Ishmael. After "careful inquiry of [his] neighbors" (13), Ishmael learns that the mark resulted from an "elemental strife at sea" that took place when Ahab was in his forties (135). Another surmises that at Ahab's death one would find "a birth-mark on him from crown to sole" (135). For Ishmael, the mark seems to connect in one sense Ahab to Moby Dick, and in another, Ahab's outward and inward, his body to his soul. In Ishmael's emblematic thinking, the mark leaves a physical line between the body and soul not unlike the monkey rope that precariously connects Queequeg and Ishmael while they prepare a newly slaughtered whale for the harvesting of oil.

Having lost his own sense of self, Ishmael wants to understand the way the mark acts as a re-birth through which Ahab obtains a connection between his outward body and his inward soul. In the case of the Monkey Rope, Ishmael, signifying the outward and by extension the narrative, stands on the deck of the ship "hold[ing] Queequeg," representing the inward and the anatomy, "down there in the sea" (349), embodies the inward. Therefore, Queequeg becomes Ishmael's "inseparable twin

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<sup>21</sup> In looking at the outward body, Susan Cameron asserts, "what cannot be seen is the body's meaning. Meaning cannot be seen" (63). While Cameron attributes this understanding that meaning "is there but invisible, not separate from the body" (63) to Ahab's insanity, this understanding can also be attributed to Ishmael in his first sighting of Ahab, and every description of Ahab thereafter. This understanding of meaning and invisibility drives him to seek meaning in the anatomy.

brother" with the rope creating a "dangerous liability" between the two in which "another's mistake or misfortune," fairly or unfairly, "might plunge innocent [Ishmael] into unmerited disaster and death" (349). Through a physical peril—or thump—Ishmael feels this situation "metaphysically" as his "own individuality was now merged in a joint stock company of two"(349). While Queequeg could fall into the ocean pulling Ishmael down with him, Ishmael also bears some responsibility for keeping Queequeg safe. He must "jerk him now and then from between the whale and the ship . . . which threatened to jam him" (349), causing Queequeg's equal dependence on Ishmael for his safety. Although Ishmael feels the injustice of such a situation, he accepts this peril as the "precise situation of every mortal" (349). As such, he feels that Ahab must also have an equal dependence on him for keeping his (Ahab's) metaphysical self safe.

Significantly, the idea of the monkey rope shows the codependence of the inward on the outward, to create meaning. What happens to one affects the understanding and meaning of the other. In other words, Queequeg's movements as he dismantles the whale affects Ishmael's stability on deck, while Ishmael affects Queequeg by making sure the rope keeps him away from the ship but above the whale. The dangers of delving for meaning, paralleled by Queequeg attempts to dismantle the whale from above while the sharks eat at it from below, could result in the figurative death of the self, thereby altering the reflected self. Likewise the reflected self, just as Ishmael would "often [have to] jerk poor Queequeg from between the whale and the ship" (350), must know where and how to delve for meaning or risk being devoured by the search. Therefore, the quest for meaning, at least as Ishmael finds, can be a perilous endeavor, especially as the quest for meaning does not take place in a vacuum but rather in conjunction with, and as a result

of, connections with others. As he appraises Ahab speculatively, Ishmael sees this line as a connection to his inward which seems to give him a secure sense of self. From his reflective standpoint, however, he wants to learn how this line leading to Ahab's inward causes the man, now called Ishmael, to lose his self while at the same time wanting to discover the meaning of this self. For this reason, "so powerfully [does] the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect [him], and the livid brand which streaked it" that he "hard[ly] notes" the ivory leg (135).

Ahab's mark from "crown to sole" as well as his "singular posture" (135) suggests a secure understanding of his individuality. Ahab, it appears from Ishmael's "leveled glance" (134), exhibits "an infinity of finest fortitude" that relies not on other people, but on his own "determinate, unsunderable willfulness, in the fixed and fearless" (135) nature of his gaze and self. As well, in using the word "sole," Ishmael refers to the physicality of the mark running the length of his body, ending at his foot. The term "sole" also connects his crown to his missing leg, now somewhere in the deep fathoms of the ocean where, as Ishmael believes, from the "boundless depths" meaning can be found. Only after making the connection of the line from "crown to sole" does Ishmael move on to describe the ivory leg, ironically "fashioned from the polished bone of the sperm whale's jaw" (135). The ivory leg, besides adding to "not a little of [his] overbearing grimness" (135), also contributes to Ahab's "singular posture." The description of his "singular posture" suggests, from Ishmael's speculative perspective, a firmness and solidity stemming from a knowledge of the inner self. Reflectively, the term becomes problematic as it refers to the singular nature of Ahab's quest. Ahab's "bone leg steadied" in "an auger hole" (135) on deck allows him to "[stand] erect," and with "many



a deep glance, and often with unspeakable precision . . . cast into mysterious Nature, and the still more mysterious Life of Man" (*Sartor* 23), and "[look] straight out" (*Moby* 135) into the sea. Seeing this firmness, Ishmael wants to learn how he "severs asunder the confusion; sheers down, were it furlongs deep, into the true center of the matter; and there not only hits the nail on the head, but with crushing force smites it home and buries it" (*Sartor* 23) as he might a "pasteboard mask." He finds himself drawn to the steady and "forward dedication of that glance" (*Moby* 135). Ahab's steadied leg on deck and his piercing gaze lead the speculative Ishmael to consider Ahab a secure anchor to which he can tie his self while he delves for meaning. In this way, the line as a connection to the inward and outward also helps to establish the narrative-anatomy spilt of the text.

#### "Season-on-the-Line"

As we have previously established, in Ishmael's emblematic way of thinking, the mark on Ahab's body connects, not unlike the monkey rope, his outward—body—to his inward—soul, thus adding texture and form to his outward. Ahab, who views viewing objects (specifically Moby Dick) as "pasteboard masks," sees the mark as his line/connection to the whale that took his leg and soul: the line to the object he must destroy in order to obtain a sense of truth and meaning. In establishing the significance of the line/mark that runs the length of Ahab's body, we can turn to Ishmael and Ahab's attempts to follow, figuratively, the line to truth and meaning. The line that connects Ahab, as captain of the *Pequod*, to Moby Dick becomes his literal course as well as the course of the narrative. Ahab feels he cannot achieve peace until he has destroyed the whale. As he follows the line (both the line he charts and the figurative line that runs the

length of his body), he takes others with him. He does not question his end goal; he only wants to get to Moby Dick, causing him to gaze only steadily forward and not into the depths. Ishmael, on the other hand, attempts to follow this line to Ahab's inward, his soul, by following the line to his missing leg, his "sole," thus, engaging with anatomy. Ishmael remains unsure of Ahab's vision or course, and while connected to the course and narrative, he takes an emblematic view of objects and events occurring in the narrative, and therefore follows the whale-line into the depths of the whale in an attempt to find and make meaning through the anatomy. From his speculative perspective he wants to discover the cause of Ahab's solid form and apply it to his own self, which requires understanding the object—the whale—to which Ahab's inward seems tied. Reflectively, he wants to learn how, in attempting to understand Ahab and his cause, he loses his self. Thereby, he delves into an anatomy of whales in an attempt to find and attach meaning to the events that caused him to lose his identity as well as show his attempt to attach meaning to his new self.

In turning first to Ahab's line, we can establish the course of *Moby-Dick's* narrative. Wanting revenge on Moby Dick as a way to obtain meaning and a sense of self, Ahab "intently stud[ies] the various lines and shadings" on the ocean charts he keeps in his cabin. Ahab studies the charts in a way similar to Ishmael's viewing of the Spouter-Inn painting. Only, instead of wavering in both a speculative and reflective perspective, Ahab does not leave room for re-interpretation. The outcome for Ahab can only be the destruction Moby Dick. He has figured out the "that" of his charts and lines and aims to get revenge on Moby Dick. Using "charts of all four oceans" Ahab "thread[s] a maze of currents and eddies" in order to obtain a "view to the more certain accomplishment of that

monomaniac thought of his soul" (215). While he works over these charts in his cabin, it appears as though "some invisible pencil was tracing lines and courses upon the deeply marked chart of his forehead" (215). Ahab carefully studies the ocean charts in order to discover the most likely place he will find Moby Dick. The "lines and courses" that Ahab applies to the "wrinkled charts" mark the lines or "veins" (216) the sperm whale follows in migrating between feeding grounds. This migration takes place with "such undeviating exactitude" and "though the line of advance be strictly confined to its own unavoidable, straight wake," the whale's line or vein "generally embraces some few miles in width" (216) though stays within "the visual sweep" of the mast-head" (217). In this way, then, Ahab can fairly accurately, "by his art, so place and time himself" (217) in a position in which he can track and meet Moby Dick. This position of "time and place" becomes "conjoined in the one technical phrase—the season-on-the-line" (217). In following the whale's vein, Ahab, too, becomes "confined to [his] own unavoidable, straight wake" (216). Learning where Moby Dick "loiters for a predicted interval" (217), Ahab, with "unloitering vigilance [. . . throws] his brooding soul into this unfaltering hunt" (218), and Ahab follows Moby Dick as though still literally attached to him by a whale-line.

With Ahab in charge, the line of the narrative can take one only direction: towards Moby Dick. His monomania in following this line causes him to abide by his own compass and direction. Thus, he eventually "strike[s] the sun" (178). In Ahab's reasoning, the sun, high in the sky, "must be eyeing" (544) Moby Dick while Ahab's "eyes . . . look into the very eye that is even now beholding him . . . and into the eye that is even now equally beholding the objects on the unknown, thither side" (544) of the all-seeing sun. His lack of success over the course of the voyage in meeting with Moby Dick

causes him to curse the sun for withholding the secrets of the deep. Furthermore, Ahab's anger at the sun situates the sun as yet another "pasteboard mask" through which Ahab must break to obtain the truth. His issue with the sun suggests that even if he manages to kill Moby Dick, he monomania would turn from the whale to the sun, who can "equally be[hold]" all objects. Therefore, in realizing that the sun, too, is "over [him]" (178), not just in a literal sense but in its ability to see all, Ahab means to smite it. This interpretation would suggest that Ahab is without hope. He will never obtain the truth because there will always be something else above him, something that knows more. In his quest for an all-seeing truth, he condemns himself to the Everlasting No, as discussed below. He condemns himself by destroying the quadrant he uses to create the chart—he later destroys the ship's compass and "log and line" as well. In destroying all scientific directional instruments on the ship, the season-on-the-line becomes committed to finding Moby Dick not through the charts, but through the physical and metaphysical line that runs the length of Ahab and connects Ahab to Moby. Ishmael and the rest of the crew are at the mercy of Ahab's narrative as well as his inner, linear compass. Ishmael, connected to this line and narrative, follows his own line, the anatomy, into the depths of the narrative in an attempt to attach meaning and purpose to it.

Ishmael's anatomy on whales and whaling begins with a physical description of an object, in this case, the whale-line, but since he views objects as emblems that "represent some Idea, and body it forth" (*Sartor* 56), he goes beyond the physical and literal and examines the idea or truth it reveals. The "whale-line," by which the crew will connect to a whale, "is only two-thirds of an inch in thickness," yet the length and strength of the rope allows it to "bear a strain nearly equal to three tons" (303). The

whale-line, which “measures something over two hundred fathoms” (304), connects the crew to the reward of the sought after whale; the line, however, also exposes the crew to immense danger. The whale-line, then, takes on a significance similar to the monkey rope. Instead of being connected to another individual, however, the line connects the crew to a whale. The speculative Ishmael sees the promise of such a connection, noting that the stored, waiting, and covered whale-line appears “a prodigious great wedding-cake” (304), thus wedding the crew to the whale, which, in Ishmael’s emblematic thinking, brings him closer the truth of both his own and Ahab’s inward. The idea of delving for truth, from a speculative perspective, appears to be a safe and promising endeavor. Reflectively, however, having lost his self in the search for the truth, he becomes aware that actually delving for truth proves to be much more perilous.

In preparing the whale-line to be darted, the sailors must adjust the line around the boat until the “whale-line folds the whole boat in its complicated coils, twisting and writhing around in almost every direction” (305). Though he talks specifically about the perilous position of the men in the whale boat, he universalizes the terror of the whale-line in asserting that “all men live enveloped in whale-lines. All are born with halters round their necks but it is only when caught in the swift, sudden turn of death, that mortals realize the silent, subtle ever-present perils of life” (306). By universalizing the whale-line, Ishmael connects the dangers of the line with the “precise situation of every mortal” (349) inherent in the Monkey Rope. Before his journey aboard the *Pequod*, he did not truly appreciate the physical and metaphysical perils of life, and in attempting to find his self by going to sea, he only becomes more aware of how easily the self, both physically and metaphysically, can be lost. Therefore, just as a “monied man... consigns

himself to perdition” (7), so too, paradoxically, does the man searching for truth and meaning.

Significantly, then, the whale-line becomes emblematic not just of the dangers of whaling but also of the search for truth. Once the whale-line darts out, "to be seated then in the boat is like being seated in the midst of the manifold whizzing of a steam-engine in full play" (306), and the line takes on a life of its own. The line "carries more true terror than any other aspect of the dangerous affair" (306) and also marks the beginning of the catch. Once the whale-line is darted, the crew must follow the line until they kill or lose the whale. The speed and inevitability of the whale-line, which with the "least tangle or kink in the coiling would, in running out, infallibly take somebody's arm, leg, or entire body off" (304), puts all the sailors in the whale boat in jeopardy. The speed of the darted line, the unpredictability of the whale, and the instability of the boat require a person to have a "certain self-adjusting buoyancy and simultaneousness of volition and action" to avoid getting caught and "run away with where the all-seeing sun himself could never pierce you out" (306). Though in peril, a person can, with "self-adjusting" and "action," avoid losing his life in the line. The same could be said of the search for truth and meaning. The reflective Ishmael, with his emblematic conception of objects and his dual perspective, clings to this idea of agency, hoping that his identity will not be entirely lost. Ishmael maintains narrative buoyancy and volition through his anatomy and his speculative-reflective narrative perspective, thereby avoiding complete loss of his self in Ahab's.

“Lord of the Leviathans” (139)

With the understanding that Ahab takes a definitive, forward looking stance that only allows him to follow his narrative line, while Ishmael uses a dual perspective to follow the line into the anatomy on whales in an attempt to attach meaning to Ahab, the narrative, and his self, we can now turn to the ways in which Ahab and Ishmael follow their respective lines. Speculatively, Ishmael wants to follow the mark that runs the length of Ahab's body so he might discover a similar sense of self. From the reflective perspective he attempts to find order and meaning in studying and classifying whales beginning with "Cetology," hoping that in classifying the whales, he may obtain a sense of meaning, which he attempts to find while on top of the masthead. This classification also shows the speculative nature of the reflective Ishmael, who, even after the demise of the *Pequod* and its entire crew, still attempts to find truth and apply meaning to this journey and his self. Ishmael ties his course to Ahab's course—and Ahab's narrative becomes his own—during the scene on the quarter-deck.

Ahab's entrance leaves Ishmael unable to continue with his narrative. Like the Spouter-Inn painting, he needs to know the "that" about Ahab that will make the meaning of his solid form clear. From Ishmael's dual perspective Ahab's strife—his missing leg and his lightning mark—suggest that his experience at sea gives him an unwavering sense of self that seems reflected in his piercing gaze, which has "gleams of an ethereal or else a diabolical fire" (*Sartor* 13). Initially, in trying to discover Ahab's inward, Ishmael carefully studies Ahab's outward: first, by watching him in conversation with Stubbs, then as he smokes and then gives up smoking a pipe, and finally, in showing Ahab's impact on other men through Stubb's dream of him. Each case reconfirms Ahab's fortitude but does not shed light on the reason for his outward firmness. Observing Ahab

smoking on his "Ivory stool" like the thrones of "the sea-loving Danish kings," Ishmael wonders "how one could look at Ahab then, seated on that tripod of bones, without bethinking him of the royalty it symbolized?" (141). Ishmael sees Ahab's "individuality: as if it were not argument that had taught him, but Experience" (*Sartor* 42). Given Ahab's vast experience whaling—his brand, the pinnacle of his experience—as well as Ishmael advocating for the "*respectab[ity]*" and "dignity" and "imperial" (122) nature of hunting the "royal fish," (121) the whale, Ishmael equates Ahab with royalty. Rather than a king of a nation, Ishmael considers him as "king of the sea, and a great lord of leviathans" (139). Unable to get a firm grasp, either from a speculative or reflective point of view, on the inward of the "socially . . . inaccessible" (166) Ahab, Ishmael turns to the leviathan over which, he claims, Ahab lords.

Establishing Ahab as lord leviathan or the sea king puts him at the head—or crown—of the scientific kingdom of whales through which, at least according to Ishmael, he seems to have gained a sense of purpose and self. Unable to make conclusions, either about the whales or Ahab, based on observation, Ishmael cannot follow "that common school of Logic, where the truths all stand in a row" (*Sartor* 41). Instead, Ishmael, like Teufelsdröckh, tries to apply "practical Reason, proceeding by large Intuition over whole systematic groups and kingdoms,"(41). For Carlyle's Teufelsdröckh a "noble complexity, almost like that of Nature, reigns in his Philosophy" of clothes and society, which creates not order but "a mighty maze, yet, as faith whispers, not without a plan" (41). Ahab creates this maze and plan as he charts and follows Moby Dick throughout the seas. Ishmael, as he looks back on his experience, tries to apply a similar plan in his understanding of Ahab as the lord of leviathans as well as his own identity. Therefore, he



wishes to find "some systematized exhibition of the whale" (145). Ishmael admits, however, that the "classification of the constituents of a chaos," "is no easy task" (145). Ishmael takes on this task "as no better man advances to take this matter" (147). This "ponderous task" requires the skills of no "ordinary letter-sorter." Ishmael, channeling his inner "sub-sub," situates himself with Carlyle's Editor as he tries to order the fragments of knowledge and understanding from his experience at sea in an attempt to create order so he may find meaning. Like the Editor, he promises "nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that very reason infallibly be faulty" (147). Once again, he creates some meaning but leaves it open for reinterpretation. As he tries to create order and meaning, he must "grope down into the bottom of the sea" (147). Ishmael acknowledges that "hav[ing] one's hands among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and very pelvis of the world . . . is a fearful thing" (147), but like that of the "toughest pearl-diver" in "div[ing] to his utmost depth" he may "return not only with seawreck but with true orient" (*Sartor* 8). He writes his whale cetology long after the *Pequod's* journey, showing his continued search for meaning. From a reflective perspective, Ishmael wants to find meaning in the loss of the *Pequod* and his self. The cetology chapter also indicates the speculative tendencies of the reflective narrator who hopes that in studying whales he might create order and discover a still uncertain self.

His object in "groping" at the bottom of the sea for meaning "is simply to project the draught of a systematization of cetology" (147). In ordering the whales in "Cetology," he wants to discover "what shall be grand in" Ahab, and find his own sense of self and identity, hoping perhaps to complete his incomplete cetology system. In this way he attempts to discover his own "kingdom" associated "not [with] what I have, . . . but what

I Do” (*Sartor* 93). In order to discover his “kingdom” requires “To find by study of yourself, and of the ground you stand on, what your combined inward and outward Capability specially is” (93). Though his choice to study whales results from his connection to Ahab, he now studies the whales in hopes of discovering his self. Therefore, he studies and writes about the whales to reflectively discover meaning in his *Pequod* journey. Here, however, the reflective Ishmael becomes speculative as he attempts to attach meaning to his new self, his “I, Ishmael.” While ordering the whales, Ishmael asks, “what am I that I should essay to hook the nose of this leviathan” (*Moby* 147). Though questioning his abilities and credibility as “architect” of the system, this question marks the one time in the text that he directly questions his identity, suggesting that as he “has swam through libraries and sailed through oceans” in ordering the whales into “three primary BOOKS (subdivisible into CHAPTERS)” (148) he hopes to obtain a sense of not just Ahab’s inward but his own, and that the text of *Moby-Dick* shows his attempt at “self-adjusting buoyancy.” Moving from “Cetology” to the “Mast-Head,” Ishmael goes back aboard the *Pequod*. Though his “Cetology” research takes place long after the mast-head, in placing his “Cetology” before the events on the mast-head, Melville suggests the importance, for the reflective narrator, of having a chart or plan in order to find a higher purpose. The mast-head, from both a speculative and reflective perspective, shows the moment in which he loses his self as well as serves as a justification for why he tied himself to Ahab’s cause and narrative.

Ishmael associates the mast-head not with the depths of the sea, but with the “first pyramids . . . founded for astronomical purposes” (167) in which the ancient Egyptians “were wont to mount the apex, and sing out for new stars” (168). In this way, he connects

a delving for meaning in the sea with a higher sense of purpose among the stars—a way of connecting his crown to his soul. In citing not only the Egyptians, but also Napoleon and Washington, Ishmael observes how leaders and great men from their figurative mast-heads do not answer "a single hail from below" nor do they "befriend . . . the distracted decks upon which they gaze" (168), but rather allow "their spirits to penetrate through the thick haze of the future, and descry what shoals and what rock must be shunned" (168), suggesting a security in their vision and their selves. Ishmael desires a similar sense of self and a similar vision as these men, both to know the outcome of the journey presently unfolding, but also to find a way around the obstacle that led to his lost identity.

The mast-head shows both Ishmael's hopes for finding his own identity as well as his loss of identity. In the mast-head, a sailor stands "a hundred feet above the silent decks" and the "hugest monsters of the sea," allowing him to become "lost in the infinite series of the sea" (169). Unlike the northern whaling ships, which contain a "crow's-nest" that provides protective "little tents or pulpits" (170), as well as a "small compass . . . kept there for the purpose of contracting the errors resulting from . . . 'local attractions'" (171), the southern whaling ships contain no such comfort nor a small compass; a "disadvantage . . . greatly counterbalanced by the widely contrasting serenity of those seductive seas" (171). This lack of compass also contributes to the potential dangers of the southern mast-head. Being alone in a "thought-engendering altitude," the sailor becomes "lulled into opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie" (172) and forgets his duty to call out for whales.

In his reverie, he also "loses his identity" as he "takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature"

(172-3). His thoughts and spirit seem embodied in the "half-seen, gliding beautiful thing that eludes him" (173). Up in the mast-head, he becomes a part of the all; his "spirit ebbs away to whence it came; becomes diffuse through time and space . . . forming at last a part of every shore the round globe over" (173). In this moment where the one becomes part of the all, when "there is no life in thee" (173), the physical self is in danger: "move your foot or hand an inch, slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror," and "you drop through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise forever" (173). The soul becomes part of the all, but in the process, the physical self is lost.

Though "Speculation should have free course, and look fearlessly towards all the thirty-two points of the compass, whithersoever and howsoever it listed" (*Sartor* 5), without any compass, such as atop the mast-head, in which to ground oneself, the self can become lost. While the mast-head presents an opportunity for calm reverie, the potential for losing one's self is just as imminent as when the harpooner darts the whale-line. Like being in the whale boat, being up on the mast-head requires a "simultaneousness of volition and action" (306), otherwise, becoming lost in the all might cause any movement to take a person by surprise, potentially causing him to fall "into the summer seas, no more to rise for ever" (173), and like the whale-line attached to the diving whale, "the all-seeing sun . . . could never pierce you out" (306). Not only does this scene justify his connection to Ahab, but it also explains his need for "action" in the way of his "Cetology." In writing about and learning about whales, he maintains the necessary volition and action. This action also keeps his self from connecting with the "all" and therefore, once again, consigns him to perdition.

Acknowledging the physical and metaphysical danger, Ishmael descends the

mast-head with a "dread in [his] soul" (194) and ties his identity to Ahab whose "lance" is "the keenest and the surest" (88). Still unable to move forward with his narrative, but wanting to discover the *that* of Ahab and his self, Ishmael ties his course with Ahab's set course and takes on his eye/I. Therefore, Ishmael allows, and to some extent needs, Ahab to control the narrative so he (Ishmael) can discover Ahab's inward and by extension his own as well as observe how Ahab's eye/I became his own. This leads us to an examination of the Quarter-Deck scene, which, narrated as a scene in a play, allows Ahab to become the lead in Ishmael's drama. The scene also helps establish Ahab's monomaniacal vision, not only in his search for Moby Dick, but also in his view of objects and truth as "pasteboard masks."

When recounting his reasons for going to sea, Ishmael accounts for his "everlasting itch for things remote" (8). This itch, referring to the far off places where the whale ship journeys, could also refer to the self and truth. Though he acknowledges earlier that his discontent with life and the "magical" (4) pull of the sea brought him to sea as a sailor, he still wants to know what "induced [him] to set about performing the part [he] did?" (7). This reflection foreshadows his journey, but also places him on a stage. Ishmael wants to know "why it was exactly that those stage managers, the Fates, put [him] down for this shabby part of a whaling voyage" (7). Though he admits that he wants to go to sea on a whaling ship, he feels the fates "cajole[ed] [him] into the delusion that it was a choice" (7). Standing on land, he views this impending voyage as a result of his "unbiased freewill and discriminating judgment" (7) that will result in a re-birth and a new understanding of self; he sees the possibilities before him. "Now that [he] recall[s] all the circumstances" (7), however, he believes that he has been tricked by the fates. In

recalling the events of his narrative, he tries to make sense of the events that lead to his identity as a wanderer.

In narrating the quarter-deck as though a scene in a play, Ishmael becomes both player and audience, enabling him both to participate and reflect on his participation. Paradoxically, as this scene marks the creation of the “I” called Ishmael through Ahab, in crafting the scene as a play, Ishmael becomes not just player and audience but also playwright; thus, Ishmael also creates Ahab. Thereby, the Quarter-Deck scene shows the speculative narrator submitting to Ahab, while the reflective narrator attempts to reclaim a self by separating his self, via his role as audience and playwright, from Ahab’s self. Ultimately, the journey down the mast-head to the quarter-deck marks the moment that Ahab, “dismasted” (177) by Moby Dick, transfers his eye/I to Ishmael and the rest of the crew effectively dismasting Ishmael. On the quarter-deck Ahab asserts himself like Carlyle’s Teufelsdröckh, only rather than writings, he uses speech to draw the crew into his purpose.<sup>22</sup> Though afterwards he struggles with his participation in Ahab’s feud, Ishmael finds in Ahab’s speech a “consummate vigor, a true inspiration” as his “burning Thoughts step forth in fit burning Words” by his use of “a rich idiomatic diction, picturesque allusions, fiery poetic emphasis, or quaint tricky turns; all the graces and terrors of a wild Imagination” (*Sartor* 24) emerge. Ahab not only brings the crew into his quest, but he also exposes the full monomania of his quest as he asserts his philosophy of

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<sup>22</sup> Mark Patterson examines the differences in authority between Ahab and Ishmael, arguing that “Ahab’s authority is, in part, institutional and coercive: it commands the men’s actions. Ishmael’s authority is verbal and didactic; in the cetology chapters it seeks to share knowledge and reveal hidden truth” (297). He also argues that “both share the common ground that language and authority are intimately related and rest finally in man’s faith and belief” (297). In this way, both Ahab and Ishmael try to carve out a place for themselves in the text.

objects as “pasteboard masks” (*Moby* 177), which must be destroyed in order to discover the truth. As he stands on the quarter-deck with no one manning the mast-heads, Ahab asserts that “truth has no confines” (178), and he commands the sailors to “take off thine eye!” (178). In the play of the word eye, Ahab commands the crew to submit their eye/I to his eye/I.<sup>23</sup> Not only does this word play connect to identity, but it also plays with the notion of a similar vision. Moments before on the mast-head, Ishmael felt the dangers of losing his self as “his spirit . . . becomes diffuse through time and space” (173). Now, on the quarter-deck, as the crew takes on a “sharp eye for the White Whale” (177), they become “one and all with Ahab[‘s]” (178) purpose, a purpose with a clear sense of direction. Ishmael gives himself “up to the abandonment of the time and the place” (203), and takes on Ahab's I/eye as well as his “quenchless feud” (194).

In taking on Ahab's “sharp eye,” Ishmael relinquishes control of his narrative. By stating “I, Ishmael” (194), Ishmael shows the creation of his new identity. On the one hand, as “one of that crew” (194) that joins in Ahab's quest, he obtains a sense of purpose, albeit Ahab's purpose, but nonetheless his “shouts had gone up with the rest” (194) and he sees this as his way to find the truth. On the other hand, his statement of “I, Ishmael,” also

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<sup>23</sup> The repetition of the word “aye” in this scene also plays into the word play of “I” and “eye.” The word “aye” suggests agreement and affirmation, but in the crafting of the scene as play, the *aye* can also be taken as “I” especially as Ahab follows the “aye” with a name, such as “aye Queequeg” (177). He repeats this with several members of the crew while getting them to take on his I. The crew’s repetition of “aye, aye” (177) as they take on the “sharp eye” and “sharp lance for Moby Dick” shows their acceptance of Ahab’s cause. This transfer of the eye/I is demonstrated again in “Midnight, Forecastle,” also crafted as a play, when an English Sailor states, “We are the lads to hunt him up his whale.” The “ALL” respond “Aye, Aye” (191) indicating that they have all taken on Ahab’s aye/eye/I. As well, the All’s response of “aye, aye” shows how the all has become part of the one. Ishmael, in reasserting “I, Ishmael” attempts to reclaim his “I” from the All’s “aye,” and yet in asserting “I, Ishmael” he also admits his involvement and acceptance of the cause.

marks the moment when he loses his identity, and he wants to know "by what evil magic their souls were possessed" (203).

“The Everlasting No” and “The Center of Indifference”

As Ahab's season-on-the-line brings the *Pequod* closer to Moby Dick and the completion of his quest, Ishmael's whale-line allows him to delve into the inward of the whale, in hopes of understanding Ahab's quest and inward. As each follows the course of his line—which also mirrors the narrative/anatomy split—the outcome of his course becomes clear: Ahab's line ends in the Everlasting No, while Ishmael's line takes him to the Center of Indifference. Ahab does not care to know or understand the whale; he only wishes to kill it. Therefore, the only way for him to find meaning is through death, thus leading him to and keeping him in the Everlasting No. In his anatomy, Ishmael studies the inward of the whale as the crew dismantles him to get to the oil. As he dissects the whale, he also investigates the greatness of the living leviathan that swims and lives in the depths of the sea. Throughout his examination, Ishmael hopes to find how the dead, dissected, inward of the whale “bodies forth” the outwardly noble creature. His search takes him from the surface/outward and into to depth/inward of both the dead and living whale, and as his search necessitates, back to the surface/outward. This circular, speculative-reflective reasoning enables Ishmael to realize, "dissect him how [he] may, then, [he] but [goes] skin deep" (414), and as hard as he tries, Ishmael recognizes that he "know[s] him not, and never will" (414). This reasoning, however, also keeps him in the Center of Indifference. Though he knows reflectively that he will never really know either the whale or Ahab, he continues to look speculatively at both in the hopes of



discovering some truth. Significantly, however, this understanding that he can never fully know the whale keeps him from being entirely swallowed up by both the whale and Ahab.

Ahab "identifies [in *Moby Dick*], not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations" (200). Ahab considers Moby Dick the figure of evil that has "mutilated" him, and not unlike "the ancient Ophites of the east" who worship "their statue devil," Ahab attaches the "idea [of the statue devil] to the abhorred white whale" (200). In order to regain a sense of self, then, Ahab feels he must "strike through the mask" (178) of *Moby Dick*. In this way, the "invisible yet impenetrable wall, as of Enchantment, divide[s] him from all living" (*Sartor* 127) as the "broad madness" of "his hidden self, raved on" (*Moby* 201) and causes him from "mankind [to] long dissemble" (202). Keeping his true self and motives "hidden" means that in "the wide world [no other] true bosom could [he] press trustfully to [his]" (*Sartor* 127). Ahab forces the crew to take on his "I" and his purpose, and as such, his "one cogged circle fits into all their various wheels, and they revolve" (*Moby* 183). He does not treat his crew as humans but rather as machines that will help with his cause. Save his desire to kill the whale, then, "to him the Universe [is] all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition. . . . It was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine" (*Sartor* 127), thus, "the path to [his] fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon [his] soul is grooved to run" (*Moby* 183). This vision of his soul and purpose as a massive machine on a straight, unbending track shows the mechanistic nature of his cause as well as the emptiness of his understanding of objects as Pasteboard Masks.

Stuck in the Everlasting No, Ahab seems "to have nothing given [him] but

eyes[ayes/Is], whereby to discern [his] own wretchedness" (*Sartor* 126). Therefore, he does not see, or care, how his wretchedness gets transferred to the crew. He only sees that "all are Ahab" (471). In his monomaniacal purpose, he does not see hope; he only sees death "as if the heavens and the Earth were but boundless Jaws of a devouring Monster, wherein [he] palpitating, waited to be devoured" (*Sartor* 128). Instead of waiting, however, he aims to destroy the very thing devouring him; he does not recognize that "it was [his] own heart . . . that [he] kept devouring" (*Sartor* 127), making him a "Prometheus; [with] a vulture [that] feeds upon that heart for ever; that vulture the very creature he creates" (*Moby* 220). As he tries to break through his own "unbelief" (*Sartor* 127) by destroying Moby Dick, he cannot do his duty to his fellow man and help him find a higher purpose; he does not believe in a higher purpose as he asks, "Who's over me?" (178). Therefore, Ahab's course leads only to the Everlasting No. Ishmael admits that he "gave himself up to the abandonment of the time and the place" (203). Therefore, Ishmael has no choice but to follow the ship's course towards Ahab's revenge. He does not, however, give himself over entirely.

Ishmael re-emerges from Ahab's eye/I when he arrives at the purpose of the *Pequod's*—not Ahab's—journey: the Sperm whale's "highly-prized spermaceti" (372). Finally following his line into the spermaceti, Ishmael discovers not truth but another individual. In this way, he removes himself from Ahab's solitary and linear I/eye. While he does not come closer to discovering truth or the meaning of the whale, this moment allows the speculative narrator to see the monomania of Ahab's quest, and in separating from Ahab, Ishmael becomes the reflective narrator who speculatively looks for truth and self after finding Ahab's course meaningless.

While in his first description of the Spermaceti, in “The Great Heidelburgh Tun” (371) and “Cistern and Buckets” (373), Ishmael comments on the procurement procedure and acts as observer, in his second description, in “A Squeeze of the Hand” (455), he literally has his hands in the spermaceti, and he is a participant. Assigned "with several others" to "squeeze these [concreted] lumps back into fluid" (455) before the sperm goes into the try-works for a final breakdown, Ishmael revels in the "sweet and unctuous duty" which he claims acts as "a delicious mollifier" (455). He admits that the "inexpressible sperm" (456) makes him forget his "horrible oath" to Ahab. The spermaceti as well as the weather acts as a calming influence. While the "blue tranquil sky; the ship under indolent sail, and gliding so serenely along" echoes the "tranced ship [as it] indolently rolls; [while] the drowsy trade winds blow" (169) of the mast-head scene, with his hands in continual action, Ishmael never feels the “horror” of his identity (173) or a loss of self. Rather, the movement of his hands causes him to feel an "abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling" (456) as he "bath[es his] hands" in the "gentle globules of infiltrated tissues" (455). As well, using his hands to squeeze the sperm causes not a "loss of identity" (172) but rather the connection with other identities as he finds "[him]self unwittingly squeezing [his] co-laborers' hands in" the sperm. While the language contains obvious sexual overtones, in his apostrophe to his "dear fellow beings" (456), he calls on them to quit "the slightest ill-humor or envy" and “to squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness" (456).

While earlier Ishmael views death—“precious perishing" (377)—as the only way to obtain the truth and understand the "sanctum sanctorum" of the whale, now, with his hands in the valuable spermaceti, he discovers not the truth of the whale, but rather an

equal connection to his fellow man. The squeezing makes him feel "divinely free from all ill-will" (456) enabling him to look at his fellow man "sentimentally" (456) and thus to "forget all about [the] horrible oath" to Ahab's single-gazed purpose. Here, Ishmael comes eye to eye with his "co-laborers," and from his speculative perspective, this moment allows him eventually to see the emptiness in Ahab's cause. Reflectively, however, though he rediscovers his fellow man, try as he might, he cannot find a truth or meaning of the whale even with his hands in the most valuable part of it. So while he discovers that following Ahab's course will not help achieve the answers he seeks, he still lacks a solid sense of meaning or self, along with any clue about where to search for those answers.

Ishmael's anatomy of whales leads him from the outward classification of whales in "Cetology" to the most inward, and valuable, part of the whale, the spermaceti. Yet, he does not obtain truth or meaning in the whale; rather, in the spermaceti he discovers, or rediscovers, his fellow man. In so doing he finds a sense of repose and "felicity" obtained not in "the intellect or fancy" but in "the wife, the heart, the bed . . . the fireside, the country" (456). With this sense of repose, he has visions of "long rows of angels in paradise, each with his hands in a jar of spermaceti" (456). As he glimpses happiness and a sense of higher purpose, he must emerge from Ahab's inward and self. Ahab's course leads not to repose but to death. Ishmael emerges from Ahab's eye/I while he steers the ship and watches the burning of the sperm at the try-works.

As he watches the burning, he experiences his own "Baphometric Fire-baptism" (*Sartor* 129) that takes him from Ahab's course in the Everlasting No, where there is [no] Godhead: our eyes never saw him" (*Sartor* 126) and into the Center of Indifference in

which "wretchedness is still wretched[,] but he can see Through it" (*Sartor* 138). While the try-works boils the sperm and other parts down into the valuable oil, the deck of the *Pequod* takes on demonic and hellish qualities with images of "darkness" "burning" and "flames" (462). To Ishmael who stands "at the helm," the *Pequod* "freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning a corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness, seemed to be the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul" (463). Delving into the whale's anatomy and the spermaceti leads Ishmael into Ahab's inward, yet instead of seeing angels, he observes only "the redness, the madness, the ghastliness of others" (463). While the "squeezing of the hand" echoes the meditative language of the mast-head scene, the try-work's scene acts as an inversion of that scene. Ishmael, standing at the helm, becomes "half conscious" (464) of his movements and despite prying his eyes open, he "see[s] no compass before [him] to steer by" (464). In a dream-like state a "stark, bewildered feeling, as of death" (464) overcomes him. He recognizes the course of the ship and this journey as "not so much bound to any haven . . . as rushing from all havens astern" (464). In this way, he dimly recognizes that the tiller is "in some enchanted way inverted" and instead of this journey leading to a sense of self and a haven, it seems to be leading to destruction. In coming to, Ishmael realizes that he has literally "turned [his] back to [the *Pequod's*] prow and compass" (464), awakening just in time to "prevent the vessel from flying up into the wind, and very probably capsizing her" (464).

Ishmael's reverie leads his "spirit to ebb away" (173) and become "part of every shore the round globe over" (173) at all points of the compass, but this could also cause a literal death of self as the individual, lost in the "inscrutable tides of God" (173), can lose

grasp of material reality and slip and fall to his death. This death, however, only affects the individual. Tied to Ahab's course, the all become the one, and Ahab directs and steers the crew's course by his own set compass and line leading to Moby Dick. Ishmael finally sees the negative outcome of this—Ahab's—direction, allowing him see that "the EVERLASTING NO . . . pealed authoritatively through all the recesses of [his] Being, of [his] ME;" (*Sartor* 129). In watching the try-works burn the spermaceti, he runs the risk of not just losing his own life and soul, but also that of the entire crew, as his reverie causes him to almost capsize the ship. In this moment, Ishmael becomes aware of "something fatally wrong" (*Moby* 465). He learns to "look not too long into the face of the fire" and to avoid "giv[ing] . . . thyself up, then, to fire, lest it invert thee, deaden thee" (465). Now, his new awareness allows "[his] whole ME, [to stand] up, in native God-created majesty, and with emphasis [record] its protest" (*Sartor* 129). As his ME rejects the Everlasting No of Ahab's ME, Ishmael takes on and reclaims his own eye and "I." In this way, Ishmael recognizes that "there is a wisdom that is woe; but there is woe that is madness" (465). He, therefore, does not expect to be without woe, though he now removes himself from Ahab's madness.

Significantly, however, Ishmael does not discover truth or meaning in removing himself from Ahab's self. Rather, he only discovers that Ahab does not have a "divine ME," and that Ahab's truth and ME, as one committed to the Everlasting No, will only lead to a literal and figurative death of the self. Therefore, in taking on his eye/I, Ishmael becomes "welded," not "wedded" to Ahab's purpose (194). In being "welded" to the cause, Ishmael becomes a tool that Ahab uses to help him obtain his own purpose. After discovering the hellish nature and "fatal contingency" of Ahab's inward, Ishmael

turns from the "artificial fire" of the try-works to the "glorious, golden, glad sun, the only true lamp" (464).

As he emerges from Ahab's inward and Everlasting No, he reaches "the CENTER OF INDIFFERENCE . . . through which whoso travels from the Negative Pole to the Positive must necessarily pass" (*Sartor* 139). Having experienced the "Negative Pole" through Ahab, and having caught a glimpse of the "Positive Pole" with his hands in the spermaceti, Ishmael now enters the Center of Indifference through which he must wander until he can find a way securely into the "Positive." While he knows that he has not entered the "Everlasting Yea" in which "all contradiction is solved" (*Sartor* 146), he believes that "there is a Catskill eagle in some souls" that can "dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces" (*Moby* 465). Though he wants to soar into the "sunny spaces," he also leaves himself a space to exist just below them. For even "if he for ever flies within the gorge, that gorge is in the mountains; so that even in his lowest swoop the mountain eagle is still higher than other birds upon the plain" (*Moby* 465). In this way, though he accepts his position in the Center of Indifference, he still searches for a way to the Everlasting Yea, hence the speculative and reflective perspective of his narrative.

In emerging from Ahab's eye/I and quest, Ishmael also emerges from his anatomy on whales. Having dissected and examined the whale's outward and inward, he finally examines the whale's skeleton when visiting an island tribe long after his trip on the *Pequod*. In examining the "worshipped skeleton" (490) that had become "all woven over with vines" (490), Ishmael "paced before this skeleton—brushed the vines aside—broke through the ribs—and with a ball of Arsicidean twine, wandered, eddied along amid" the

internal maze of the skeleton. Soon, however, his “line was out; and following it back, [he] emerged...from where [he] entered” (490). In exploring and then emerging from the skeleton, Ishmael sees “no living thing within; naught was there but bones” (490). This exploration and realization marks the moment that he realizes that his anatomy of whales will not give him answers. Having followed the whale-line into the depths of the whale and Ahab’s purpose, he discovers only that he can’t find meaning there. In this way, Ishmael also detaches from Ahab’s cause because he sees the emptiness in it. Shortly after seeing “naught but bones,” and following his line out, he appraises Ahab again. This time, rather than seeing the whole man, he sees only “Ahab’s Leg” (505). In focusing on the leg, made out of whale bone, Ishmael makes the connection between the “naught but bones” of the skeleton and Ahab’s revenge. Thus Ishmael concludes his anatomy, removing himself from the narrative and the cause.

The last twenty-nine chapters read like a tragic novel documenting Ahab’s descent into madness as he gets closer to Moby Dick. No longer searching for meaning, Ishmael must follow Ahab’s narrative and line to the end. Ishmael appears again only with the sinking of the *Pequod* and the death of Ahab. In the final scene of *Moby-Dick*, the chase ends with Moby Dick’s escape and the death of the entire crew, including Ahab. As the *Pequod* sinks, “*the half-spent suction of the ship reached*” Ishmael, drawing him “*towards the closing vortex*” (625). By the time he reaches it, however, “*it had subsided into a creamy pool*” (625). The image of the “vortex” created by the sinking ship echoes the Editor’s sentiments at the end of *Sartor Resartus*, where he observes the way “the smaller whirlpool is sucked into the larger, and made to whirl along with it” (6). Ishmael had been taken up into Ahab's whirlpool, and so took on Ahab's goal and



eye/I. His “*round and round*” movement towards the vanishing “*black bubble*” mirrors the circular path of his narrative (625). With the death of Ahab, Ishmael once again becomes a single entity without answers or meaning. As he asserted at the beginning of his journey, the ocean offers great potential to unlock the mysteries of one's life. Ishmael, however, fails to find his identity or experience a re-birth. Lying on “*the coffin life-buoy*” in the middle of a vast expanse marks the outcome of his “substitute for pistol and ball”(3). This narrative leads not to better understanding of self, but rather a continual wandering in search of the self, which, even with this narration, he is unable to salvage. Though living, Ishmael becomes an orphan searching for an identity.

While Ishmael circles “*round and round . . . ever contracting towards the button-like black bubble at the axis of that slowly wheeling circle, like another Ixion did [he] revolve*” (625), Ahab, caught “around the neck” by his lance’s whale-line disappears into the depths (623). Ahab disappears into the very vortex he created. His purpose, like his gaze took a linear, definitive course and ends only when he can reach—and break through—his intended target. His experience of having his leg ripped off causes him not to “find any centre to revolve around” (*Sartor* 148), a center that would “fashion itself into a system” (148) around which Ahab can rotate. As such, Teufelsdröckh’s suggestion to “*Do the Duty which lies nearest thee*” (148), means for Ahab to break through that “nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing . . . the remorseless emperor [that] commands” him (*Moby* 592). The only outcome can be his truth, his revenge. In tying his self to Ahab’s, Ishmael unknowingly connects himself to a man on a linear mission. Ishmael wants not revenge but an understanding of life and his self.

The physical nature of Ahab and Ishmael's search keeps them from obtaining higher truth. In this way, Melville tests the "abstract thought and system" expounded by Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus* in which Teufelsdröckh claims "Experience [to be] the grand spiritual Doctor" (*Sartor* 138) through which a person can find a center around which to revolve. While Teufelsdröckh did experience the world in his actual wanderings from boyhood to adulthood, his experiences as an orphan, a wayward academic, and a scorned lover place him in intellectual and emotional rather than physical peril. The Editor, in his experiences as he sifts laboriously through the Philosophy and autobiography to try to find meaning, also only experiences intellectual strife rather than physical danger. By contrast, in *Moby-Dick* the physical experiences, though offering glimpses into a metaphysical truth and higher purpose, cause a physical and metaphysical awareness of the self and the loss of self that makes attaining a higher truth almost impossible. Ahab's near-death experience and his lost leg leave him not with a better understanding of self but with an intense desire for revenge and an unbelief that causes him to determine that killing Moby Dick will free him to discover a higher truth. Unlike the Editor's experience, which ends with his completed edition of the Philosophy and his creation of the biography, Ishmael's experience does not end with the sinking of the *Pequod*. Rather, the loss of the *Pequod* and Ahab only begins the next stage of his journey. Thus, the search for truth, in Melville's perspective, is never ending.

## Conclusion

“Shade of doubt” (Sartor 217)

The Editor and Ishmael, seemingly unable to look into their own narratives and inwards for meaning, take on the search in others. In doing so, their “individuality [is] now merged in a joint stock company of two” (Melville 349). Being figuratively tied to another individual creates “a sort of interregnum in Providence; for its even-handed equity never could have sanctioned so gross an injustice” (349). In this sense, what happens to one, good or bad, fairly or unfairly, affects the other. The Editor and Ishmael, hoping for a reward of self and meaning, willingly enter this risk when they tie their search for identity to their subjects.

The Editor and Ishmael have chosen to study the lives of men who are well advanced in their life narratives. Studying them requires looking back on their narrative pasts and choosing moments and events that seem to give insight or meaning to the present person. The Editor examines Teufelsdröckh's life fragments in a literal way, picking events and moments out of six bags of random information and trying to create order. Significantly, the Editor does not see the whole picture of the narrative, just as the reader does not see the whole Philosophy. Rather, he chooses the fragments from Teufelsdröckh's narrative that help explain and support his current view of Teufelsdröckh. In piecing together the stories of Teufelsdröckh's life, the Editor creates a narrative as well as gives meaning to that narrative. The choice of fragments reveals as much about the Editor as it does about Teufelsdröckh. While the Editor feels he has pieced together the man, he admits that "with a Teufelsdröckh there ever hovers some shade of doubt" (Sartor 217) because “there is that in the wild, much-suffering, much-

inflicting man, which almost attaches us" (Sartor 222). Therefore, even after his intense study of Teufelsdröckh, the Editor still does not have a clear understanding of him. His editorial asides and comments leave room for reinterpretation as he still wonders, "how could a man occasionally of keen insight, not without keen sense of propriety, who had real Thoughts to communicate, resolve to emit them in a shape bordering so closely on the absurd" (222). While he admits the potential for re-interpretation, he does not take up the job. Instead, he leaves the question to one "wiser than the present Editor" (222) to answer. The Editor does, however, acknowledge that his "conjecture has sometimes been that perhaps Necessity as well as Choice was concerned in it" (222). Though he admits that his choice of fragments does create a certain view of Teufelsdröckh, the Editor's desire for meaning makes him unwilling to revisit the autobiography or Philosophy.

In finishing his project, the Editor receives a letter revealing "the disappearance of [Weissnichtwo's] Sage" (223), which causes him to wonder if "Teufelsdröckh's public History were not done, "but perhaps "the better part thereof were only the beginning" (255). In reaching the end of his study, the Editor briefly acknowledges the possibility that he has only reached the beginning. Unwilling to fully consider this possibility, as it makes pinning down meaning impossible, the Editor's "own private conjecture now amounting almost to certainty, is that [Teufelsdröckh is] safe-moored in some stillest obscurity" (225) and potentially in London. Feeling this sense of certainty, however false it may be, allows the "present Editor, with an Ambrosial joy as of over-weariness falling into sleep, [to] lay down his pen" (225). Using the pieces of autobiography and the Philosophy, the Editor creates a truth and self that helps him make sense of his own society and self, and while he cautiously leaves room for reinterpretation, he does not

seem willing to re-examine his truth. The Editor, using the fragments of Teufelsdröckh's life and Philosophy, creates his own meaning. Not wanting to examine the instability of this meaning, he literally closes the book. Contradictorily, the desire for wholeness and meaning associated with the discovery of the self and the "Everlasting Yea" must be studied and examined in fragments. Those fragments, as they make up a larger whole, then, can take on multiple meanings. Carlyle offers this idea in *Sartor Resartus*, but ends the text with meaning, albeit tentative meaning, having been achieved. While Ishmael makes a similar fragmentation when examining Ahab and the whale, Melville's *Moby-Dick* fixes no event or object with a firm meaning.

Having no autobiography from which to draw, Ishmael creates fragments—through his cetology—of the whale and whaling in trying to obtain a meaning of the whole whale and the *Pequod's* journey. Ishmael interjects these cetology chapters with the various events from the *Pequod's* journey that prominently feature Ahab and create his narrative. Ishmael hopes that in studying and applying meaning to the fragments he will obtain a better sense of the whole. He discovers, however, no such fixed meaning. As he finishes his cetology by measuring the whale's skeleton, he notes that the whale's skeleton "loses about one fifth in length compared with the living body" (495). Here, he realizes that in studying only parts, he misses the whole being and truth of the whale, and he can see how "vain and foolish . . . [it is] for a timid untravelled man to try to comprehend aright this wondrous whale, by merely poring over his dead attenuated skeleton" because "only on the profound unbounded sea, can the fully invested whale be truly and livingly found out" (*Moby* 495). Ishmael immediately contradicts himself and after recognizing the wholeness of the whale, he returns to the skeleton, not the entirety

of the skeleton, “But the spine” (495). He focuses on the spine as the connector of all the bones, thus helping give the whale form, not unlike the narrative forming around a self. In order to understand the whole, he has to understand the parts; to understand the parts, he must see the whole. This circular reasoning makes coming up with a definitive meaning impossible, yet the search for self and meaning can only be undertaken in this continual assessment and understanding of both. The more fragments of the whale, the journey, and Ahab that Ishmael examines, the more he increases the difficulty, but also expands the possibilities, of finding meaning. Problematically, if a meaning can be determined from an object, that meaning is not the same for each person.

In discovering the lack of meaning in Ahab’s linear cause, Ishmael observes various characters aboard the *Pequod* viewing the doubloon nailed to the masthead (470). For each character who observes it, the doubloon—meant as a reward for the first sighting of Moby Dick—takes on a new and different significance. In looking at the coin, Ahab only sees Ahab (471), Starbuck sees “gloom” of impending death but also “the sun of Rightousness in God” (472), and Stubbs sees the ups and down of life as in the Zodiac (472-3). The doubloon takes on multiple meanings, and each meaning indicates to the viewer the purpose of the *Pequod*’s journey as well as providing insight into the effect of the journey on the viewer. The multiple meanings of the doubloon only demonstrate the infinitely expanding possibilities of meaning. Paradoxically, the more the object is examined the less certain but more malleable the meaning becomes. Attempting to find the truth and self necessitates a careful examination of not just one object, but of many different objects and events that when brought together help to create a person’s narrative, thus causing the narrative to take on exponentially increasing meanings.

Significantly, this circular reasoning and lack of definitive meaning is not necessarily a negative endeavor. Ishmael survives, at least narratively, because of his emblematic view of objects and his willingness to reinterpret and re-examine. His continual examinations suggest his hope that meaning can be obtained. The creation of narrative through fragments—as seen with the Editor’s creation of Teufelsdröckh—and the multiple meanings created with the encyclopedic knowledge of a given subject such as Ishmael’s cetology provide a structure for writers attempting to examine truth, society, and the self. In this way, Carlyle and Melville still exert considerable influence on writers since the nineteenth century.

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