

**Modernity After Holiness:
Time and Its Other in Herman Melville and Victor-Lévy Beaulieu**

Jean-François Leroux

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the M.A. degree in English to the
Faculty of Arts of the University
of Ottawa, March 22 1996.



Jean-François Leroux, Ottawa, Canada, 1996



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-612-15640-0

Canada



UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Abbreviations

Victor-Lévy Beaulieu*Blanche forcée* (Bf)*Don Quichotte de la Démanche* (DQ)*Discours de Sann* (Sann)*Entre la sainteté et le terrorisme* (EST)*Monsieur Melville* (Melville)*N'évoque plus que le désenchantement de ta ténèbre, mon si
pauvre Abel* (N'évoque)*Sagamo Job J* (SJJ)*Un rêve québécois* (RQ)Herman Melville*"Bartleby, the Scrivener"* ("B")*Billy Budd, Sailor (An Inside Narrative)* (BB)*Collected Poems* (CP)*Mardi* (M)*Moby-Dick* (MD)*Pierre, or the Ambiguities* (P)*The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (TCM)

Friedrich Nietzsche

- The Birth of Tragedy* (BT)
The Genealogy of Morals (GM)
Untimely Meditations (UM)

Paul Ricoeur

- The Conflict of Interpretations* (CI)
Fallible Man (FM)
Freedom and Nature (FN)
Freud and Philosophy (FP)
From Text to Action (TA)
Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences (HHS)
Histoire et vérité (HV)
History and Truth (HT)
Oneself as Another (OA)
The Symbolism of Evil (SE)
Time and Narrative (TN)

Abstract

The first part of the present work elaborates the "problem" that concerns the study as a whole, namely the crisis in historical consciousness that figures prominently in the fiction of Herman Melville and Victor-Lévy Beaulieu. This crisis has as its zero degree the humiliation of historical paradigms and the failure of traditional theodicy that *Pierre, or The Ambiguities* and *Sagamo Job J* narrativize. The apprehension of a nonsensical totality of being results in the "horror of history" (Eliade), which dread precipitates various modes of forgetfulness and uchronia. A stalemate emerges from the readings in Chapter One: on the one hand, a solipsistic textual infinite is opened by the death of the fiction of the end; on the other hand, the will to sainthood and eternity portends a form of Western nihilism. It is this "dead wall" of metaphysics that inspires the effort to think more and differently in the chapters that follow.

Beaulieu's nondualistic treatment of *Moby-Dick* and *Mardi* in *Les Voyageries (I-VI)* offers an "Eastern" solution to the aporias of modernity and presents a meditative route out of the empire of Cartesian rationalism. The second chapter explores this alternative with reference to Vivekananda's *The Vedanta Philosophy*. It also solicits the aid of David Loy's Buddhist critique of Jacques Derrida, which proposes a *clôture* to the history of Western metaphysics. In Beaulieu and Melville's work, however, this *clôture* takes the form of a disclosure of a

different mode of being-in-the-world, one which reclaims metaphysical hope on a higher level. The spirit of a Christian kerygma cleansed (to paraphrase Beaulieu) from the heresies of historical Christianity emerges at the end of the apophatic journey charted by a comparative study of *Moby-Dick*, *Mardi* and *Les Voyageries*. Although Beaulieu relates the meaning of Christianity to the key message of Buddhism, Christian hope seems to introduce an asymmetrical "economy of superabundance" (Ricoeur), an eschatological "not yet" that denies the untempered immediacy of atonement while fully participating in the hope of such a reconciliation. Nowhere is this paradoxical tension between hope and history clearer than in the dynamics of uchronia.

In studying the sense of uchronia and apophatic discourse in Melville's "Bartleby," *Billy Budd* and Beaulieu's *Discours de Sann*, it is possible to resume a dialectic between history and truth. The utopian imaginary holds up the promise of a truth higher than historicity and necessity: the truth of a world-in-the-making whose concealed or occulted possibilities must be unveiled by way of a hermeneutical effort. Uchronia, therefore, need not be assimilated to a will to nothingness insofar as it manifests new forms of life and even different modes of being-towards-death. The last chapter explores this tension, fundamental to Paul Ricoeur's ontology of being as act and potentiality, by unfolding the sense of uchronia as a possible orientation or a meaning held in suspension.

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
Preface	6
I. The Madness of Woe and <i>le Terrorisme</i> : The Disfigured Narrative and the "Unhistorical" in Melville's <i>Pierre</i> and Beaulieu's <i>Sagamo Job J</i>	12
II. In Search of Job's Whale: Melville's <i>Moby-Dick</i> , <i>Mardi</i> and Beaulieu's <i>Voyageries</i> as Apophatic Journeys of the Self	75
III. The Wisdom of Woe and <i>la Sainteté</i> : Uchronia in Melville's "Bartleby," <i>Billy Budd</i> and Beaulieu's <i>Discours de Samm</i>	136
Works Cited	185

Preface

This comparative study of the works of Herman Melville and Victor-Lévy Beaulieu deals with different modes of being in relation to Time and its Other. As a hermeneutical effort, it owes an immense debt to Paul Ricoeur's thought. In his post-Hegelian Kantian style, Ricoeur responds to the challenges of modernity and post-modernity by attempting to re-open and reclaim aborted possibilities in innovative projects. If the failure of the Hegelian synthesis as the *Aufhebung* of narration has brought about the fragmentation of historical discourse, then Ricoeur for his part preconizes the work of mourning. Renouncing the eternal present of absolute knowledge or the supreme plot, he proposes instead a hermeneutics of hope and imagination that opens a career in history for the passion for the possible. In accordance with his belief in the disposition of being to renewal, then, Ricoeur's hermeneutics focusses primarily on the world-disclosing power of texts: *A coeur vaillant rien d'impossible*.

The impossibility of perfect mediation, though, has just as often given rise to modes of refusal and despair. The crisis of narrative that can be apprehended in the works of Melville and Beaulieu constitutes a symptom of this crisis in historical consciousness, powerfully evoking what Mircea Eliade calls the "horror of history." Nietzsche's "On the uses and disadvantages of history for life" is taken throughout this study as the index

of radically divergent dispositions, since its existential theme appears to be intercalated between the time of *historia magistra vitae* and the days of modernity. Hence, on the one hand, the historical species-fictions that Nietzsche describes in the mode of "monumental" and "antiquarian history" attest to the possibility of viable forms of historical consciousness; these pious paradigms, however, have already been assimilated to vital lies. Given the devastation of two World Wars and the rise of pluralistic and democratic societies in the post-colonial era, monumental and antiquarian history have quite understandably fallen prey to abuse and disuse. On the other hand, the ideology of the New that Nietzsche inherits from the Enlightenment also seems to be suffering from atrophy in the post-modern world of pastiche, ply and play. Nietzschean forgetfulness has become the fulcrum apart from which the Hegelian spirit is, if not overthrown, then at least endlessly contested.

In his analysis of "Literary History and Literary Modernity," Paul de Man re-inscribes the conflict between the critical "mood" of modern revisionism and the sedimentation of history into the dynamics of language; but already this desire for a radical break with the past is hemmed in by the Derridean fold of writing. The impossible quest for self-presence and totality thus becomes a "fluctuating movement of aborted self-definition" caught in a Penelope's web of intertextuality (De Man 164). Modernity gives way to post-modernity when, like traditionality, the notion of a "new time" (*neue Zeit*) or a

radical beginning becomes an incredible fiction. Having lost sight of the beginning and the end of Humanity, the post-modern imagination often envisions itself as lost in a textual infinite such as Foucault describes in his essay "Le langage à l'infini," where he formulates an ontology of language apart from its narcissistic parry of death. In "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Newly Adopted in Philosophy," Jacques Derrida even heralds "an apocalypse without apocalypse, an apocalypse without vision, without truth, without revelation...without any other eschatology than the tone of the 'Come,' its very differance, an apocalypse beyond good and evil" (66).

The sense of nothingness or death remains quite deliberately "unthought" in this elaboration by Foucault and Derrida of an instinctual and semiological unconscious on the basis of the Freudian difference: desire/fear of death. Certainly, Freud's commitment to the "reality principle," strongly tied as it is to the acceptance of death and the tragic *anake*, is quickly perverted by Derridean and Foucauldian forgetfulness. The image that emerges from this reduction is that of a ghost-like humanity that, like the Melvillean God, has absconded from presence behind a 'glass darkly,' trapping the exegete in a modern Babel of narcissistic mirror images and inauspicious murmurs. While fully anticipating this solipsism of the text, the play of imagination in the fiction of Melville and Beaulieu also unveils alternative modes of being-towards-death.

In fact, the project of this study draws much of its impetus

from the notice of a kind of historical *décalage* that makes both Melville and Beaulieu "untimely." Perhaps no American author adumbrates the great crises and reversals of modernity and post-modernity so well as Herman Melville, as he topples historical paradigms of understanding and traditional modes of theodicy. Nevertheless, the sheer vehemence of Melville's relentless questioning and his abiding preoccupation with matters of spirituality and revelation have left many a modern reader perplexed. Because Beaulieu is a contemporary rather than a predecessor, the *écart* between the modern and the amodern becomes even more obvious in his case. As evidenced by both his fiction and his "Manifeste pour un nouveau roman," Beaulieu has quite clearly appropriated a great deal of contemporary French literary theory; but at the same time, his annunciation of a post-History and his turn to Eastern mysticism also make him highly intempestive. The last two chapters of this study endeavour to revive another aspect of "On the uses and disadvantages of history for life," one that passes more or less unnoticed by De Man, and understandably so, given his fervor for the Nietzschean "unhistorical" as the example *par excellence* of modernity. Nietzsche, however, also speaks of the "eternalizing powers of art and religion," under the heading of the "suprahistorical" (*UM* 120), as yet another counterpoison to objectifying thought.

Even after the "death of God," once the unpronounceable name of God has been crossed out and silenced in history, this silence need not be the haunting murmur of death that pervades Foucault's

"Le langage à l'infini." To this first economy can be opposed the *clôture* that David Loy proposes in his Mahayana critique of Derrida or the Christian "*economy of superabundance*" (CI 410) that Ricoeur evokes in his essay on "Freedom in the Light of Hope." Both Loy and Ricoeur envisage a metamorphosis in the experience of thought and language by relinquishing the foundational claim to self-presence. Loy speaks of the Zen Buddhist who "plays with language--moving in and out of it freely," and in so doing, indirectly reveals an "unrepresentable ground of serenity" ("Clôture" 75). Silence and discourse thus both perform an agogic function in the silencing of ontologizing thought, which silencing in meditation opens a way out of the aporias of modernity. Once the devoidness (*sunyata*) of all language is realized, a nondual experience of language and thought emerges: the selfless freedom of creativity as "inspiration" and "revelation" exemplified by no less than Nietzsche (according to Loy). Nietzsche's essay on history and life indeed ends with an appeal to the Greek idea of culture as "a new and improved *physis*" (UM 123).

Clôture, so conceived of, however, hardly speaks to the tension in the work of Beaulieu and Melville that arises even as they marry Christianity to Buddhism. The *hors-texte* that Loy approaches through meditative practice becomes for these authors a sacred place: the "elsewhere" of the utopian imaginary that is unveiled only through their apophatic style of discourse. Following Gadamer, Ricoeur speaks in his essay on "Appropriation"

of a "true *mimesis*: a metamorphosis according to the truth"; he affirms the play of the imagination in which "reality truly becomes reality, that is, something which comprises a future horizon of undecided possibilities, something to fear or to hope for" (HHS 187). As opposed to the Buddhistic, Brahmanic and Hellenistic paradigms, Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach is decidedly historical; it forsakes the immediacy of a selfless union with Being or Nothingness in order to project a temporal horizon for Being and its Care (*Sorge*). Ricoeur thus reclaims the Christian theme of hope within an ontology devoted to the meaning of being as act and potentiality. If Buddhist self-forgetfulness dispenses with the relevance of being-towards-death in dissolving the self, then Christian eschatology holds out the hope of the death of death and the redemption of the whole of creation *ex nihilo*--a re-creation out of death. It is this re-creation that the utopian imaginary bodes forth in its break with the illusions of modern-day Narcissus, even as it discloses "new forms of life" (to use a wonderful expression from Wittgenstein). "It is as if," to quote Levinas, "utopia were not the prize of some wretched wandering, but the clearing where man is revealed" (qtd TA 323). This becoming-human of man, finally, is nothing less than modernity after holiness.

Chapter 1

The Madness of Woe and *le Terrorisme*:
 The Disfigured Narrative and the "Unhistorical"
 in Melville's *Pierre* and Beaulieu's *Sagamo Job J*

"For who is God but Yahweh,
 who is a rock but our God?"

- Psalms 18:31

"Shall Time with creeping influence cold
 Unnerve and cow? the heart
 Pine for the heartless ones enrolled
 With palterers of the mart?"

- Herman Melville, "The Enthusiast" (CP 230)

When Frank Kermode writes in *The Sense of an Ending* that the "Aevum...is the time-order of novels" as well as that of angels, he effectively locates narrative time between the pure succession of world-time and the eternal present of God.¹ In Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, this third time of the poetics of narrative responds productively to the aporetics of time by bridging the gap between cosmological and lived time. In fact, Ricoeur argues that the emancipation of literature from cosmological time allows fiction to investigate various imaginative refigurations of lived time so that narrative time, or *mimesis*₂, represents "the privileged means by which we re-configure our confused, unformed, and at the limit mute temporal experience" (TN 3:128; 1:xi).

But while Aristotelian *mimesis praxeos* or *mimesis*₂ provides an ideal medium for synthesizing the history of a group or an

individual into the discordant concordance that constitutes a "narrative identity," fiction can also disfigure time to convey dissonant and even achronic experiences.² In *Monsieur Melville*, Victor-Lévy Beaulieu relates the "problem" of circularity that mars his episodic novels to the antinomy between semantic polysemy and diachronic linearity, "la pluralité de l'écriture et...son inscription sérielle--de quoi infirmer tout projet d'accomplissement" (see 1:13-14). Beaulieu's untimely refusal of historicity and finitude--"si je suis moi c'est à mon corps défendant," he writes, "ce que j'exprime souvent par le refus"--informs his attack on narratives with "une intention précise et un temps particulier" (*Melville* 1:19, 13). The author of *Pierre* pretypifies this "schismatic" (to use Kermode's term) revolt against emplotment when he "write[s] precisely as [he] pleases," rejecting those "two grand practical distinctions," namely pure chronology and narrative time, that correspond to "the various conflicting modes of writing history" (*P* 280). Melville's disfigured and dismembered narrative signals a refusal to write *history* that is also a refusal of History as such.

For Beaulieu, each of Melville's great works--and especially so in the cases of *Mardi*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Pierre*--attests to a desire to produce an "oeuvre totalisante" or a *livre impossible*, a book that would re-envision and even exceed the world "pour essayer de savoir ce qui reste lorsque la réflexion met fin au mensonge" (*Melville* 3:16).³ Beaulieu describes *Mardi*, for example, as "un ensemble inextricable parce que global, une quête passionnée qui confine au vertige et fait venir les seules

vraies questions qu'un homme doit se poser" (*Melville* 2:134). Beaulieu proceeds to formulate a rigorous interrogation of the existential and metaphysical import of history, wherein the vehemence of doubt quickly overflows into polemic and aporia:

Qu'y a-t-il de fondé dans le progrès? Quel est le sens de l'histoire lorsqu'elle s'écrit avec un H majuscule? Qu'en est-il de l'individu perdu dans ce maelstrom délirant? N'est-il toujours qu'un esclave, enchaîné à ce qui a été avant lui, le passé fondant l'avenir, dans le carcan bizarre des croyances et des religions, de la vanité et de la gloire? Qu'est-ce donc que la vérité et que signifie le simple fait de vivre? (*Melville* 2:134)

In his interpellation of History in relation to truth and justice, Melville foreshadows the modern age of suspicion. It is mainly through his disfigured and dismembered narratives, however, that the author strains the ties between subjectivity and historicity to the breaking-point. In so doing, Melville adumbrates the modern "schismatics" and the eclipse of narrative and character.

Both authors undertake an archeology of truth, each in his own fashion. In Beaulieu's "Les raquettes de l'hiver de neige," the works of hands and days do nothing much more than throw a diaphanous veil of Maya over blankness: "Sans illusion mais serein: beaucoup plus qu'un trou de mémoire, la vie (donc toute oeuvre) est un blanc de neige et ne vaut que par ce qui est dessous" (*EST* 299). In a passage that bears a striking resemblance in tonality and depth to Beaulieu here, Melville re-

visits the *Abgrund* in *Pierre*: "The old mummy lies buried in cloth on cloth: it takes time to unwrap the Egyptian king.... But, far as any geologist has yet gone down into the world, it is found to consist of nothing but surface stratified on surface.... By vast pains we mine into the pyramid...with joy we espy the sarcophagus; but we lift the lid--and no body is there!--appallingly vacant as vast is the soul of a man!" (323). Neither history nor narrative can reveal the origin or the destination of a ghost-like humanity that, like the Melvillean God, has absconded from presence behind a 'glass darkly,' trapping the exegete in a Babel of narcissistic mirror images, such that Richard Gray aptly calls *Pierre* a "Chinese box of fictions" (118). The disclosure of this "lack," therefore, defies the order and the "mutual genesis" of emplotment and characterization, which are replaced instead by the "spirale fiévreuse" of textual dissemination, a post-modern labyrinth of convolutions and bifurcations such as are illustrated in the opening pages of Beaulieu's *N'évoque plus que le désenchantement de la ténèbre, mon si pauvre Abel* (10-11).⁴

Hence, the "freedom of fiction" in world or mortal time, the "Cartesian moment: free choice in the realm of the imaginary" (Ricoeur, *TN* 3:177), presents the corresponding danger of an alienation, a crisis of narrative inseparable in its fault-lines from a crisis in historical consciousness. In his discussion of the Enlightenment sense of *neue Zeit* and the form of modernism that devolves from this projection of a radically new time, Ricoeur locates the threat of a crisis in historical

consciousness in a "schism" between the "horizon of expectation" and the "space of experience." "If submitted to passively," according to Ricoeur, such a "rending makes the present a time of crisis, in the double sense of a time of judgment and a time of decision" (*TN* 3: 235).⁵ In a related context, Kermode attributes this time of crisis and distention to a modern "clerky" skepticism in regards to endings as such.⁶ This ethos of modern or post-modern suspicion appears in all its virulence in Michel Foucault's "L'écriture à l'infini" and Jacques Derrida's "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Newly Adopted in Philosophy." In both cases, the impossibility of ending (or the death of the fiction of the ending) institutes the apocalypse of apocalypse, in which event the "sense of an ending," to use Kermodian terms, becomes "immanent rather than imminent" (101).

The schism between an increasingly contracted space of experience and an increasingly distanced horizon of expectation leads to what Mircea Eliade has called the "terror of history." This state of crisis results in turn in the abolition of historical time through various modes of refusal and uchronia, a kind of perpetual Oedipal drama of subversion and substitution. Unlike Sophocles' hero, however, "modern man" fails to achieve self-consciousness, even in the throes of blindness and anguish.⁷ In *History and Truth*, Ricoeur remarks "a break, a rupture with the sum total of previous philosophy" evinced in a certain post-Hegelian or anti-Hegelian "style" of philosophical modernism that privileges ontological denegation, specifically through the suspension of the subject's being-there and the historical given

(HT 305). In "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," a genealogical critique of German historical culture, Nietzsche assumes an existential position that in many ways inaugurates this "mood" or "attitude" of modernity; and it is just such a position that has come to be appropriated by neo-Nietzscheans such as Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault.⁸

Nietzsche writes that "History pertains to the living man in three respects: it pertains to him as a being who acts and strives, as a being who preserves and reveres, as a being who suffers and seeks deliverance. This threefold relationship corresponds to three species of history...a *monumental*, an *antiquarian* and a *critical* species of history" (UM 67). These "species" are rooted not in the "pure knowledge" of history as the "science of universal becoming" but rather in the modern and "unhistorical power" of life (67, 77). Ultimately, they represent a sort of Apollonian "unwisdom" capable of protecting life from the Dionysiac "wisdom" and "nausea" of the "suprahistorical men"--that is to say, a sort of "stifling of life by the historical, by the malady of history" (UM 66; 121; comp. BT 51-52). Melville's and Beaulieu's works manifest a Nietzschean breakdown of belief in the truth of narratives as historical species-fictions. The humiliation of historical and fictional paradigms gives rise, in turn, to two Nietzschean "poisons"/"antidotes" to the stream of pure succession and pure becoming that then predominates: the "unhistorical" and the "suprahistorical" (UM 120). Melville's *Pierre*, re-envisioned in

Beaulieu's *Sagamo Job J*, speaks to the use and abuse of such poisonous antidotes to the terror of history.

In many ways, *Pierre, or the Ambiguities* constitutes the great Melvillean *Zeitroman*. It can be read as a vast apprenticeship to time, as Millthorpe's advice to Pierre suggests: "Oh, there's a secret in dispatching these things: patience! patience! you will yet learn the secret. Time! time! I can't teach it to you, my boy, but Time can" (P 358). The variations on the theme of time represented in *Pierre* provide fertile ground for a phenomenological hermeneutics of historical and internal time-consciousness. For example, Nietzsche's living species of history, as well as the distinct phenomenological experiences they unfold and the explicitly genealogical metaphors that sustain each refiguration of time and each figuration of character, can readily be discerned in *Pierre* when read typologically. Ultimately, however, this *Zeitroman* exceeds the limits of phenomenological, narratological and historiographical analyses in its fascination with the "secret" of time. As such, Melville's *Pierre* is also instructive for a study of the *critical, decisive* movement from paradigms to poisons, from history to modernism, and narrative to uchronia.

Pierre begins with youth, a "trance-like" time of mystical Romance. Pierre's first horizon is the "green and golden world" (23) of an eternal estival daybreak. Says Pierre, "I would return thee thy manifold good mornings, Lucy, did not that presume thou hadst lived through a night; and by heaven, thou belong'st to the regions of an infinite day" (24). Such a

duration, "neither temporal nor eternal, but... participating in both the temporal and the eternal," corresponds to Kermode's characterization of the *aevum* (cf. 72; also 76). As happens in *Mardi's* opening pages, the successiveness of *chronos* in *Pierre* seems in some sense checked by a Melvillean calm, "a state of existence where existence itself seems suspended" (*M* 34). In *Pierre*, the "profound mystery" of "Nature" is intimated by the "silence" of a "wonderful and indescribable repose" (*P* 23). This symbolization of Nature as ontic mystery anticipates the whole movement and the final ambiguity of the novel, which circumscribes through archaic and lyric tropes the aporia of the inscrutability of time-in-itself.⁹ Moreover, Pierre's apprenticeship to the signs of his time(s), and ultimately, to Eternity or Time itself, progresses through stages of light and gloom, wherein his apprehension of this core mystery changes according to his temporal orientation and his affective disposition.

Pierre's relation to his mother and his paternal heritage forms the firmament of the first temporal hiatus. The "striking resemblance" between the protagonist and his mother is the result of a long-standing "still[ness]" in the mother's "beauty" and of Pierre's "splendid precocity of form and feature" (25). The author describes a certain verticality, "a mature stand-point," in which first the mother and then the son "st[an]d still." This "stand-point" offers a univocal present (as distinct from a distended threefold present)¹⁰ that nonetheless remains "in" the flux of encompassing "Time" (25). Kermode's analogy both for the

aevum and for the Augustinian *intentio*--namely that it "co-exists with temporal events at the moment of their occurrence, being...like a stick in a river" (72)--finds its counterpart in Melville's own metaphors. The successive time of the world has not been abolished. But the "pure joined current of life" of the couple allows as well for a seamless experience of time that Melville likens to the time-order of the angels:

Altogether having its origin in a wonderful but purely fortuitous combination of the happiest and rarest accidents of earth; and not to be *limited in duration by that climax which is so fatal to ordinary lovers*; this softened spell...seemed a glimpse of the glorious possibility, that the divinest of those emotions, which are incident to the *sweetest season of love*, is capable of...translation into many of the less signal relations of our many chequered life.... [I]t seemed almost to realize here below the sweet dreams of those religious enthusiasts, who paint to us a Paradise to come, when...the holiest passion of man shall unite all kindreds and climes in one circle of pure and unimpairable delight. (37; emphasis added)

The ironic, self-reflexive and satirical tone of the novel as a whole, of course, undercuts this initial vision of temporal integration, which depends on "Time and Chance" (133). This Melvillean representation of the *aevum* is the first of a series of elaborate but human fictions of time. It answers to Pierre's immediate needs and thus sustains his credulity; but the narrator twice refers to the treacherous work of time that will divorce

Pierre from his youthful self by means of "remorseless insight" and "more ardent fires" (26). In fact, the prophetically ambiguous narrator anticipates the time of discord when "the fair river" will meet "those sideways repelling rocks...thenceforth destined to be forever divided into two unmixing streams" (25).

While Pierre's brotherly relationship with his mother may ultimately constitute a purely deceitful approximation of the "sweetest season of love," it also points to the ideal type of quasi-eternity that Pierre will seek in divergent forms throughout the novel. Certainly, his mother's "fictitious title" designates a "hiatus" or "absent reality" in the "illuminated scroll of his life," even as it unrolls itself with his pursuit of time lost and with his quest for the inscrutable mystery of time, which, like the identity and the nature of Pierre's true sister or significant other, will always be "omitted from the text" (27).

Moreover, as a pleromatic period, this "sweetest season of love" also hinges on a peculiar species of history. The quietude of Saddle Meadows, for example, depends on Pierre's docility towards a mother who commands respect only insofar as she imposes her own sense of the past. "Always think of him and you can never err," she says to Pierre; "yes, always think of your dear perfect father" (40). Pierre's youthful outlook is thus almost wholly directed towards the extinguished past, as the "Retrospective" makes clear in retracing and representing Pierre's piety towards his deceased father, the "God"-like "personification of perfect human goodness." The contrast

between two disparate times, between the "recollections... unchangeable and eternal" of "childish life" and the "Solomonic insights" of late adolescence, again announces the undoing of Pierre's pious character or self-constancy in the movement of time (93). It also hints at the eschatological question of faith that overdetermines the novel's Oedipal "symbolism of engendering"; as in *Oedipus Rex*, the "tragedy of truth" in *Pierre* seems closely intertwined with the "tragedy of sex" and the archeological problems of "generation, genesis, origin, development" (Ricoeur, *FP* 519, 525).

As a return to the Nietzschean typology of historical species-fictions that subtends the first part of this analysis additionally invites reflection, Pierre's initial disposition effectively corresponds to a concern with "antiquarian history" (see *UM* 72). Significantly, Nietzsche states of the antiquarian man that "the possession of ancestral goods changes its meaning in such a soul: *they* [i.e. these goods] rather possess *it*.... The history of his city becomes for him the history of himself; he reads its walls, its towered gate, its rules and regulations... like an illuminated diary of his youth." This species of history lends an ecstatic temporal breadth to the soul, since "with the aid of this 'we' he looks beyond his own individual transitory existence and feels himself to be the spirit of his house, his race, his city" (*UM* 73). This antiquarian man is easily recognizable in the young Pierre, for whom "the popular names of [Saddle Meadows'] finest features appealed to the proudest patriotic and family associations of the historic line of

Glendinning" (P 25). Furthermore, the idea of perpetuity *sui generis* lends the history of Saddle Meadows a semblance of sempiternity, since "such estates seem to defy Time's tooth, and...contemporize their fee simples with eternity" (31).

Kermode maintains that through the fiction of the *aevum* "human society...took on certain angelic characteristics." He even gives instances of sempiternity that rejoin Melville's own analogies: the "corporations" (74) immortalized by medieval lawyers, for example, invite comparison with "those most ancient and magnificent Dutch manors at the North" in *Pierre* "whose haughty rent-deeds are held by their thousand farmer-tenants, so long as grass grows and water runs; which hints of a surprising eternity for a deed, and seems to make lawyer's ink unobliterable as the sea" (31). According to Kermode, this "surprising eternity" was extended in medieval times to "the Empire, the People, the legal corporation...because each was *persona mystica*, a single person in perpetuity" (74). Melville deflates the mere nominalness that subtends such a *persona mystica* when read *sub specie aeternitatis*:

Perishable as stubble, and fungous as the fungi, those grafted families successively live and die on the eternal soil of a name. In England this day, twenty-five hundred peerages are extinct; but the names survive. So that the empty air of a name is more endurable than a man, or than dynasties of men; the air fills man's lungs and puts life into a man, but man fills not the air, nor puts life into that. (30)

Undoubtedly, the author satirizes and undercuts these anthropomorphic fictions of time so that the humiliation of the paradigms to some extent accompanies their very presentation.

Pierre, however, has clearly interiorized an antiquarian vision of the *aevum*: "But not only through the *mere chances of things*, had that fine country become ennobled by the deeds of his sires, but *in Pierre's eyes*, all its hills and swales seemed as sanctified through their very long uninterrupted possession by his race" (28; emphasis added). Such a vision does not represent pure knowledge of the past but rather, as Nietzsche argues, history in the service of life; and so necessarily, according to his "universal law," it represents a vision "bounded by a horizon" (*UM* 120, 74, 63). Hence, "Pierre deemed all that part of the earth a love-token; so that his very horizon was to him as a memorial ring" (*P* 29). It is precisely in this sense of an *épanouissement* and a rootedness in the remembered past that antiquarian history affirms life and establishes a narrative identity. Nietzsche envisions the resilience of antiquarian history before the temptation of "a restless, cosmopolitan hunting after new and ever newer things" as one of its chief benefits (*UM* 74). When the former species of history is displaced and subverted by the latter temporal and historical perspective in *Pierre*, though, antiquarian history effectively becomes one of Nietzsche's life-choking "weeds" sown in arid soil.¹¹

The "associations of Saddle Meadows" all bear upon a

monumental history of conquest, war and nationhood. And yet, Pierre participates in this history only in the play of his memory and his imagination. Pierre's citified attitudes, his liberal treatment of Dates, and his nominal relation of equals with his mother all point to a cosmopolitan and democratic set of values. From the beginning, monumental history seems explicitly effeminized and christianized, as evidenced by Mary Glendinning's possession of the General's "bâton-phallus" (see *Melville* 3:24). Melville employs the familiar trope of the genealogical tree as a symbol of filial longevity; but in Pierre's case, the "limbs of the oak" have been weakened by Time. As the "only surnamed male Glendinning extant," the "powerful and populous family ha[ving] by degrees run off into the female branches" (*P* 28, 29), Pierre is both literally and figuratively what Nietzsche calls an "epigone" or a "latecomer" suffering from his sense of historical belatedness (cf. *UM* 83).

According to Beaulieu, *Pierre* is yet another failed or stillborn novel (*Melville* 1:104). In *Les Voyageries (I-III)*, Job J likewise evinces an anxious awareness of his belatedness and mourns the demise of *québécois* antiquarian and monumental history, which subsisted, once again, only in the play of memory:

Cette époque qui ne permet plus de pays possible, qui les a tous épuisés et qui se rabat sur la substitution. Pour nous, ce n'est que davantage tragique parce qu'il n'y a jamais eu de pays.... C'est dans le jeu de notre mémoire que nos pères furent des héros. Au fond, ils n'en menaient pas large. Juste ce qu'il faut pour que nous naissions

romantiques et un brin schizophrènes. D'où le refuge de la baleine. C'est un ventre, et ça doit être rose à l'intérieur, confortable et sans rien d'autre à y faire qu'assouvir le désir. (SJJ 154)

As in the works of absurdists such as Pinter and Beckett, Beaulieu's neurotic anti-hero manifests a desire for retrogression, for an exit to the mother's womb, not so much to be reborn as to be still unborn in a state of narcissistic desire. For his part, Melville conveys Pierre's dawning impression of the absurdity of existence through "the following lines [of Dante's *Inferno*], allegorically overscribed within the arch of the outgoings of the womb of human life: `Through me you pass into the city of Woe; / ... / ... / All hope abandon, ye who enter here" (P 198). In Beaulieu's fiction, stillbirths occur repeatedly, and the author makes their significance quite explicit. In *Un rêve québécois*, for instance, the birth of "un Mongol, une Tête d'Eau" in Morial Mort "symboliserait tout ce qu'il y avait de hasardeux, voire même d'impossible dans la survie souhaitée du monde" (33). The same symbolism attends the birth of Abel Beauchemin in the opening pages of *Don Quichotte de la Démanche*, a "sombre augure" of "une vie tourmentée" that amounts to a living death devoid of any (ap)parent origin or living history, and which consequently necessitates the fictionalization of being: "il te fallait devenir personnage" (DQ 16, 19).

In *Monsieur Melville*, Beaulieu employs Sartrean concepts to compare Melville and Flaubert, arguing that, like Flaubert,

"Melville...se saisit comme *personnage* et non comme *personne*."
 The death of the Father/father marks the occasion of this refusal of presence and consequently, "l'impossibilité du dénouement."
 According to this typically Sartrean reading, "Melville se projette dans son devenir, s'irréalisant dans son géniteur. Lui mort, c'est cela aussi qui va mourir en Melville: le présent de la mémoire" (*Melville* 1:99, 100, 101). Similarly, the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness* claims that "freedom is the human being putting his past out of play by secreting his own nothingness" (qtd *HT* 320). Modernity is thus characterized by its narrowing of the space of experience or sense of rootedness in the remembered past as a ground for being.

Even before his refusal of History, Pierre is at least nominally another "orphan," like "Ishmael...with no maternal Hagar," a fatherless Isolato, which condition accounts both literally and metaphysically for his constant "feeling of loneliness" (*P* 115-16, 28). Pierre's isolation recalls the somber pronouncements of another Ishmael: "Our souls are like those orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them: the secret of our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to learn it" (*MD* 406). In Melville's work, as well as Beaulieu's, a black existentialism tends to focus on existential difference and metaphysical anguish. Job J, for instance, suffers from a form of solipsism, uncertain even of Blanche's presence, haunted by her quasi-transparency and the thought that "s'il y avait pas la masse noire de ses cheveux, je verrais pas Blanche, je verrais rien que ma solitude, l'angoisse de ma solitude" (*Bf* 47). Pierre

likewise discovers that he is "companied by no surnamed male Glendinning, but the one reflected to him in the mirror" (P 28).

Like Job J, Abel and Ishmael, Pierre exists in a state of narcissistic unrest, as an "orphelin de l'absolu" (*Melville* 2:272), or in Descartes' words, "a something intermediate between God and nothingness" (qtd in *FM* 204). Eventually he will realize that both "Divinity and humanity" (P 334), like the Calvinistic God and the "step-mother world" of *Moby-Dick* (443), have wholly forsaken him in his quest for the truth of his origin and his end. It is this "being in the midst" (to use Kermode's phrase) and this belatedness that compel Pierre to undertake a working through of the ambiguous, equivocal series of retentions and protentions that make up his life and his genealogy.

Moreover, the Oedipal "tragedy of truth" (to return to Ricoeur's crucial distinction) begins with the hero's hubristic refusal of being-in-the-middest, for "in the...vain-gloriousness of his youthful soul, [Pierre] fondly hoped to have a monopoly of glory in capping the fame-column, whose tall shaft had been erected by his noble sires" (P 28). The "demand" for immortality and immutability, according to Nietzsche's typology, remains a prominent facet of the antiquarian sensibility: antiquarian history "knows only how to preserve life, not how to engender it; it always undervalues that which is becoming because it has no instinct for divining it" (*UM* 75). Pierre in childhood refuses to imagine "that once upon a time" he did not in fact exist along with his father (P 99). As his affinity for the Terror Stone, his dream of mythical Enceladus and his French surname clearly

suggest, Pierre aspires to a monolithic, phallic-like permanence in time. In fact, Pierre aims to posit the end of his life as the *terminus ad quem* of his genealogical history, and thus unambiguously to close the horizon of the past in the present of the antiquarian *aevum*. He hopes, in other words, to make himself an end-in-himself rather than an agent for engendering history.

Pierre's nemesis in his Promethean quest for the Platonic "aei einai" or "being-for-ever" is the *nunc movens*, the passing Time of Nature (cf. Kermode 74). The narrator foreshadows Pierre's this-worldly strife and failure by evoking the ravages of Time on stony Palmyra in terms that clearly anticipate the oneiric-cosmic symbolism of the Enceladus myth: "These Time seized and spoiled...and the proud stone that should have stood among the clouds, Time left abased beneath the soil. Oh, what quenchless feud is this, that Time hath with the sons of Men" (*P* 28). A lyrical apprehension of impersonal, transhuman Time conveys not only its incommensurability with mortal time, but also the archaic sense of an *agon* between Man and Time.

As he does in the case of the *aevum* of antiquarian history, Melville ascribes a species of history to the pure successiveness of "ever-shifting nature" (29). The time of "demagogical America" is "an everlasting uncrystalizing Present" that coincides with the cycles of "all-fertile nature." The narrator of *Pierre* points out that "the democratic element operates as a subtle acid among us; forever producing new things by corroding the old" (29). This process of permanent impermanence, like the Platonic "athanasia" or deathlessness (Kermode 74), seems to

follow the rhythms of Nature so that "political institutions, which in other lands seem above all things intensely artificial, with America seem to possess the divine virtue of a natural law" (P 29). Significantly, the opposition of the "sacred Past" to the eternal becoming of Nature arises within an inquiry into the question of historical authenticity that adjudges the respective claims to perdurability of the English and the American aristocracies. In spite of the Dionysiac "Revolutionary flood" of Time, America remains comparable to England "in this short little matter of large estates and long pedigrees" (32). In America, however, the coercive force of monumental history maintains these "mighty lordships" in the present, whereas in England legal sophistry alone preserves the antiquarian history of the past. Both species of history emerge as hubristic impositions on world-time, as the "audacity of a worm that but crawls through the soil he so imperially claims!" (31). As such, these species of anthropomorphized time are open to attack by a critical consciousness that suffers and seeks deliverance in the present.

Although Pierre first appears as "issuing from the embowered and high-gabled old home of his fathers," the young hero effectively "march[es] under [the] colors" of the "crimson flower" of love (23, 24). The horizontal shift from past to future is also marked by the narrator during Pierre's rendezvous with Lucy Tartan: "Love has more to do with his own possible and probable posterities, than with the once living but now impossible ancestries of the past" (55). Pierre indeed proves "a

thorough-going Democrat *in time*," and the narrator ascribes this enthusiasm "for some insulted good cause to defend" to the "lyrical thoughts" and "whispers of humanness" inspired by "Nature" (33-4; emphasis added). These enthusiastic "whispers" anticipate Isabel's own sense of "humanness," but not her deeper, both human and transhuman, sense of the "inhumanities" and "the immortalness and universalness of Sadness" (150). Pierre's democratization of Nature can thus be construed as yet another humanization or refiguration of the pure successiveness of time.

Love, as the force of the "everlasting uncrystalizing Present," is first portrayed as "this world's great redeemer and reformer" come to effect a progressive exorcism of "the demon Principle" (P 57). Hence, as a young "Enthusiast to Duty," Pierre assumes the role of judge of the past and critic of history. This desire for a "reddition," strongly shared by Beaulieu (see *Melville* 1:19), remains symptomatic of modernism. Nietzsche's ascription of a critical mode to historical consciousness pretypifies this revisionist disposition:

If he is to live, man must possess and from time to time employ the strength to break up and dissolve a part of the past...every past, however, is worthy to be condemned--for...violence and weakness have always played a mighty role in [human things]. It is not justice which here sits in judgment...it is life alone, that dark, driving power that insatiably thirsts for itself. Its sentence is always unmerciful, always unjust, because it has never proceeded

out of a pure well of knowledge; but in most cases the sentence would be the same even if it were pronounced by justice itself. *'For all that exists is worthy of perishing. So it would be better if nothing existed.'* (UM 76; emphasis added)

Although his Dantesque and Hamlet-like moods foreshadow his realization of the vanity of all human enterprise, Pierre has not yet attained a state of suprahistorical wisdom. His democratic and romantic zeal for justice and truth, however, evinces a strong propensity to condemn the wrongs of the past, a propensity that does not originate in pure knowledge but rather in a concern for the present. Ultimately, Pierre's judgments stem from the "dark, driving power" of life alone, since, as his story tends to confirm, "there is no faith, and no stoicism, and no philosophy that a mortal man can possibly evoke, which will stand the final test of a real impassioned onset of Life and Passion on him" (P 327).

The troubling hallucination of his sister Isabel's Janus-like face is itself only "vaguely historic and prophetic; backward, hinting of some irrevocable sin; forward, pointing to some inevitable ill" (67). In addition, none of the recollections or traces of the past that Pierre reinterprets after he receives Isabel's missive offers conclusive proof of his father's alleged sin, since they consist only of "ineffable hints and ambiguities, and undefined half-suggestions" (110). Pierre's rejection of his genealogy stems from the "lightning" intuitions of "grief's wonderful fire" that temporarily unveils

the "concealingly deceptive" character of his time (114). His refusal hinges, moreover, on an immediate understanding of all appearances as illusory, on the truth of untruth and equivocalness, as attested to by the (in)significance of the father's smile, "the chosen vehicle of all ambiguities" and "artifice" (110).

Pierre's motives cannot be deduced, then, on the basis of factual evidence. His "enthusiastic resolve" must rather be explained in accordance with his new disposition, mood or attitude. As a force of the present, the time of Love is characterized by its radical *newness*: "That morning was the choicest drop that Time had in his vase," and "Love was first begot by Mirth and Peace, in Eden, when the world was young" (55, 56). This emphasis on the present as a new beginning seems in itself indicative of modernity, but the analogy can be pursued even further. Ricoeur maintains that the sense of *neue Zeit* consists of a "time [that] is no longer just a neutral form of history but its force as well" (TN 3:210-11). In *Pierre*, the progress of Love is a world-changing revolution, a *Zeitgeist*, wherein "from each successive world, the demon Principle is more and more dislodged" (P 55). "The present, henceforth," according to Ricoeur, "will be perceived as a time of transition between the shadows of the past and the light of the future." This "semantic" displacement stems from a shift in the relationship between the horizon of expectation and the space of experience: "The present is only new, in the strong sense of the word, insofar as it 'opens' new times" (TN 3:210-11).

It is precisely Pierre's disposition, namely his interest in the present of anticipation, that leads him to repudiate his heritage: "But now, *now!*--Isabel's letter read; swift as the first light that slides from the sun, Pierre saw all preceding ambiguities, all mysteries ripped open...and forth trooped phantoms of an infinite gloom. Now his remotest infantile reminiscences...all overwhelmed him with reciprocal testimonies" (111). The preoccupation with the present as the "first light" of a new dawn throws the past into "an infinite gloom," and compels him to assimilate two different temporal images of his father according to his insight that "in youth we are...but in age we *seem*" (109). The decrepit past and its conventions are now relegated to the shadowy region of silhouettes, whereas it is the present, in its youth, its possibilities and its newness, that opens onto being. This attitude conforms to the unhistorical thrust of modernity in its quest for a radical break with the past and with tradition.¹²

Nietzsche writes of the unhistorical endeavour to transform a "second nature" into a "first nature" through "the art and power of *forgetting*" that "it is an attempt to give oneself, as it were a *posteriori*, a past in which one would like to originate in opposition to that in which one did originate" (*UM* 120, 76). In "Literary History and Literary Modernity," Paul de Man explores this "paradox" in Nietzsche's work, and maintains that "modernity exists in the form of a desire to wipe out whatever came earlier, in the hope of reaching at last a point that could be called a true present, a point of origin that marks a new

departure" (148). In many ways, Nietzschean forgetfulness inaugurates the modern enterprise of begetting the self poetically through fiction liberated not only from cosmological and historical time but also from any metaphysical notion of origin and end.

According to Foucault, "modern man...is not the man who goes off to discover himself, his secrets and his hidden truth; he is the man who tries to invent himself," or better, to "produc[e] himself" through "an ascetic elaboration of the self" and a refusal "to accept oneself as one is in the flux of the passing moments" (*Enlightenment* 41-42). Secreting its own nothingness, this denegation implies a recourse to the liberating verticality of art (the *pli* or fold of literality) that Foucault explores in such essays as "La folie, l'absence d'oeuvre" and "L'écriture à l'infini." This poisonous forgetfulness corresponds to the fictionalization of being by Beaulieu and Melville as the enactment of a symbolic patricide, just as the desire for a "true present" finds an analogue in Pierre's quest for permanence and sameness in time.

Driven by his enthusiastic resolve, Pierre attempts to beget himself, like "the heaven-begotten Christ" who "will not own a mortal parent, and spurns and rends all mortal bonds" (*P* 134). In fact, both Melville and Beaulieu describe sainthood as a form of self-generating hermaphroditism (*MD* 315; *Melville* 3:179; *P* 295). In repudiating his heritage and in writing an *oeuvre totalisante* ("a comprehensive compacted work"), Pierre, who already bears the name of the father/Father, "renounc[es] all his

foregone self" and endeavours to beget himself in the womb of his own imagination (320). The chain of equivalences he sets into motion through his "conversational conversion of a mother into a sister" and his "nominal conversion of a sister into a wife" demonstrates the incestuous, even solipsistic, circularity of this fictional enterprise: Mary = mother => sister = Isabel => wife (208). Writes Melville, "Then they changed; they coiled together, and entangledly stood mute" (P 226). *Pierre* is a tissue of incestuous fictions, and truth seems to be the first casualty of this Oedipal drama of subversion and substitution. As Richard Gray points out, Pierre in his pursuit of truth and in his attempt to "rebuild the temple" of his moral life simply "ends by...embracing his own image, a projection of infantile obsessions" (128): even in the act of reading the "reciprocal testimonies" of his "infantile reminiscences," the Oedipal hero displaces his incestuous desires by attributing them to his absent father, a kind of Freudian *Verschiebung* (111).

When Pierre burns the "image of the original" after the "terrible self-revelation" that attests to "the mere moonshine of all his self-renouncing Enthusiasm," he effectively protests not only his mortality and his belatedness, but also his own sense of a history of self-interest and blindness perpetuated (P 231, 225, 238). Hence, the "tyranny of Time and Fate" that nourishes his existential anguish is mirrored for him in "the strange relativeness, reciprocalness, and transmittedness" between his father's portrait and Isabel's face (230). Significantly, Pierre renounces the taint of ancestral guilt through the force

of the "everlasting uncrystalizing Present." "Let all die, and mix again," he exclaims, echoing Goethe's "Die and become!" (P 231; qtd *FN* 473). Secreting his own nothingness, the hero posits himself in the point-like "now": "Henceforth, cast-out Pierre hath no paternity, and no past; and since the Future is one blank to all; therefore, twice-disinherited Pierre stands untrammelledly *his ever-present self!*--free to do his own self-will and present fancy to whatever end!" (P 232; emphasis added). Like Shakespeare's Macbeth, Pierre wants to "be[gin]-all and end-all," and thus free himself unconditionally from all historical and temporal ambiguities; yet, as Kermode points out, "to be and to end are, in time, antithetical; their identity belongs to eternity, the *nunc stans*" (85).

The Enceladus myth, a replaying of the Orphic drama of the exiled soul, is redoubled in Beaulieu's more properly Eastern cosmology, which stresses the demiurgical status of humankind and its quest for liberation from *samsara* and the *nidana* chain (see e.g. *EST* 92; *DQ* 251-52; 273). The dream thus plays out through cosmic symbols the two aspects of Pierre's desire; specifically, it opposes the "archeology" of his unconscious and incestuous complexes to the "eschatology" of his more or less conscious longing for sainthood.¹³ Like Taiji and Ahab, Pierre is a Promethean demi-god, an amputated, "impotent Titan" descended from the incestuous "son of incestuous Coelus [i.e. the 'Hollow' God: *Gk koflos*] and Terra"; he also demonstrates his divine part through his "reckless sky-assaulting mood" (P 388-89). Although he renounces his birthright, Pierre never reveals his father's

"secret." He even perpetuates the lie through yet another fiction that serves his unconscious desire for Isabel, a second and thus "doubly incestuous" image of his "terrestrial mother." In his desire to beget himself within world time, Pierre reveals his "not wholly earth-emancipated mood," while simultaneously repressing the truth of this "terrestrial taint" (388-89).

Nietzsche also uses genealogical metaphors--"hereditary nature" and "inborn heritage," for example--when he speaks of the well-nigh impossible attempt to beget the self unhistorically, arguing that since the present is an outgrowth of the injustice of the past, "it is not possible wholly to free oneself from this chain" of conditionality (*UM* 76). In fact, as their names and their incestuous relationship suggest, Pierre and Isabel simply repeat history. Paradoxically, Pierre will break the shackles of desire and mortality and finally become "neuter" only by violently suppressing all the traces of his genealogy and future posterity in a quasi-apocalyptic ending (*P* 403). In *Pierre*, the eschatology of the sacred proves radically incompatible with the archeology of historical figures.

In *Sagamo Job J*, Abel Beauchemin's insane brother Jos also proclaims himself divine saviour by birthright (see 181). In his desire for sainthood, Jos envisions himself as a martyred Christ figure. He refuses outright warfare, "le fouet sacré," "la caste des guerriers" and "le bain de sang," only because the *québécois* past contains no authentic monumental history--"ni mythologie ni histoire" (*SJJ* 188). Jos begins by renouncing his "foregone self"--"plus droit au je" (176)--in favour of the plurality of

the lordly "vous," and yet he requires a maternal Other to beget himself out of his Buddhistic isolation and ascetism (177). Jos describes his spiritual journey to France, represented as the woman he has elected as a substitute for his lost mother:

Je suis seul...volontairement seul, une manière d'ascète parce que je voulais aller loin et que certains ponts doivent se traverser dans la solitude. Je suis né en 1939...d'une mère...et d'un père.... Je suis l'aîné, j'ai toujours été l'aîné.... En un sens, je suis même l'aîné de mon propre père et c'est pourquoi je ne le vois plus, que je fais comme s'il était mort. Mais je ne suis toujours que l'aîné et c'est le père qu'il me faut devenir. Ma mère est morte trop tôt: c'est par sa mère qu'on devient le père. C'est la semence de la mère et du fils qui fait du fils le père et permet l'affranchissement. Qui met fin à toute servitude. Qui ouvre la porte, et qui, en même temps, vous fait devenir porte. (*SJJ* 177-78)

As a latecomer, Jos is in a sense his father's elder, yet to become the firstborn he has to replace the father, to complete himself in becoming Jos-eph. To become the father means to abolish myth, history and repetition, to extinguish the traces of becoming, "toutes ces naissances répétitives et de tout temps mal venues auxquelles il était urgent de tirer votre révérence," and thus to reach a kind of absolute presence or aseity (180; see also 179, 203).

The necessity of the Other to re-constitute this absolute self in time becomes evident in the need for "un interlocuteur

[qui] ne pouvait être que femelle." Yet once again this Other belongs to the degraded world of objects, a mere "simulacre" that serves as "un substitut à votre mère morte trop tôt." Moreover, this imaginative self-fathering and the re-enactment of the Oedipal drama is possible due to the freedom of fiction from cosmological time; hence, to become the father Jos employs his bookish knowledge ("l'histoire...de livres") and plans a ritual "sacrifice" of his *québécois* literary mother: France (*SJJ* 178). In the terrorism and madness of Jos, Beaulieu demonstrates the resentment that overshadows his Promethean project, namely the desire to nihilize an other in a "refus global" of history, which resentment seems implicit in any refusal of the historical given: "Longtemps vous y aviez exclu la femme--la vraie paternité ne se consomme jamais que dans la solitude. Mais vous étiez revenu de cette idée là aussi depuis que vous aviez compris qu'avant d'être Père...il vous fallait tuer définitivement tout ce qui en vous restait coriacement femelle" (*SJJ* 188).¹⁴

Matricide now rejoins patricide in the panoply of metaphors for the war on genealogy. In *Discours de Samm*, in the midst of a drunken stupor, Jos effectively believes "qu'il vient de tuer sa mère et que cela abolit le temps, l'espace et le monde, ne laissant vivre que l'enfer du désert" (156). When Beaulieu states that Melville's writing demonstrates "une formidable poussée vers la sainteté dont Jean-Paul Sartre a bien montré que gagnante, elle n'est rien de plus qu'une plongée furieuse dans l'asocial et l'exploitation exacerbée de la différence," he effectively describes his own transgressive poetics, as well as

the story of Pierre Glendinning (*Melville* 1:32).

Les Voyageries, Beaulieu's Melvillean odyssey, likewise figures an attempt to escape his guilt before the haunting presence of the Father that recalls him to his "pays terrorisé." Says his literary persona Beauchemin:

...[J]e sais bien que ce livre sur Melville est...
lamentable parce que plein de fissures. A quoi bon alors?
Ne devrais-je pas plutôt faire venir la mort de Père et
écrire cet acte manqué que seront ses funérailles? La tribu
enfin rassemblée...de tous les pays québécois, pour mettre
un terme au passé, pour briser la mémoire et me faire
comprendre que mon oeuvre est vaine ainsi que le prétendait
Jos: "Mon pauvre Abel, quand sauras-tu enfin que l'épopée ne
s'écrit pas parce que, tout simplement, ça se vit."

(*Melville* 2:17-18)

Jos echoes the moral of *Hamlet* (according to Melville's reading), namely that "all meditation is worthless, unless it prompt to action" (*P* 199). Beaulieu's much deferred *La Grande Tribu*, if it were ever to appear, would apparently constitute not a mythical epic or a work of anamnesis (as Beaulieu often claims) but an act of forgetting, "[une] oeuvre de dérision, en prophète astucieux de la fin du vieux pays" (*SJJ* 188). But this forgetfulness leads straightaway to the death of narrative.

As Paul de Man points out, "modernity invests its trust in the power of the present moment as an origin, but discovers that, in severing itself from the past, it has at the same time severed itself from the present" (149). In his political essay "Et

saigne la conscience," for example, Beaulieu makes it abundantly clear that the symbolic patricide he enacts is not advanced in the name of making-history or epic history, since he praises Québec precisely for its absence from a violent monumental history. Beaulieu turns instead to a post-historical, uchronic vision, portraying the *Québécois* as the bleeding conscience of History (see *EST* 463-65). In this sense, Beaulieu's symbolic patricide constitutes an abortive act, since it fails to "revivify [the past's] unaccomplished, cut-off--even slaughtered--possibilities" for the sake of the present (*TN* 3:216; see also 240).

Similarly, the death of literature prophesied by Beaulieu at the end of his "Manifeste pour un nouveau roman"--a dying in the name of "l'accomplissement de l'homme, son intégration sans issue au monde"--must continually be deferred if Beaulieu is to continue writing. Thus he casts himself as "l'écrivain de demain, parlant déjà à travers son Silence de l'intégralité de sa réalisation" (*EST* 92). In the words of De Man, the "desire for modernity...lead[s] outside literature" and consequently, continually "forc[es] the writer to undermine his own assertions in order to remain faithful to his vocation" (153). Beaulieu's many equivocations confirm that proposition from De Man; and yet, the former concludes that "il importe peu que la littérature meure: c'est l'homme qui doit s'éterniser" (*EST* 92). Hence, the paradoxical movement towards the limits of narrative and the desire for a new beginning is resolved in the hope of uchronia as the possible *clôture* to all deconstructions, an end to the

eternal rebirth of subversive fictions and genealogies. Melville's *Pierre* most strikingly accounts for this movement towards the suprahistorical.

The chapter on "The Journey and the Pamphlet" in *Pierre* appears at a pivotal point in the novel between its protagonist's refusal of the past and his actual quest to engender a radically new fictional identity capable of effacing his genealogy. The equivocal narrator suggests that Plotinus Plinlimmon's pamphlet on "Chronometricals and Horologicals" might contain premises that demonstrate "the intrinsic incorrectness...of both the theory and the practice of [Pierre's] life," which fallacy Pierre "more or less unconsciously" represses, as suggested by the unacknowledged presence of the pamphlet in his coat lining (242). The narrator further implies that "some things that men think they do not know, are...for all that thoroughly comprehended by them," such as the "idea of Death" (*P* 333). In *Mardi*, the philosopher Babbalanja is gifted with a solution to this Melvillean riddle when he is brought to reflect on the paradox of living and dying: "Thy own skeleton thou thyself dost carry with thee through this mortal life; and ay would view it, but for kind nature's screen; thou art death alive" (*M* 211). In deliberately forgetting the moral of the pamphlet, Pierre also represses the truth of his historical finitude.

The Plinlimmon treatise is concerned with the central Melvillean problem of theodicy in its widest sense, as evidenced by Plotinus' allusion to "the history of Christendom for the last 1800 years" and the fact that "in spite of all the maxims of

Christ, that history is...just as full of...violence...as any previous portion of the world's story" (P 249). His enunciation of the crisis of theodicy echoes that of the narrator in his discussion of the "enthusiastic youth" faced with historical Christianity and its irreconcilability with the Christian kerygma as the expression of "all the love of the Past, and all the love which can be imagined in any conceivable future" (241). The explanation that Plotinus offers to this "solecism" does not in fact represent the *Aufhebung* (sublation) of "God's truth" and "man's truth" that he promises to elaborate "in subsequent lectures" that never follow (246). The narrator opines that the treatise "seems more the excellently illustrated re-statement of a problem than the solution of the problem itself," yet he concedes that "such mere illustrations...perhaps are the only possible human solutions" (243). In other words, the pamphlet comes to an "untidy termination" (249), an *aporia* without possibility of any resolution.

Plotinus' argument, moreover, remains characteristically Melvillean. In *Mardi*, Babbalanja offers a solution to the problem of theodicy by opposing eternity to mortal time: "Yet what seems evil to us may be good to Him. If He fears not nor hopes--He has no other passion, no ends, no purposes. He lives content; all ends are compassed in Him; He has no past, no future; He is the everlasting now, which is an everlasting calm" (M 513). Plotinus likewise proposes that the time (*chronos*) of God and the hour (*hora*) of man are incommensurable: "Did [Christ] not expressly say--My wisdom (time) is not of this world" (245).

If God not only measures (*métron*) but also names the time, according to Plotinus' derivation of "sea-chronometers (*Greek*, time-namers)," then horological mortals by contrast simply tell, tally, keep or speak (*legein*) the fleeting hour (244). Melville stresses the priority of Time, Being, or Eternity as an always-already-presupposed ground when he writes in the chapter "Time and Temples" of *Mardi* that "we are not gods and creators" since "in all the universe is but one original; and the very suns must to their source for their fire; and we Prometheuses must to them for ours." The works and temples of man are not truly "new," "for to make an eternity we must build with eternities" (*M* 204).

This status of the present as an outgrowth of time past, and indeed forever past for the "everlasting now," affects Pierre's untimely project to beget himself and attain "absolute Truth" through an oeuvre that would be truly "new" (321), since "there never yet was an original man...the first man himself--who according to the Rabbins was also the first author--not being an original; the only original author being God" (295). Melville's pursuit of these genealogical metaphors works to demonstrate that "self-reciprocally efficient hermaphrodites" are nothing "but a fable" (295). The fundamental ontological difference between the *hora* of man and the *chronos* of God remains that the latter totalizes the field of time as a collective singular. Only a suprahistorical being could assert the truth of history. Thus the chronometers are characterized by their accuracy; they are the acolytes of "God, the sole source of that heavenly truth, and the great Greenwich hill and tower from which the universal

meridians are far out into infinity reckoned" (244). Plotinus opposes this "Greenwich time" of infinity to the "China time" of "this remote Chinese world of ours" (246). He maintains that "Christ was a chronometer" and that "the reason why his teachings seemed folly to the Jews, was because he carried that Heaven's time in Jerusalem" (245). Here Plotinus clearly recalls St. Paul's attack on worldly wisdom, but he counsels instead of Pauline charity the prudence of a "virtuous expediency" as preached by the "Pagan philosophers" (248). In fact, his horological reading rejects the ethical efficacy of an horologe undertaking "a complete unconditional sacrifice of himself in behalf of any other being, or any cause, or any conceit" (248). Thus the pamphlet foreshadows the failure of Pierre's enthusiastic quest. Pierre's modern Hamletism issues from the incompatibility of his untimely desire for altruism with the fallen time of history: "'The time is out of joint;--Oh cursed spite, / That ever I was born to set it right!'" (P 198).

The schism that separates, on the one hand, the China time of the world as the time of deceit, anguish and moral imperfection, and on the other hand, the Greenwich time of God as the time of tranquillity, immobility and eternal sadness, marks the breaking-point of historical paradigms and the zero-point of the emergence of uchronia. The refusal that stems from such a rift corresponds to what Nietzsche calls "the No of the suprahistorical man, who sees no salvation in the process" of history (*UM* 66). The degeneration of the space of experience into a series of infinitesimal "nows" and the projection of the

horizon of expectation into a "futureless future" effectively negate the "tension" essential to "historical time," and concurrently, to historical praxis (TN 3:211, 215). Ricoeur justly describes this fracture point in his hermeneutics of historical consciousness:

...the modern age is not only characterized by a contracting of the space of experience...but also by an increasing gap between our space of experience and our horizon of expectation. Do we not see our dream of a reconciled humanity withdrawing into an ever more distant future and one ever more uncertain of realization? The task that, for our predecessors, prescribed the journey by pointing the way has turned into a utopia, or, better, a uchronia.... And when our expectation can no longer fix itself on a determined future...our present finds itself torn between two fleeing horizons, that of the surpassed past and that of an ultimate end that gives rise to no penultimate term. So torn within itself, our present sees itself in "crisis," and this is...perhaps one of the major meanings of our present.

(TN 3:212-13)

The untimely movement of literature towards a uchronic schism, as well as the eclipse of narrative and character that marks this *via negativa*, can be traced within Pierre's apprenticeship to the "secret" of Time and Eternity.

Isabel's letter, as stated earlier, effectively confirms Pierre's predisposition and presentiment, his "mystic mood" and his fascination with "the infinite cliffs and gulfs of human

mystery and misery" (P 75, 79). This mood instills in the young hero fresh doubts concerning "the before undistrusted moral beauty of the world" (90). When Pierre receives the letter, hitherto "absent" from his text, he explicitly resolves to adopt for himself a Herculean role as seeker of "Truth." Pierre aspires first and foremost to petrification in the fixity of absolute Truth--"be it Gorgon"; yet it is time itself that enables the ambiguities that unfold before him (91). For instance, Lucy's claim that "love's self is a secret, and so feeds on secrets" both deepens and informs Pierre's dawning awareness of the equivocalness of human relations across time (60). Whether they be concerned with recollection or anticipation, the series of retentions and protentions that constitute Pierre's "family history" proceed in the absence of any hard kernel of truth.

The non-coincidence of individual temporal experiences, the disintegration of the pure past, and the inscrutability of the pure future represent a fault that undermines and overdetermines time-consciousness itself. For his part, Ricoeur envisions "the mimetic activity of narrative...as the invention of a third-time constructed over the very fracture whose trace [the] aporetics [of temporality] has brought to sight" (TN 3: 245). In Melville's *Zeitroman*, however, the ultimate inscrutability of time convulses and paralyzes the poetics of narrative. The narrator states that "love's secrets, being mysteries, ever pertain to the transcendent and the infinite" (P 107). Pierre's fascination with Isabel nourishes itself on the "fathomless

fountain of ever-welling mystery" she uncovers for him through the "narration of her history" and "the essential and unavoidable mystery of her history itself" (167). The "Mystery" of Isabel awakens Pierre to the uncertainty and the ambiguity of his own history and past, and to the fault that underlies narrative representation in its attempt to reconstitute passing time and prefigure future time. Like her brother, Isabel is an Isolato, an orphan and an "exile" who "seem[s] not of woman born," and she also suffers from terrible "loneliness" (146, 141, 143). She lacks the "slightest knowledge" of her past or her origin, especially that period "wholly memoryless" of "entire unknowingness," birth and infancy (144). As Isabel goes on to confess, she hardly possesses "that which they call the memory" (354). Isabel thus embodies a Nietzschean poison to the historical sense--the power of *forgetting*.

Pierre's love for Isabel represents to some extent a desire to divine the "secret" of time and eternity, the "melodious mournfulness" of the "Eolean pine" that pretypifies the silent, sad voice of the Melvillean God: "I conjure ye to lift the veil; I must see it face to face" (64, 65). Pierre speaks of the "nameless fascination of the face" of the other/Other, its "death-like beauty" and "immortal sadness" (139): "For me, thou hast uncovered one infinite, dumb, beseeching countenance of mystery, underlying all the surfaces of visible time and space" (P 76). Isabel is a cipher of the *deus absconditus* of *Moby-Dick*, the God who shows only His backside to Moses (Ex 33:23), just as the Memnon Stone seems to be a cipher

of the Rock of the Old Testament. In *Pierre*, the Memnon Stone has fallen silent "in a bantering, barren, and prosaic, heartless age," no longer singing of the eternal "Hamletism" of the sons of the earth and sky (163-64). The suprahistorical and post-modern conscience despairs of the truth and the possibility of History, whether it be a History realized through the force of the present or the intrahistorical presence of God; instead it resigns itself, according to Richard Kearney's prognosis, to "the demise of imagination--understood as a creative source of unique images" (*Poetics of Imagining* 176).¹⁵

In his "Le langage à l'infini," for instance, Michel Foucault establishes a clear-cut dichotomy between those works that invoke closure by way of the Cartesian *deus ex machina* (see *BT* 80), and those works that follow upon the twilight of the gods and must therefore submit to the throes of the eternal return.¹⁶ "Écrire, de nos jours," he writes, "s'est infiniment rapproché de sa source": an *absence d'oeuvre* (48). Similarly, in his "Manifeste pour un nouveau roman," Beaulieu traces the history of European literature from the seventeenth century to the present and concludes with Maurice Blanchot: "Où va la littérature? Oui, question étonnante, mais le plus étonnant, c'est qu'il y a une réponse, elle est facile: la littérature va vers elle-même, vers son essence qui est la disparition" (qtd *EST* 70). The impossibility of writing a *nouveau roman* or an *oeuvre totalisante* that would renew History in exceeding its determined totality in the direction of truth and possibility leads to a "refus d'écrire," a refusal to write history that manifests itself in a

novel that abolishes itself, eliding both the configuration of narrative and the figuration of character (EST 79). In Beaulieu and Melville this schism announces the leap into uchronia, which has the calm of eternity rather than history as its horizon. But the desire for liberation, it should be noted, arises as a result of the collapse of the discordant concordance of narrative as a credible model for permanence in time.

Through her "angelic childlikeness," Isabel offers Pierre a new vision of the *aevum*, which vision gradually replaces "the sweetest season of love," the eternal "Sweet Summer" of the enthusiastic author of "*The Tropical Summer: a Sonnet*," with the eternal "Winter" of his "Inferno dream" (169, 334, 358). Isabel, of course, is the inverted mirror-image of Mary Glendinning, a "bold black one" (41) that furthers Pierre's apprenticeship to time through the horological experience of woe; hence, "to Pierre the *times of sportfulness* were as pregnant with the *hours of earnestness*; and in sport he learnt the terms of woe" (208; emphasis added). When Pierre finally realizes that "it is all a dream--we dream that we dreamed we dream," Isabel concurs, noting that "long loneliness and anguish have opened miracles to me" (311). In Melville's and Beaulieu's *oeuvres amputées*, solipsism and woe progressively de pragmatize and poison the world of historical and fictional paradigms, unfolding increasingly untimely experiences for the reader's meditation.

"There is a wisdom that is woe," says Melville's Ishmael, "but there is a woe that is madness" (MD 355). In "La Tentation de la Sainteté," Beaulieu maintains that "il n'y a pas trente-six

solutions, il n'y a que le choix de la sainteté ou de la folie" (*EST* 146). He also designates "la folie" as "le terrorisme." In "Entre la sainteté et le terrorisme," for instance, Beaulieu asks, "Ou bien le terrorisme ou bien la sainteté, serait-ce cela la problématique définitive, en littérature et en écriture, comme dans le reste?" (*EST* 492). Terrorism embodies an anti-bourgeois resentment that attacks, dismembers, and disfigures the time of being and the being of time by poisoning it with the "mutilation" that the marginalized have suffered at the hands of monumental history (*Melville* 3:58-59).

Pierre's own "poison[ous]" terrorism emerges when he finally accepts Dante as his "muse of fire," the "poet" who repays the world's "unforgivable affronts and insults" with "the sublime malediction of the *Inferno*" (*P* 198-99). Pierre's work also evinces his deep hatred of life--"to think of the woe and the cant,--to think of the Truth and the Lie" (343). Hence, when the enormity of the world's vanity becomes apparent to the young author, he resolves himself to "gospelize the world anew, and show them deeper secrets than the Apocalypse" (310). Melville's dismembered narrative points to a new sense of apocalypse more terrorizing and "deeper...than the Apocalypse" itself, to the sense of an ending become immanent that Kermode terms "the tragedy of sempiternity; apocalypse is translated out of time into the *aevum*" (82).

In a passage that rehearses many of the same themes as the chapter "Worth the consideration of those to whom it may prove worth considering" in *The Confidence-Man*, the narrator of *Pierre*

questions the paradigms of novelistic convention by asserting "that [human life] partakes of the *unravelable* inscrutableness of God" (P 170; comp. TCM 85-86; emphasis added). Moreover, it is the disfiguring logic of the tragic vision invoked by Isabel's history that disarticulates the discordant concordance of emplotment and the possibility of Aristotelian *lusis* (untying) in favour of a *diastasis* (separation) that reveals the ravages of time:

By infallible presentiment [Pierre] saw, that not always doth life's beginning gloom conclude in gladness; that wedding-bells peal not ever in the last scene of life's fifth act; that while the countless tribes of common novels laboriously spin veils of mystery, only to complacently clear them up at last; and while the countless tribe of common dramas do but repeat the same; yet the profounder emanations of the human mind...these never *unravel their own intricacies*, and have no proper endings; but in imperfect, unanticipated, and disappointing sequels (*as mutilated stumps*), hurry to abrupt intermergings with the eternal tides of time and fate. (170; emphasis added)

The madness of woe, like the Nietzschean (in)sanity of radical honesty (*Redlichkeit*), leads to a fascination with the unformed. Once authentic temporality is equated strictly with dissonance, the order of narrative consonance appears as a violent, truthless imposition (see TN 1:72). As Kermode points out in his reading of Shakespearean tragedy, "the cry of woe does not end succession; the great crises and ends of human life do not stop

time" (89).

Melville's *Pierre* and Beaulieu's *Jos* nonetheless subscribe to an "ascetic ideal" that bespeaks the Nietzschean "will to nothingness" and its "longing to escape from illusion, change, becoming, death, and from longing itself" (*GM* 299). In *Pierre*, the will to Truth emerges as a form of Christian nihilism, as evidenced by the tendencies ascribed to the Apostles (cf. 341). In the process of writing his book, *Pierre* pursues this will to nothingness through a form of detemporalization, "assassinat[ing] the natural day" in order to summon an "infinite wakefulness" in his soul (345). The narrator asks, "Is there then all this work to one book, which shall be read in a very few hours...and which, in the end...must undoubtedly go to the worms?" (344). *Pierre*'s writing, however, exceeds both the time of narrating and mortal time through a sort of doubling up of his task. As Beaulieu argues, in order to achieve "le langage vrai" that is Silence and Fixity, "il faut que la vie qui va porter ce langage ait fait l'expérience de son néant" (*EST* 92). Similarly, *Pierre* "is learning how to live, by rehearsing the part of death," and the authentic language that concerns him is that of the Book of the soul, which "is elephantinely sluggish"; in fact, it is this "larger book...infinitely better" that "absorbs the time and the life of *Pierre*" (*P* 344). Detemporalization thus responds to the ascetic desire for eternity.

Beauchemin himself claims that "je ne saurai jamais être chronologique. Bien trop québécois, c'est-à-dire privé de temps" (*Melville* 3:64). In Beaulieu's works, the marginalized live in

"un monde qui n'obéit pas au temps et à l'espace" (*Melville* 1:127-29). In *Un rêve québécois*, the uchronic refusal of narrative and Western history by way of silence and the "emptiness of the *tock-tick*" (Kermode 46) is emblemized by Barthélémy's broken horologe, a "ouestcloque," which Barthélémy winds back into the detritus of the past and the refuse of History to avoid being-present and making-history (*RQ* 22, 16-17). The end of Beaulieu's *Un rêve québécois*, however, seems to signal the author's doubts concerning *québécois* uchronia, since the eruption of monumental history onto the scene leaves the impotent Barthélémy with no choice but to walk "en direction des hélicoptères remplis de soldats et qui tournoyaient au-dessus de la rue Monselet" (135).

The wisdom that Plotinus Plinlimmon exemplifies in his "passive[ness]" and his "Inscrutableness" is also one of withdrawal, wherein the Isolato "contracts into one's isolated self" (*P* 331). Unencumbered by any apparent genealogy, Plotinus also refuses to read and write. He exists in a state of "repose neither divine nor human...but a repose separate and apart" (330). The retreat of woe from concordance and pure succession towards discordance and then uchronia strongly demarcates Pierre's trajectory to sainthood: "In the midst of the merriments of the mutations of Time, Pierre hath ringed himself in with the grief of Eternity. Pierre is a peak inflexible in the heart of Time, as the isle-peak, Pico, stands unassaultable in the midst of waves" (343). This verticality stands for a new experience of the *aevum* characterized by the refusal that stems from the

ravages of time and the mutilation of woe, a tendency towards *diastasis* simlized by the "dismembered" trees on the Mount of Titans and the amputated Enceladus (386, 388). This tendency is further evidenced "with every accession of the personal divine to [Pierre]" that causes "some great land-slide of the general surrounding diviness" to crumble away so that both the "gods" and "mankind" release the Enceladus-like protagonist (345). Pierre becomes "immortal" and "immovable" in the deep solitude of his stony cell only after he murders his cousin Glen and thus "extinguishe[s] his house" (402).

In the order of genealogical metaphors, it is significant in *Pierre* that the "ever-encroaching appetite for God" is symbolized by the "sterile inodorous immortalness of the small, white [amaranth]" which invades the pastures "like banks of snow" (386, 384). At the end of the interminable prologue to *Sagamo Job J--*a blasphemous canticle in which France acts as both storyteller and evil genius--Mattavinie is covered for the second time by "une neige épaisse comme une apocalypse," and France exclaims, "Tu ne pourras plus jamais être, mon Job J. L'hivernie, mon Job J! L'hivernie! Sous six pieds de neige, mon Job J" (52, 172). This apocalyptic ending is not an authentic end, however, but rather a living death in time, since Una wakes from her dream-sleep and France writes, instead of *finis*, "Il était temps" (*SJJ* 172).

Pierre's "history" or personal narrative also translates a this-worldly Inferno, an eternal Winter of woe: "Morning comes; again the dropped sash, the icy water, the flesh-brush, the breakfast, the hot bricks, the ink, the pen, the from-eight-

o'clock-to-half-past-four, and the whole general inclusive hell of the same departed day" (345-46). Melville and Beaulieu's *oeuvres amputées* retain and detain "deeper secrets than the Apocalypse" through their apprehension of an ending that never ends but is always *ending*, an anguished desire for God that is never consummated in the living world.

Plotinus' "torn" pamphlet, with its "untidy termination" (249), thus becomes emblematic of the impossibility of an ending that would be a true apocalypse: a revelation or disclosure. The tragedy of sempiternity transpires most strikingly in Beaulieu's work:

Continue d'inventer même si ce moment ultime est déjà venu puisque *l'Apocalypse est au commencement de soi puisque la fin précède toute naissance* puisqu'il n'y a pas de parole originelle rien que du mauvais langage rien que l'ennui du mauvais langage cette suite désordonnée de signes sans conséquences.... (SJJ 170; emphasis added)

While Beckett's modern world waits for Godot in the midst of absurdity, Beaulieu's post-modern world continues in crisis "En attendant Geronimo," a terrorist who plans to light the country in an apocalyptic conflagration (see SJJ 191, 189).

Derrida's "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Newly Adopted in Philosophy" seems to offer a deliberate response to Kermode's polemic in "Endings, Continued." The French theorist examines apocalypse as the "angelic structure...of every scene of writing in general" (57). Like Beaulieu, he affirms that "the end has always already begun," and speaks of an "apocalypse without

apocalypse" (49, 66). "Here," he concludes, "the catastrophe would perhaps be of the apocalypse itself, its fold (*pli*) and its end, a closure without end, an end without end" (67). Beaulieu in his poetics assumes this beginningless eternal return of language as a kind of *via negativa*: "Écrire ne constitue pas une orientation parce que cela ne commence ni ne s'achève, parce que cela ne fait que se recommencer pour occuper tout le champ de ses fissures et, par cela même, en produire de nouvelles, et d'autres encore, jusqu'à l'extinction de soi" (*Melville* 1:14). Pure succession renders the time of narrative practically meaningless and purposeless, and yet in both Beaulieu and Melville its meaning and its truth effectively become this sense of crisis and dissonance that informs the typically Eastern desire for liberation and silence.

Moreover, the bifurcation of writing finds its analogue in Melville's own truncated poetics, since according to his theory, "all the great books in the world are but the *mutilated shadowings-forth* of invisible and eternally unembodied images in the soul; so that they are but the mirrors, distortedly reflecting to us our own things" (*P* 322; emphasis added). Beaulieu comments that "c'est la première fois que Melville, élaborant la théorie de l'écriture circulaire, va aussi loin: l'écriture ne vous ramène qu'à l'écriture, c'est-à-dire à vous-même," a kind of textual solipsism (*Melville* 3:35). In *Pierre*, "Nature is not so much her own ever-sweet interpreter, as the mere supplier of that cunning alphabet, whereby selecting and combining as he pleases, each man reads his own peculiar lesson"

(383-84). Language does not disclose being but rather evinces its own lack, separation and self-referentiality so that the *oeuvre amputée* can exist in its own space of perennality.

Foucault also formulates an ontology of "le langage à l'infini" on the basis of its "auto-représentation": the fold as "une configuration du miroir à l'infini contre la paroi noire de la mort" (45, 47). Traversed by death and traversing death, language opens onto a world of simulacra constituted entirely by its own self-referentiality. According to Foucault, "les décisions les plus mortelles, inévitablement, restent suspendues le temps encore d'un récit. Le discours, on le sait, a le pouvoir de retenir la flèche, déjà lancée, en un retrait de temps qui est son espace propre" (44). *Blanche forcée* exemplifies this denial and this delay: "Il y a que la mémoire et ce qui se refuse dans la mémoire. J'ai menti tout le long du voyage par besoin de me sauver et de me retenir dans ma mort. Par besoin de Blanche" (*Bf* 171-72; see 209). The traumatic past deforms the act of remembering back in what amounts to a forgetfulness of Being, an apocalypse of apocalypse sustained by the basic Freudian difference: desire/fear of death. Death is both detained and retained in the want and the blankness of desire, and the truth of the end is forever deferred by the self-understanding of fiction as Apollonian *mensonge*.

Melville also suspends the arrows of time in *Mardi's* ending. Taiji flees "land" and Mardi with "eternity...in his eye," his "last crime" a monumental "abdication" of the truthlessness and guiltiness of being (540). Beyond the threshold of this refusal,

"the racing tide...seizes [him] like a hand omnipotent," sealing his fate, "and straight in [his] white wake headlong dashed a shallop, three fixed specters leaning o'er its prow, three arrows poisoning." The arrows point out three "fixed" temporal trajectories. In the fictive suspension of historical time, however, the mortal reckoning is forever postponed: "And thus pursuers and pursued fled on over an endless sea" (540). In his introduction to *Mardi*, Hillway maintains that Taiji "commit[s] a symbolical suicide...by refusing to admit his inability to grasp the nature of the absolute and by pursuing truth even beyond the confines of the finite world" (12). In the words of Ricoeur, such an "inconclusive ending" reflects in a deliberate fashion "the interminable character of the theme of the whole work" (*TN* 1:22). For Beaulieu, as previously mentioned, *Mardi* is indeed an impossible work overdetermined by metaphysical anguish.

Henceforth, in a world so conditioned and interpreted, the "crisis replaces the end"--and the "impossibility of concluding" spells "the ruin of the fiction of the end" (see *TN* 1:24). The liberation of fiction from cosmological, historical and mortal time, the death of its referential function and the closure of the text over an *absence d'oeuvre* or a transcendental difference, these reductions become the occasion for its alienation.

In *Blanche forcée*, the morbid play of desire with death also suspends Job J Jobin's death in the space of fiction. He reflects while masturbating: "Cloué suis-je, encercueillé dans ma mort que j'appelle, que j'attends...il y a de temps que pour celui qui se tient devant le miroir et se complaît dans les

contrefaçons qui lui sont retournées." Death is both retained and detained *in* the *aevum* of writing through the prolonged manipulation of the point of narcissistic desire and through the absence of climactic closure: "Cloué suis-je seulement, encercueillé déjà par ma mort, sexe dressé pour que la foudre s'y décharge et me tue" (71). Foucault maintains that "la limite de la mort ouvre devant le langage, ou plutôt en lui, un espace infini" ("Le langage" 45). In *Moby-Dick* as well, "Death is only a launching into the region of the strange Untried; it is but the first salutation to the possibilities of the immense Remote, the Wild, the Watery, the Unshored," and for "death-longing" men the mythical voyage replaces "suicide," as from "the hearts of infinite Pacifics, the thousand mermaids sing to them--Come hither, broken-hearted," "Come hither," "Come hither" and again "come hither, till we marry thee!" (402). In *Sagamo Job J*, Beaulieu attempts a pastiche or collage:

Cette page, cette autre page de Blanche, pareille à de la musique noire. Elle dit Cet abbé Ferland comme cachalot dans la mer du Sud...chasses de tous mes Job J! pays et océans de tous mes Job J!--oeil gris comme une bouteille de sorte que nous avançons toujours au même endroit chaque jour dans la semblance de sa veille--*je trompe le temps* couvercle d'un vieux coffre de matelot là où les sirènes se pourchassent dans les alvéoles du corail interminées...
 • baleine! baleine! baleine!--évents--vapeur d'eau est toute vie. (118; emphasis added)

If time is eluded, then, it is by harkening to the deadly

singsong of the mermaids, and through the eternal return of writing to itself as an illusion that, like the vertical whale spout, is "nothing but mist," a sort of "coffin life-buoy" that both detains and retains Foucault and Derrida's Freudian difference in "the tone of the 'Come'" (MD 313, 470; see "Of an Apocalyptic Tone" 66).

Beaulieu effectively re-envisioned the unsayable, bottomless ending of *Mardi* so that an infinite series of iterations or rebeginnings seems possible: "Cinquante pieds de mer se disent-ils lorsque Job J Jobin passe près d'eux, courant après son souffle de Blanche" (Bf 212). In *N'évoque plus que le désenchantement de ta ténèbre, mon si pauvre Abel*, Beaulieu's Beauchemin even suggests a series of *renouements* or *redoublements* to this first *dédoublement*, all prefixed by "Après qu'il eut écrit cela, il faillit ajouter..." (e.g. 17, 25, 33, 43, 55). The process of reiteration, of course, could continue *ad infinitum*, since "l'oeuvre du langage, c'est le corps lui-même du langage que la mort traverse pour lui ouvrir cet espace infini où se répercute les doubles" ("Le langage à l'infini" 47). Hence, in *Blanche forcée*, Taiji's "symbolical suicide" is replaced by the suicide of Blanche, which Job nonetheless attributes to himself (see 197). This suicide spells the death of what Tolkien in his essay "On Fairy-Stories" called "*Eucatastrophe*" (62), since Taiji and Job, impelled only by their sense-of-lack, effectively pursue Yillah and Blanche into infinity.

Says Pierre, as he waits upon the hangman, "Oh, now to live is death, and now to die, is life; now, to my soul were a sword

my midwife" (P 403). By a queer equivocation and reversal, Pierre hopes finally to end all temporal ambiguities, yet as he remarks, "It is ambiguous still." Pierre's "untimely, timely end" (402) simply marks the end of *his* time but not of time itself; it is "life's last chapter well stitched into the middle." Like birth, death does not belong to the light of the cogito so that "nor book, nor author of the book, hath any sequel, though each hath its last lettering!" (402). Hence, the utterly ambiguous and equivocal character of *Pierre's* ending, which is also the "untimely, timely end" of its hero: "'All's o'er, and ye know him not!' came gasping from the wall; and from the fingers of Isabel dropped an empty vial--as it had been a run-out sand-glass--and shivered upon the floor...and she fell upon Pierre's heart, and her long hair ran over him, and arboresced him in ebon vines" (405; emphasis added). Pierre has steadfastly "refused the world his likeness" (299)--and likewise, *Pierre*, or *the Ambiguities* remains a disfigured and dismembered narrative that, rather than affording its reader a *dénouement*, tangles and "arbor[s] him [or her] in ebon vines."

In *The Ship of Death*, D.H. Lawrence ponders Hamlet's famous meditation: "With daggers, bodkins, bullets, man can make / a bruise or break of exit for his life / but is that a quietus, oh tell me, is it quietus?" (957). The ending of *Pierre* is an "untimely, timely end" precisely in the sense that it does not offer the consolation and acquittance of quietus, but rather a violent, tragic break that gives survivors no solace in time, effectively demonstrating the narrator's view that "the

profunder emanations of the human mind...these never unravel their own intricacies, and have no proper endings; but in imperfect, unanticipated and disappointing sequels (as mutilated stumps), hurry to abrupt intermergings with the eternal tides of time and fate" (170).

The eclipse of the fiction of the end is thus a double eclipse, since the fragmentation of configuration has a "rebound effect" on the fate of the "identifiable hero" (OA 149). This elision explains the ethical vacuum at the core of *Pierre*: "Look: a nothing is the substance...two shadows cast from one nothing; these...are Virtue and Vice" (P 310). Since "the gods [themselves] are dumb," no revelation, no apocalypse, and no meaningful ethical action seems possible. Melville's and Beaulieu's "dark modernity," with its recourse to Nietzschean and post-modern poisons, gives rise to thought insofar as it bespeaks a crisis specific to modernity. Ricoeur argues that "a certain iconoclasm directed against history, as sealed up in what is past and gone, is a necessary condition for its ability to refigure time." In Ricoeur's view, however, this "time of suspension" serves the aim of "reactivat[ing] the unaccomplished possibilities of the past" and employing the force of "effective-history" within "living traditions" (TN 3:240). In other words, this reactivation is an attempt "to re-open the past, to revivify its unaccomplished, cut-off--even slaughtered--possibilities" so that the resentment and the terrorism attested to by Melville's and Beaulieu's disfigured narratives can be overcome within a productive dialectic (3:216). The danger of modernity seems to

reside chiefly in its youthful, unhistorical forgetfulness, or in its refusal of historical maturity. In this sense, *Pierre* is indeed a failed *Bildungsroman*, and yet it is an accomplished *Zeitroman* that *speaks to* a modern crisis in historical consciousness evocatively redoubled in Beaulieu's contemporary Melvillean odyssey.

Moreover, in Melville and Beaulieu, the madness of woe effectively has as *its end* sainthood or the wisdom of woe. Their fiction aims to lead one to "la Fixation, c'est-à-dire au rêve accompli, c'est-à-dire à la paisible immobilité" (*EST* 147). The extreme exigency of madness and sainthood links them as two aspects of the same transgressive desire: the folly of Taiji, Ahab, Pierre and Jos remains the desire to attain sainthood in the here and now and thus fill the absence of God in History. The wisdom of woe, on the other hand, may consist in "la force... de savoir être fou et d'avoir la sagesse de sa folie," a "sane madness" that abates the violence of this desire for immediacy, as Beaulieu suggests in "Être écrivain québécois" (*EST* 253). This wisdom of woe may very well be the hidden capital and the hope of uchronia.

The nihilization of the Book of History may also reveal another mode of being-in-the-world. Beaulieu maintains that literature is nothing more than a babble of nonsense and that its redeeming value rests solely in its capacity to lead one to "Silence" (see *EST* 92). Perhaps "Silence is the only Voice of our God," as the narrator of *Pierre* frequently suggests (237), and perhaps the stutter of language itself unknowingly intimates

this voice and this quietude, most notably in a story such as *Billy Budd*. Significantly, Isabel herself exists outside Pierre's mature "point of Time"; she is "a child of everlasting youngness" and "deep and endless sadness" (P 169). She aspires not to be a "solitary Pico" but rather to atonement: "I pray for peace--for motionlessness.... I feel that there can be no perfect peace in individualness" (146). The "secret" inscribed within her magical guitar and called forth by her "mother" song evokes the "Pantheistic master-spell, which eternally locks in mystery and muteness the universal subject-world" (178-181).

In *Blanche forcée*, Beaulieu likewise speaks of "une réconciliation dans les éléments du paysage devenu cette vaste masse blanche" (Bf 163). Like Isabel, Blanche is quintessentially an absence and a mystery, "obligé à la récusation et au détour, se prenant et se déprenant, se donnant et se dédonnant, comme si c'était ça le fond de sa nature: l'incertain, le pas sûr, le crédit, l'acte étant fait que pour se déconstruire et la déconstruction même étant vue comme la seule façon possible d'atteindre à l'extrême" (Bf 163). Does this "déconstruction" not imply the kind of "double deconstruction" that David Loy describes in his Mahayana critique of Derrida by emphasizing the total "devoidness (*sunyata*) of language" rather than simply a vertical "invagination" (76) that allows for endless supplementation? Blanche says, "me viennent que des flux de mots blancs" (Bf 116), while Isabel claims that "always in me, the solidest things melt into dreams and dreams into solidities" (P 145). Perhaps, to use Indian symbols, the *yoni* as the

the "absence" of the mother goddess offers an alternative to the phallic economy of the mark or *linga* as the narcissistic point of Oedipal desire.¹⁷ Melville's indirect appreciation of Eastern philosophy through Schopenhauer and Beaulieu's conscious adoption of Vivekânanda's thought might very well offer a "clôture" to the sense-of-lack fostered by logocentrism and solipsism, allowing for the breaking-forth of a new mode of being in the silencing of ontologizing thought and the abolition of the self.

Notes

1. "Aevum, you might say, is the time-order of novels.

Characters in novels are independent of time and succession, but may and usually do seem to operate in time and succession; the *aevum* co-exists with temporal events at the moment of occurrence, being...like a stick in a river" (Kermode 72). Both Ricoeur and Kermode employ the Augustinian dialectic of the *intentio* and the *distentio animi* to study the structural dynamics of narratives.

2. In Ricoeur's view, historical and fictional narratives interweave in their referential intentions of "standing-for" the past and presenting an "as-if" past. Both forms seek to refigure time without ever totalizing the ontic field of the pastness of the past or the sum total of human experience (cf. *TN* 3:190-191). Mimesis₂, once articulated within the "hermeneutic circle" of mimesis₁ and mimesis₃, contributes to a "wholesome" historical consciousness by forming the narrative identity of an individual or a collectivity (*TN* 3:248; 1:70-87). Ricoeur envisages a historical "fusion of horizons" with an open-ended view to totalization as a regulatory idea (cf. *TN* 3:220).

3. The notion of an *oeuvre totalisante*, a term Beaulieu borrows from Jean-Paul Sartre, suggests to what extent *Monsieur Melville* is also a Sartrean reading of Herman Melville, hinging on Beaulieu's identification of Melville with Flaubert. Concerning the *livre impossible*, see Foucault's comments on Sade in "Le langage à l'infini" (49). Compare Beaulieu's appropriation of Sade, Melville and Flaubert in "Le théâtre de la folie" (*EST* 405-11).

4. In "The Self and Narrative Identity," Ricoeur discusses the "mutual genesis" of a story and a character in a plot (cf. *OA* 144). For Ricoeur, the elaboration of a semiological unconscious on the basis of a differential system of signs remains a transcendental reduction of signification in the style of Husserl that has as its counterweight the extra-linguistic aim (*visée*) of signification: the Heideggerian ontic or Husserl's *lebenswelt*. It is at the semantic level that language acquires the status of discourse and reinstates the hermeneutic circle. See Ricoeur's "The Question of the Subject: the Challenge of Semiology" (*CI* 236-66).

5. Concerning Enlightenment *neue Zeit*, see *TN* 3:210-16.

6. "Crisis is a way of thinking about one's moment," writes Kermode, "and not inherent in the moment itself. Transition, like the other apocalyptic phases, is...an 'intemporal agony'; it is merely that aspect of successiveness to which our attention is given. The fiction of transition is our way of registering the conviction that the end is immanent rather than imminent; it reflects our lack of confidence in ends, our mistrust of the apportioning of history to epochs of this and that. Our own epoch is the epoch of nothing positive, only of transition. Since we move from transition to transition, we may suppose that we exist in no intelligible relation to the past, and no predictable relation to the future" (101-102; emphasis added). Kermode's diagnosis of schismatic modernity as a discontinuous time of "eternal transition, perpetual crisis" marked by constant "revolution or schism" invites comparison with Ricoeur's analysis

of this "modern age...[as] characterized by a contracting of the space of experience, which makes the past seem ever more distant in that it seems ever more passed, [and] also by an increasing gap between our space of experience and our horizon of expectation" (TN 3:212-13).

7. In his *Freud and Philosophy*, Ricoeur examines *Oedipus Rex* as a double tragedy of truth and of sex. Ricoeur articulates a Freudian "economics of culture" with a Hegelian phenomenology of the spirit around the overdetermined symbolism of the Oedipal myth. His reading concludes with the theme of "education" as "the movement by which man is led out of his childhood; this movement is...an 'erudition' whereby man is lifted out of his archaic past; but it is also a *Bildung*, in the twofold sense of an edification and an emergence of the *Bilder* or 'images of man' which mark off the development of self-consciousness and open man to what they disclose" ("A Dialectical Reexamination of the Problem of Sublimation and the Cultural Object" 523-24). Read as a failed *Bildungsroman*, in this amplified sense, *Pierre* becomes a startling example of schismatic modernity. In *Pierre* and *Sagamo Job J*, the historico-cultural dialectic of desire and sublimation is subverted by the schism instituted between sexuality, which is given over to the world of generation associated with the maternal figure, and spirituality, which emerges as the unredeemed will to nothingness, the sterile "ever-encroaching appetite for God" (P 386).

8. Ricoeur argues that the strength and originality of Nietzsche's reflection on history stem from his attempt to work

out the implications of "the interruption the lived-through present" as regards "the influence of the past...over us--even by means of historiography insofar as it carries out and calls for the abstraction of the past as *the past for itself*." Such an investigation is "untimely...because it breaks immediately with the problem of knowledge (*Wissen*) in favor of that of life (*Leben*), and thereby puts the question of truth beneath that of utility (*Nutzen*) and the inconvenient (*Nachteil*). What is untimely is the unmotivated leap into a criteriology, which we know from the remainder of this book stems from Nietzsche's genealogical method, whose legitimacy is only guaranteed by the life it itself engenders. Equally untimely is the mutation the word 'history'--Nietzsche writes *Historie*--undergoes. It no longer designates either...the *res gestae* nor narrative, but rather 'historical culture' or 'historical meaning'" (*TN* 3: 235-36). Nietzsche writes that "the origin of historical culture--its quite radical conflict with the spirit of any 'new age', any 'modern awareness'--this origin *must* itself be known historically, history *must* itself resolve the problem of history, knowledge *must* turn its sting against itself--this threefold *must* is the imperative of the 'new age,' supposing this age really does contain anything new, powerful, original and promising more life" (*UM* 103). Nietzsche thus resolves to work within the bounds of "occidental prejudice" and its "valuation of the historical" in order to overcome and dissolve the notion that his people are "epigones" and "latecomers" (66).

9. Cf. *TN* 3:138, 243, 272-73.

10. See Ricoeur on Augustine, Husserl and Heidegger, *TN* 1:16.

11. "Each of the three species of history which exist belongs to a certain soil and a certain climate and only to that: in any other it grows into a devastating weed.... Much mischief is caused through the thoughtless transplantation of these plants: the critic without need, the antiquary without piety, the man who recognizes greatness but cannot himself do great things, are such plants, estranged from their mother soil and degenerated into weeds" (*UM* 72).

12. Ricoeur remarks the displacement of *historia magistra vitae* by this new disposition. Due to the temporalization of history, "the past, now deprived of its exemplary status, is cast outside our space of experience into the shadows of what no longer exists" (*TN* 3:211, n. 7).

13. In his "The Exiled Soul and Salvation through Knowledge," Ricoeur relates the *topoi* of the "circularity of life and death" present in Orphism to the "old Indo-European theme of migration and reincarnation" (*SE* 285). The myth of the eternal return traverses much of the work of Melville and Beaulieu.

14. See *History and Truth*, 323, on the negative and the positive aspects of denegation.

15. Kearney himself opposes Ricoeur's "hermeneutic reading" and approach to the "apocalyptic reading" or the "apocalypse of floating signifiers" (177-78), stressing the importance of the hermeneutic circle and the social imaginary as process.

16. "Longtemps--depuis l'apparition des dieux homériques jusqu'à l'éloignement du divin dans le fragment d'*Empédocle*--

parler pour ne pas mourir a eu un sens qui nous est maintenant étranger. Parler du héros ou en héros, vouloir faire quelque chose comme une oeuvre, parler pour que les autres en parlent à l'infini, parler pour la 'gloire', c'était bien s'avancer vers et contre cette mort que maintient le langage; parler comme les orateurs sacrés pour annoncer la mort, pour menacer les hommes de cette fin qui passe toute gloire, c'était encore la conjurer et lui promettre une immortalité. C'est autrement dire que toute oeuvre était faite pour s'achever, pour se taire dans un silence où la Parole infinie allait reprendre sa souveraineté. Dans l'oeuvre, le langage se protégeait de la mort par cette parole invisible, cette parole d'avant et d'après tous les temps dont elle se faisait seulement le reflet têt fermé sur lui-même. Le miroir à l'infini que tout langage fait naître dès qu'il se dresse à la verticale contre la mort, l'oeuvre ne le manifestait pas sans l'esquiver: elle plaçait l'infini hors d'elle-même,-- infini majestueux et réel dont elle se faisait le miroir virtuel, circulaire, achevé en une belle forme close" ("Le langage à l'infini" 48). The passage clearly evokes the dissolution of the exemplary status of monumental and antiquarian history. It also marks the eclipse of narrative as the story of a life, and the passing away of Man as the subject of history. *La Parole infinie* now becomes for Foucault the haunting murmur of death--"ce bruit inquiétant," "ce bruit indéfini et assourdissant" (48)--and the death of the fiction of the end undercuts any claim to recount the truth of an oeuvre as a closed totality. Pierre's demand for permanence in time in the sense of "sameness," an identity

constituted apart from an "absolute beginning, a beginning of time," also accounts for the displacement of narrative by uchronia, since narratives, according to Ricoeur's model, still have as their temporal horizon a world of actors and patients constellated about "the beginning, the middle, and the end of an action" that occurs within pure succession (OA 147).

17. Richard Gray (122) and Bernhard Radloff (58) note significant divergences between Pierre's logocentrism and fetishism of the image and Isabel's non-verbal and non-conceptual openness to dissolution and mystical atonement.

Chapter 2

In Search of Job's Whale:

Melville's *Moby-Dick*, *Mardi* and Beaulieu's *Voyageries*
as Apophatic Journeys of the Self

"Yes, as every one knows, meditation and water are wedded for ever."

- Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (13)

"Car, disait le vieux matelot déguisé en inspecteur de douanes, des millions d'ombres et de ténèbres entremêlées, des rêves noyés, des fantômes, tout ce que nous appelons vies et âmes sont là à rêver sans cesse, se tournant et se retournant comme des mauvais dormeurs dans leurs lits, et ainsi les vagues roulent sans arrêt sous leur fièvre."

- Victor-Lévy Beaulieu, "Melville-pot en finale Lowry" (EST 191)

In his *Destin littéraire du Québec*, Gérard Tougas remarks that "entre 1970, quand paraissent *La Nuitte de Malcom Hudd* et *Jos Connaissant*, et 1978, année où Beaulieu complète son *Monsieur Melville*...l'imaginaire québécois que le romancier édifiait avec bonheur de roman en roman à l'aide d'une langue populaire, teintée d'un discret académisme...tourne court et sombre dans la platitude narcissique." Tougas concludes that "Melville aura été pour Victor-Lévy Beaulieu le mauvais génie" (110). Oddly enough, though, given that appraisal, Tougas himself constructs the socio-historical model for *Destin littéraire du Québec* on the basis of "l'exemple américain" treated in his *Puissance littéraire des États-Unis* (11, 66).¹ This initial confluence

suggests not only divergent interpretations of Melville and his place in the American canon--a revealing *écart* between Tougas' "Melville" and Beaulieu's "Melville"--but also a different view of Melville's exemplarity, and consequently, the future of *québécois* literature, especially insofar as Tougas portrays Melville as the American Shakespeare, a view apparently shared by Beaulieu: "ce que Melville a été, c'est ce que je voudrais être" (see *Puissance* 146; *Melville* 1:23).

Tougas' model rests on the mediating function of "l'essence même de la nouvelle langue, la double série métaphorique," whose manifest form is a "prose mitoyenne," a writing "calqué sur la langue parlée de l'homme moyen" (*Destin* 68, 42, 70); his literary analyses accordingly privilege ideological and doxological claims rather than alethic and aesthetic judgments.² Tougas' statements in the way of prophesying--"La littérature qui compte échappe aux yeux du profane et révèle ses secrets à quelques esprits tournés vers l'essentiel," for example (9)--invite an ironic construing, then, since the "essence" his analysis uncovers is not a Platonic Idea but rather a structural concept. The historian approaches Nietzschean monumental history in this case with a religious scientificity that restricts the possibilities of artistic innovation and transgressive freedom. Although Tougas casts himself as a *haruspex* ("aruspice"[9]), his art of divination consists not of a hieratic but of a historicizing *modus operandi* that often rejoins a form of positivism; most notably, he designates "[l']avenir immédiat de la littérature québécoise" as "programmé d'avance" on the basis of the American

example (*Destin* 65).

In accordance with his teleological construction of Québec's literary history, Tougas finds in Beaulieu's work-in-progress a leading indicator of the gradual resolution of a basic linguistic problem: the stylistic mediation between "facticity" and "vulgarity" (104; see 95).³ As a consequence of Beaulieu's appropriation of the Melvillean imaginary, however, the author "s'est embourgeoisé au point que sa langue, vidée du substrat populaire, apparaît dans toute son indigence" (110). Beaulieu deviates extravagantly from Tougas' normative model, and thus compels the historian of power to critical violence; similarly, the intersection of two distinct literary cultures is reduced to a Penelope's web in literary history: "Melville aura été pour Victor-Lévy Beaulieu le mauvais génie," whose power of fascination possessed the author with a sudden passion for effeminized prose and "la platitude narcissique" (110).

Tougas' own view of literary history, however, remains eminently narcissistic: "Ce n'est pas le passé qui nous instruit sur le passé, mais le futur," he writes. "Le Québec est en passe de devenir une nation littéraire côtoyant ce futur qui refait le passé à son image.... [S]ous l'impulsion de son devenir, le Québec discerne, plus clairement que par le passé, son passé, et crée son futur à partir de son présent" (*Destin* 148; see 183).⁴ Examined in terms of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics of history, *Destin littéraire du Québec* figures within the leading kind of the "Same," wherein the present effectively totalizes the field of historical consciousness. Tougas' preoccupation with power as

a determining factor leads him to reconstitute a master-consciousness under the aegis of monumental history. His model, as a logical consequence, works to reproduce past or projected exclusions in order to be faithful to its constitutive schema. Beaulieu's project, however, challenges the very common sense belief and triumphalism that Tougas deems inexorable (see *Puissance* 133). As Beaulieu asks in a discussion of his *rêve québécois*, "que pourrions-nous bien être si nous voulons être rien et nous donner malgré tout l'illusion d'être quelque chose?" (*EST* 18-19).

Beaulieu, undoubtedly, invites being construed as an *auteur manqué*. As he states in "L'écrivain québécois et la question nationale," he adopts a "refus global" of all identitarian thinking, even to the point where "aucune certitude, ni québécoise, ni occidentale, ni autre" remains intact (*EST* 388, 391). Beaulieu fictionalizes himself via his literary persona *Beauchemin* and his shifting masks, as "un Don Quichotte imprécis dans ma course éperdue de vie multiple" (392). A hyperbolic order of doubt erodes the ground of all fixity and certainty, freedom expressing itself in an explicitly Promethean refusal. As Ricoeur characterizes it, "hyperbole" is the strategic and "systematic practice of excess" in philosophical discourse (*OA* 337). Although Ricoeur opposes this philosophical use of hyperbole to its literary or tropological function, his own theory of the imagination suggests that an analogous *practice of excess* can be found on the side of fiction, and with similar effects. Insofar as fiction suspends historical time and the

historical given, it too has, as its zero degree, what Ricoeur calls "the Cartesian moment: free choice in the realm of the imaginary"; and it is also this imaginative "neutralization" that allows for "the free play of possibilities" on the side of the reader (*TN* 3:177; *TA* 174). The aim of this chapter, then, is to demonstrate, first, that Beaulieu and Melville narrativize an order of hyperbolic doubt comparable to that which Ricoeur detects in the work of Descartes, Nietzsche and Levinas; and, furthermore, that this narrativization also bears to some extent an excess in relation to the more "systematic," "critical" or "philosophical" uses of hyperbole. This excess pertains to the mimetic or redescriptive function of narrative and to the play of the imagination insofar as it refigures the "everyday" through the projection of an inhabitable world or the proposal of a mode of being-in-the-world.⁵

In *Monsieur Melville*, Beauchemin portrays the ego as a "prétexte," and then asks:

De quoi rendre compte alors? *De quel lieu qui en soi est le vrai?* / De vouloir seulement répondre à cette question est déjà toute une reddition. Car alors je suis obligé de m'interroger non plus seulement sur moi mais sur tout ce qui m'entoure, sur la société dans laquelle je vis et qui n'est mienne que parce que j'y suis né, qui m'impose ses règles et son jeu, de sorte que si je suis moi c'est à mon corps défendant, ce que j'exprime souvent par le refus. (1:19; emphasis added)

Beaulieu's "refus global" of finitude and historicity rejoins

what Tyrus Hillway has hailed as Melville's "'Everlasting No'"; indeed, in his three volumes on *Monsieur Melville*, Beaulieu repeatedly underscores Melville's "non obstiné" and "la souveraineté de son refus" (1:35).⁶ This refusal responds to the contingency of birth with an act of withdrawal from the world in which consciousness posits itself at a distance from the body. As Eva-Marie Kröller remarks in a comparative study of Melville's and Beaulieu's poetics, this "reddition" seems symptomatic of modern revisionism. Paul de Man's seminal analysis of the aporias in Nietzsche's "On the uses and disadvantages of history for life" likewise circumscribes the "mood" or "attitude" of modernity as the impossible desire for a clean break with the past and a radical renewal in the present finally become a "true present," a place (*lieu*) where truth in itself (*en soi*) would abide ("Literary History and Literary Modernity" 148). Read within such an untimely model, of course, Beaulieu and Melville would seem to outrun the sort of ideological closure implied by Tougas' structuralist discourse.⁷ Furthermore, such a "dehistoricized" perspective presents the distinct advantage of abolishing the historical distance between Melville and Beaulieu and thus legitimating a *rapprochement* on a level other than that of historical culture.⁸ Lastly, it solves what Kröller advances as a problem from a post-colonial perspective, namely Melville's belonging to a republic that has since become an imperialistic superpower. She suggests that construing Melville as a utopian visionary constitutes a possible "remedy" to these pathological effects of ideology and history (54).

Beaulieu's emphasis on the sovereignty of Melville's refusal clearly positions Melville, in this respect at least, in a space relatively subversive of any colonizing discourse. It also reveals the *écart* between Beaulieu's "Melville" and Tougas' "Melville," as evidenced by Tougas' conclusion that "Melville...se fait l'interprète des Américains plutôt que de l'humanité" (*Puissance* 168), an assertion bound to astonish most Melville scholars attentive to the novelist's representations of Anacharsis Clootz deputations (cf. *MD* 108; *TCM* 14). Beaulieu's vision of Québec's literary destiny does not differ, initially at least, from Tougas' *Le destin littéraire du Québec* insofar as they both employ American literary culture as a wellspring for their project, a project based on Québec's emergence as a world-oriented society and, whether explicitly or implicitly, on the nationalist dream of political sovereignty.⁹ While Tougas as an historian of power ultimately perceives the simple reduplication or approximation of the American model as unproblematical, inclusive of much of its political culture and ideology, Beaulieu reads in America's now most critically esteemed author an effort to subvert a presence he can neither accept nor entirely refuse: if Beaulieu is fascinated with Melville, he is also fascinated with America. Melville belongs to the canon of literary history just as America embodies a very palpable force in history; hence, to say that Beaulieu simply refuses the historical present and the traditionality of literature is to avoid the paradoxes, equivocations and aporias generated by his work.

In *Don Quichotte de la Démanche*, the errant knight speaks of "ce refus que vous vous faites de l'Amérique et dans cette acception que vous vous faites aussi, en une apparente contradiction, si subtile qu'il faut ouvrir grand les yeux pour comprendre qu'elle est parfaitement logique et même astucieuse" (258). The logic of Beaulieu's equivocal position is itself concealed beneath the ambiguity of history. That syntax is informed by the desire at once to be part of the historical present and yet also to surpass *this* history by abiding to the call, not necessarily of another time as such, but rather of another mode of being in relation to time and to the present. This "otherness" can be approached first and foremost by way of the excess in Melville's work in relation to the official record of literary history, since (according to Beaulieu) no reader has ever glimpsed the "essential" in their works. In *Monsieur Melville*, he envisions all writing as nothing more than death: "Mort de soi-même parce que mort de toutes les images de soi-même. Mort de tout avenir linéaire parce que mort de tout ce qui en moi me possède." Beaulieu portrays this annihilation of the multiple avatars of the self as an attempt to attain sainthood, a self-apophasis that harkens to "tout ce qui ne cesse pas de venir mais n'arrive jamais, tout ce qui se refuse [chez lui] à n'être que québécois comme, en Melville, tout ce qui se refusait à n'être qu'américain" (3:126). Beyond all nationalisms, Beaulieu identifies with Melville by way of this common refusal of ideological sameness, a refusal which amounts to a denial of the very History that marginalizes him, "la présence américaine, ce

par quoi je suis annihilé," and that renders otherness and his utopian concept of man almost impossible (*Melville* 3:126; comp. *EST* 464).

Paradoxically, this self-apophasis is both modern and amodern. Beaulieu rejects the history of Western metaphysics in the name of a post-History, a uchronia modeled on the Eastern way of non-violence and nondualism. He approaches the aporias of modernity, the symptoms of which De Man detects in the seminal reflections of the young Nietzsche, with an Eastern mindset, for which the aporias produced by thinking at the limit are not simply indicative of the insuperable boundaries of a language game, but rather the sought-after occasion to promote the ineffable.⁹ As Loy points out in his Mahayana critique of Jacques Derrida, "language/thought," in the Buddhistic view, "is no longer the means...nor even the end...but the problem itself." "Philosophy," he goes on to argue, "cannot grasp what it seeks in any of its categories, but, as language becoming self-conscious of its function, it can learn to 'undo' itself and cease to be an obstruction, in that way allowing what we have long sought to manifest itself" (61). In a way that remains consistent with Loy's argument, this chapter will focus on some of the ways in which, through their very self-referentiality and self-reflexivity, the works of Beaulieu and Melville tend to "undo" themselves in the paradoxical breaking-forth of a *clôture* to the text of Western history, an apocalypse of the Book that oddly prefigures an alternative mode of being-in-the-world beyond the closed horizon of a grammar of Being--a world no longer

experienced as *samsara* but as *nirvana*. It goes without saying that "*in language, such a possibility cannot be proven or disproven*" (Loy, "Clôture" 80). Yet, if the emphasis is placed instead on the power of world-disclosure yielded by texts, as it is in Ricoeur's hermeneutics, then the reader can certainly *imagine* such a possibility from *within* language. Between Loy's *clôture* and Ricoeur's disclosure, the works of Melville and Beaulieu anticipate a metamorphosis in the imaginative being of thought and language.

Beaulieu makes the *terminus ad quem* of his Melvillean odyssey quite explicit: "Cette recherche que j'ai entreprise, c'est celle d'essayer de comprendre ce qui fait que je suis tenu au monde circulaire alors que tout devrait me forcer à la verticalité et à d'autres définitions de moi-même" (*Melville* 1:22). Melville interests Beaulieu as "une grande exception" that will provide an analogue of the crisis inherent in his own project, a crisis represented diagrammatically by a vicious circle. Beaulieu's longing for verticality expresses a desire to escape this circularity in the direction of an undetermined and perhaps unrepresentable totality. In accordance with "a concept of history based on phenomenology," Kröller advances "the whiteness of Moby Dick's skin" as a metaphorical incursion into this "new space" (57; see 55). She then ascribes the rhetoric of blankness to the utopian imaginary. Given the purely visual and undifferentiated aspect of whiteness, however, the logic of *uchronia* seems more consistent with the usage of this symbol; Kröller admits, after all, that this new space is

"synchronic" (56).

In his phenomenological analysis of *Moby-Dick*, Paul Brodtkorb writes that, by its suggesting of "muteness and universality," whiteness "escapes time" (119); it effectively implies a "vertical movement" away from the "horizontalness of time" (101). The theme of eternity, as Brodtkorb observes, also traverses Melville's description of whales:

Because the "Sperm Whale blows as a clock ticks, with the same undeviating and reliable uniformity" (XLVII), the whale is a kind of living clock; but also, says Ishmael, "I am horror-struck at this ante-mosaic, unsourced existence of the unspeakable terrors of the whale, which having been before all time, must needs exist after all humane ages are over" (CIV). Itself incarnating time, the whale outspans the limits of time; or, more accurately, "we account the whale immortal in his species, however perishable in his individuality" (CV). The whale exists in time, but 'he idea of whales suggests the impingement of eternity on time.

(95)

Indeed, Ishmael refers to "the unearthly conceit that Moby Dick was ubiquitous; that he had actually been encountered in opposite latitudes at one and the same instant of time" and that, consequently, he was "not only ubiquitous, but immortal (for immortality is but ubiquity in time)" (*MD* 158). In this symbolization of "Moby Dick," Melville appeals to something like the Augustinian *nunc stans*, or the eternal present, which exceeds all the limits made *thinkable* by a determined, historicized

logos, since it transfixes the horizontality of cosmological and mortal time, being both "in" and "beyond" time. Hence, Melville's evocation of a so-called "new space" actually constitutes an endeavour to adumbrate an image of eternity that exceeds both the strictly philosophical boundaries of a phenomenology of time-consciousness and the empirical constraints of a physics of time.

In *Mardi's* "Time and Temples," the narrator's meditation on the relation of time to eternity once more recalls Augustine's distinction that "in eternity nothing moves into the past: all is present," whereas "time...is never all present at once" (qtd *TN* 3:333, n. 29). Likewise, for the narrator of *Mardi*, "duration is not of the future but of the past; and eternity is eternal, because it has been" (204). The "germ" of all future is past for the eternal, whose ontological state corresponds to the Platonic *aei aenai* or being-for-ever. According to Melville's analogy in "Time and Temples," the works and temples of man are only artful fashionings of the actual building-"blocks" or "stones formless" that are the potentiality of primordial being and primordial temporality, the "dumb I AM" of "The Great Pyramid," for "in all the universe is but one original; and the very suns must to their source for their fire; and we Prometheuses must to them for ours" (*CP* 255; *M* 204). Time thus becomes, in Ricoeur's words, "an always already presupposed ground" that emerges "on the side of what, in one way or another, is the true master of meaning" (*TN* 3:261; see 1:22-30).

When Beaulieu summons the phantom of Melville from across

the great divide, the latter speaks of death as "un temps où tout se prend comme dans un pain, curieuse force centrifuge qui fait qu'on est toujours dans le présent...avec tout ce qui fut et continue d'être, sauf que ça se produit désormais sans mémoire, dans la permanence de l'épiphanie" (*Melville* 1:38; 26). The eternal present represents a conceptual image of the oneness of the manifold that allows reason *a priori* to think of time as a collective singular; yet, as Beaulieu also suggests, it defies all "reference" because it points to the inscrutability of time as such. According to Melville, this "Infinite" totality may differ "in incident, [but] not in essence" (*M* 205). Hence, eternity effectively represents the "true present" to which modernity aspires through the kind of forgetfulness that Nietzsche first describes as the unhistorical, carefree existence of animals, yet in the decidedly less modern, suprahuman form of being-for-ever. Interestingly, in the very text upon which De Man grounds his reading of modernity, the possibility of this "eternal now" is marked out; yet ironically, De Man is blind to Nietzsche's insight. And this blindness seems especially conspicuous in that the relation of the "eternal now" to the "now" of pure succession remains the basic ontological difference that subtends De Man's entire analysis. To reclaim this alternative way of envisioning the unresolved problem of modernity, it would seem helpful to return to the source of De Man's interpretation.

Following Nietzsche's typology in "On the uses and disadvantages of history for life," the "essence" to which

Melville refers might be termed the "suprahistorical," the second of the "poisons" or "counterpoisons" Nietzsche envisions as "the natural antidotes to the stifling of life by the historical, by the malady of history" as objectifying thought (UM 121).

Phenomenologically speaking, the suprahistorical manifests all the traits Brodtkorb and Kröller attribute to Moby Dick:

I call 'suprahistorical' the power which lead[s] the eye away from becoming towards that which bestows upon existence the character of the eternal and stable, towards art and religion. Science...sees in these two forces hostile forces: for science considers the only right and true way of regarding things...as being that which sees everywhere things that have been, things historical and nowhere things that are, things eternal; it likewise lives in a profound antagonism towards the eternalizing powers of art and religion, for it hates forgetting, which is the death of knowledge.... (120)

The suprahistorical offers an escape from the endless flux of historical becoming, or the Augustinian *distentio animi*, that simultaneously relativizes the truth of finitude, temporality and historicity.

In "The Fountain," Ishmael depicts the whale spout as such a "poisonous," disfiguring and blinding power. The motif of blindness traverses *Moby-Dick*, and in every instance, it seems to raise questions regarding the limits of human knowledge in relation to the suprahistorical. Ishmael tells of "one, who, coming into still closer contact with the spout, whether with

some *scientific object in view*, or otherwise, I cannot say, the skin peeled off from his cheek and arm" (313; emphasis added). The "mystifying" enigma of the spout is clearly framed in terms of time:

That for six thousand years--and no one knows how many millions of ages before--the great whales should have been spouting all over the sea...and yet, that down to this blessed minute (fifteen and a quarter minutes past one o'clock P.M. of this sixteenth day of December, A.D. 1850), it should still remain a problem, whether these spoutings are, after all, really water, or nothing but vapor--this is surely a noteworthy thing. (*MD* 310)

The specificity and the measurability of chronological and calendar time contrast with the incommensurable interval of time during which the cipher has remained sealed only to be approached now in the point-like present. Like the "heavenly chronometers" or "chronometricals" in *Pierre*, whales possess their own internal time (see *P* 246): like the God of Genesis, "the Sperm Whale only breathes about one seventh or Sunday of his time" and "if unmolested, upon rising to the surface, [he] will continue there for a period of time exactly uniform with all his other unmolested risings" (*MD* 311). The Sperm Whale lives on the uneasy margins between the deep of eternity and the dangers of the "upper world." Eternity both traverses and encompasses time and so it finds its "vivifying principle" in this surface world. Consequently, Ishmael can seek to understand the "fountain of the whale" through "scientific" concepts, just as humankind can

seemingly disrupt the calm of eternity through its manipulative technological undertakings. In Beaulieu's *Una*, the instrumental violence of the man-of-war world becomes so overwhelming that the whale in which *Una* lives must transform itself into a sidereal "blanc d'espace" distant from the horizon of History and ordinary human time (232).

Mortal reason can never reach any "absolute certainty" concerning "the mystery of the spout." The "snowy sparkling mist" that conceals "it" leads only to indecision (*MD* 312, 313). The narrator of *Moby-Dick* thus ventures an "hypothesis": he claims that this spout is "nothing but mist," and yet that it bears the secret imprint of "incommunicable meditations" centered on "Heaven" and "Eternity" (313-314). Says Ishmael, "I have heard it said...that if the jet is fairly spouted into your eyes, it will blind you. The wisest thing the investigator can do...is to let this deadly spout alone" (313). This blindness represents the dead spot of science: the noumenon or the unconditioned. The vertical whale spout is deadly to a science of appearances and a scientific gaze, because it designates the "eternal and stable" that eludes positive reason's continually backsliding search for phenomenal traces "upon an infinite and unbounded sea of light whose light is knowledge of all becoming" (*UM* 120). Ahab's pursuit of Job's whale can thus be construed as a quest after the meaning of eternity, and hence, the truth of all becoming. Beaulieu's reading and re-writing of *Moby-Dick* would tend to support such a hypothesis.

In his journal entry for November 26, 1964, Beaulieu ponders

the significance of dreams, concluding that "lorsqu'on aura pénétré le songe, il n'y aura plus rien à trouver" (EST 39). *Les Voyageries (I-VI)* narrativize an apophatic journey of the self that carries out this early programme of meditation. Through his persona Beauchemin, Beaulieu himself embarks upon a meditative voyage in order to plumb the hidden depths of the Cartesian Age *somnium*, one (like Ishmael's 'voyage of mind') that often encounters the "demonisms" of the evil genius and the "blind wall" of solipsism (MD 160, 427). In *Don Quichotte de la Démanche*, for instance, Beauchemin asks, "L'espace, n'était-ce finalement que la projection subtile de soi-même dans un paysage dont on tentait par ailleurs et désespérément de se déprendre?" (22). Beyond the quixotic world of simulacra and illusion, however, lies the *terminus ad quem* of Beaulieu's progress towards a realization of *Mahat*, or the cosmic mind, "l'Énergie originelle et finale, lieu de la fermeture du Temps, de la Durée, du Mouvement des cycles du monde" (EST 103; comp. DQ 251-52). This unity of being is the aim of sainthood, or the wisdom of woe, that can be attained only once consciousness has freed itself from all its false avatars and its metaphysical anguish (cf. "Être écrivain québécois," in EST 253; see also *Samm* 61).

Beaulieu's *Voyageries* can be represented as a vast circular odyssey of the spirit that moves from the throes of hyperbolic doubt towards the quietude of hyperbolic consent, as in the philosophy of his spiritual guru Vivekânanda, who describes the "goal" of *The Vedanta Philosophy* as follows:

If a man is deluded by a mirage for some time, but one day

the mirage disappears, if it comes back again the next day or at some future time, he will not be deluded. Before the mirage first broke, the man could not distinguish between the reality and the deception. But when it has once broken, as long as he has organs and eyes to work with, he will have to see images, but will no more be deluded.... So when the Vedantist has realized his own nature, the whole world has vanished for him. It will come back again, but no more the same world of misery. The prison of misery has become changed into Sat, Cit, Ananda,-- Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.... (15)

In Beaulieu's "L'île aux Basques comme démonstration de l'impuissance," Bobi revives "la parole de Vivekananda [sic], oubliée depuis des siècles," and attains this same "certitude" by resolving himself with "l'Idée de l'univers," or alternatively, "le formidable Rien du monde," in a vision of "le paradis de la lumière noire" (EST 102-3). Albeit different as to its ontological and epistemological significance, such a certainty established by an absolute subject in the midst of systematic doubt evinces the same formal circularity as Descartes' effort to demonstrate the apodicticity and the immediacy of the transcendental ego by suspending the world of the given. Like the Advaita philosophy, Cartesian meditation moves from hyperbolic doubt to affirmation and belief, yet its end term is a return to the corporeal world of objects, whereas Eastern philosophy seeks to transcend this delusive vision of the everyday world (*prapanca*) and to transgress the subject-object dichotomy and its

ontological commitments, understood as the root cause of suffering or *duhka* (see Vivekânanda 19-23).

Moreover, once a "certainty" of this order is assured by the very method or approach of philosophizing, it seems that it can be displaced only by an additional excess of doubt. Beaulieu's terrorist poetics levels a suspicion of precisely such an order at the substantialist illusion of the self-identical ego, the master-consciousness of history and of narrative realism, by demonstrating its solipsistic tendency and the eternal rebirth of terror that it engenders (cf. *EST* 79, 90). This subversion itself aims to surpass Western logocentrism in the silencing of all ontologizing thought, adopting language as a *via negativa*, a trait common to both Nagajurna's Buddhistic anti-philosophy and Vivekânanda's Advaita Vedanta. Like all forms of idealism, the Advaita philosophy aims to reconcile thought and being in a super-consciousness, yet it does so only by relinquishing egology and its will to truth. The enlightened Vedantist has not totalized history in a system of the Hegelian type, but rather has realized his religion and thus abolished all speculative systems, which realization Beaulieu explicitly sets as his goal in his journal (see *EST* 44; cf. Vivekânanda 22). This fundamental difference goes a long way towards explaining Tougas' misreading of Beaulieu's *Voyageries*, since the historian quite obviously works strictly within a Western frame of reference.

The very quality that Tougas admires in Beaulieu, namely his capacity to appropriate elements of the *québécois* imaginary in a second-order discourse, subsists throughout Beaulieu's "lecture-

fiction" and re-writing of Melville but at the level of a more transgressive imaginary. Indeed, it is through this exercise in interpretation that Beaulieu appropriates the metaphysical problems from Melville's oeuvre that he acts out in such novels as *Don Quichotte de la Démanche*, *Un rêve québécois*, and *Les Voyageries*. As Tougas suggests, Melville certainly seems to have a demonic effect on Beaulieu. After reading *Moby-Dick*, for instance, as if ravished by Melville's prose, Beauchemin describes a state of anguish wherein existential difference has become total: "Écrasé, je suis écrasé, et c'est tout vide en-dedans de moi, comme s'il n'y avait jamais rien eu, ni ma naissance ni l'écriture de ce qui a persisté à se dire en moi bien que se taisant" (*Melville* 2:273). *Mardi* also transforms him into a "victime melvillienne, incapable de réflexion," a victim possessed of "une absurde idée: se débarrasser enfin de moi pour devenir...une indéterminable folie" (2:156-57). It is this monomania for the unformed that Tougas excludes when he substitutes a commentary on "whiteness" in Poe's *Narrative of A. Gordon Pym* for any thoroughgoing exegesis of *Moby-Dick*'s "The Whiteness of the Whale." Tougas argues for the invariance of the authors' metaphorizations of whiteness on the basis of certain textual and thematic similarities, yet the rhetorical sleight of hand conceals a critical occlusion that transpires *sous ratures*.¹¹ Beaulieu, on the contrary, believes that "cette utilisation de la blancheur, voilà ce qui distingue Melville de tous les autres écrivains; et voilà ce qui constitue le noeud même de *Moby Dick* et en bouleverse toutes les données" (*Melville*

2:253). The Gordian knot of whiteness specifically pertains to the question of hyperbolic doubt and hyperbolic consent in Melville and Beaulieu's works. *Blanche forcée*, like *Sagamo Job J* and *Una*, attests to Beaulieu's mimetic appropriation of this truly singular aspect of the Melvillean imaginary.

Melville's "The Whiteness of the Whale" enacts a gesture towards the suprahistorical that develops the tension between the finite and the infinite in the constricting space of metaphysical anguish. If, as Ricoeur argues, Descartes assures the safety of the meditating Cogito by maintaining its will to truth, then Melville risks more than Descartes in that he privileges the imagination itself and its affective impressions. Hence, Brodtkorb suggests that the author "twist[s] Descartes" so that "Ishmael *knows* only because he fears; perhaps...at this point he is only because he fears" (117).¹² It is this experience of anguish that Beaulieu recaptures so well in his "hystérie...sans limites bien que passive" (*Melville* 2:273). Furthermore, if in the order of perfection Descartes exorcises the evil genius and grounds the truth of his finitude, his temporality and the object-world by way of his belief in a benevolent Other, then Melville again goes further by portraying Ahab's tragic or hidden god as a malign genius.¹³ Melville thus invokes a "theology of blinding" that has rarely been assumed by speculation, yet which preserves its tragic resonance precisely in myth and drama. This tragic theology is evoked in particular by Ahab's apprehension of existential difference. "Is Ahab, Ahab?" he asks (*MD* 445). Among the manifestations of the Other, the deceiving God precedes

the evil genius in the Cartesian meditation, and undoubtedly points to a strategic exclusion, albeit ostensibly in favour of a more radical order of doubt.¹⁴ The question of the charity or the enormity of God clearly lies at the core of *Moby-Dick's* metaphysical doubt; and the "knowledge of the demonism in the world" represents the primordial concern of the "white-lead chapter about whiteness" (168, 169).

According to Beaulieu, whiteness as "l'absence de toute certitude," the *Abgrund*, constitutes "le pré-requis à l'hallucination" (*Melville* 2:254). Ricoeur maintains that "left to itself, the 'I' of the cogito is Sisyphus condemned, from one instant to the next, to push up the rock of its certainty, fighting the slope of doubt" (OA 9). Ahab's longing for the "absolute code" (Krölller 59) requires God as the divine guarantor; hence, the anguish of Sisyphus traverses his questionings, such as "how...can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does that living, and not I" (*MD* 445). As a "man of eternity," Ahab longs for certainty and permanence, but as a being who is lacking, he experiences only the sadness of the finite as a kind of fateful emasculation (see *Melville* 3:16).

The "meaning of that story of Narcissus" and his "tormenting, mild image," the "image of the ungraspable phantom of life," would seem to constitute a hermeneutical "key" to *Moby-Dick* in its textual entirety (14). Beaulieu also incorporates the problem of narcissism in his "écriture hallucinante" (*Melville* 2:133). "L'angoisse est circulaire," he writes, while

Melville conveys this vicious circle of existential difference through Ahab's "close-coiled woe" in "The Symphony" (*EST* 383; *MD* 443). While Ahab's perspective remains theocentric throughout *Moby-Dick*, the gaze of the Holy Other has effectively become that of the Wholly Other. The epigraph from Job that appears in the epilogue and the reference to Moby Dick as "a Job's whale" suggest that the novel is in some sense a re-writing of Job (*MD* 162). Beaulieu understood the importance of the crisis in theodicy in Melville's work so well that when he re-envisioned *Moby-Dick* in *Blanche forcée*, he made the hero of his book not Ishmael but Job himself: "Comment je m'appelle, ç'a pas si tellement d'importance. Mettons Job J Jobin" (*Bf* 13). The tragedy of Job, of course, is the dramatized hypothesis of the suffering just, the story of the unhappy consciousness unable to reconcile itself with the apparent injustice of the world. Job J Jobin suggests that the hermeneutical key to *Blanche forcée* lies in "le sens de l'entrelacs que forment mes initiales" (13). The always incomplete stutter of "J-(e)" in Job J Jobin suggests the incompleteness of the individualized ego, a fractured I that cannot actualize itself but rather continually reiterates the tragedy of Job in a narcissistic circle whose center is the void of anguish: Job J Jobin Job J Jobin Job.... The "image of the ungraspable phantom of life" (*MD* 14) thus haunts the meditations of both Ishmael and Job J, caught as they are in the images refracted by fluid surfaces.

If Melville makes use of Job's Leviathan as a symbol of God's "Titanism of power" (*MD* 315), then Beaulieu employs Job's

Behemoth to like purpose. According to the editors of the *New Jerusalem Bible*, Behemoth represents "the hippopotamus, [a] symbol of brute force, controlled by God but beyond human power to tame" (805, n. f). Says the Old Testament God, "But look at Behemoth, my creature... Who is going to catch him by the eyes or put poles through his nose?" (Jb 40:15, 23-24). In *Un rêve québécois*, Barthélémy is terrorized by Behemoth as the Wholly Other, as "le monde [qui] se gonflait de sa souffrance." In its "toute-puissance," this "monde-hippopotame" symbolizes the Absolute Seeing of the Other become the "hargne" of the evil genius (RQ 119; see SE 85). Barthélémy also suffers from hallucinations and torments induced by "les démons invisibles mais tout-puissants," just as Ahab is pursued by the fire-gods sent to destroy him and decries the "mastery" of the "personified impersonal," its "speechless, placeless power" over him (RQ 43; MD 417). Hyperbolic doubt thus attains the apex of dis-ease in the apprehension of an Absolute Seeing become inimical to life.

In *Blanche forcée* and *Sagamo Job J*, Job J Jobin hopes to overcome his metaphysical, historical and existential anguish, depicted as *maya*, *samsara* and *avidya*, by attaining *nirvana* or *samadhi*. Job's whale, a cipher of the One in the manifold, would represent a monumental Eastern koan so that "celui qui connaîtrait parfaitement le monde de Ventre-de-soufre, son organisation, son fonctionnement et sa mort, celui-là saurait tout, aurait envalé tout l'univers par sa grande bouche et serait pris avec ça dans la gorge" (Bf 138). Job, however, chooses to adopt neither Ahab's search for the absolute code nor Ishmael's

sketch of a fragmentary one; instead, he studies Confucianism to attain "la vérité vrai" of the whale, a phrase he incessantly repeats like an Eastern koan, just as an ideogram of the whale appears on every page of the cycle of *Les Voyageries*, amounting to roughly 1700 whales (*Bf* 144). Reading Beaulieu's *oeuvre*, consequently, means accepting an invitation to meditate on the one truth and engaging language itself as a *via negativa*, as exemplified by Vivekânanda's use of the phrase *neti, neti*, meaning 'not this, not this' (see Vivekânanda 19).

Beaulieu's novel *Una* opens with an epigraph from the Buddha, "Nous vivons dans la peur et c'est ainsi que nous vivons pas"-- and at one point, Job tells Una how he defeated his fear of Blanche "pour plus mourir dans ma peur d'elle" (*Una* 68). In *Sagamo Job J*, to forget Blanche means to forget the karmic projections of *maya* and to attain the Absolute through Ruth/*samsara*, through the wisdom of woe or *la sainteté*:

De grands sillons blancs entre Ruth et toi. Ça sortait de la bouche de Ruth pour entrer dans ta bouche à toi et ça se promenait dans tout ton corps, pleins d'odeurs et de reconnaissance, débarrassés de toute terreur et de toute angoisse. Ça ouvrait toutes les portes des sens en même temps. Ça te faisait oublier Blanche. (*SJJ* 78)

Once the truth of the interconnectedness or interconditionality of all "things" has been received in this quite Blakean fashion, hyperbolic consent becomes possible, since the personalized ego has been silenced in this blankness that is no longer absolutely Other, no longer the anguishing "absence" of Blanche. The author

symbolizes Job's non-attachment by way of the open hand that neither retains ("rien retenir") nor detains ("rien détenir") any particular thing but allows the oneness of being to manifest itself in and through oneself by resolving oneself with *sunyata* (devoidness, lack of being).

As Loy argues in "The Deconstruction of Buddhism," such a transvaluation implies relinquishing a logocentric paradigm of "truth as grasping the concepts that grasp Being" and its displacement by "a sense of mystery, of being part of something that we can never grasp, since we are a manifestation of it" (250, 247). By contrast, Beaulieu portrays the will to knowledge/power and the instrumentalization of Nature as a will to rape and plunder, just as in Melville's "The Whiteness of the Whale" "deified Nature" turns "harlot" under the "atheistic" gaze of the "natural philosophers" (*MD* 169-70). In *Blanche forcée*, Blanche's father Charles molests her at a young age. As a result of this violation, Blanche manifests a "refus" that eventually culminates in a "silencieuse folie" or "mutisme." Indeed, like the mute at the very beginning of *The Confidence-Man*, she wears around her neck a pad of paper on which she writes. An ambulant text, she bears no sign of "Charity," however, but rather the indelible imprint of the father's manipulative domination: "c'était pas le bloc que je voyais mais la main de Charles, étampée là pour le reste de son règne" (*Bf* 188). Inviolable silence and blankness alone will henceforth retain the possibility of a nondualistic, non-objectifying form of thinking in Beaulieu's poetics, depending on whether it is approached with

a heavy or open hand. In the opening pages of *The Confidence-Man*, the "stranger," described as a "lamb-like figure," falls into a mood of "tired abstraction and dreaminess" once the Pauline hymn to love has been rejected or tempered by the law of "No Trust"; like Blanche, he too becomes a "motionless" and "white placidity" (*TCM* 10-11). Beaulieu's symbolic understanding of whiteness suggests that the critical reduction of Melville's oeuvre to a confidence game obscures a possibility more fundamental than the interpretation of an interpretation of an interpretation. Beyond the ventriloquial babble of voices that has fallen deaf to the call of the Other, there is also the possibility of keeping silent and listening.

For Beaulieu, "le pouvoir procède toujours par exclusion" (*Melville* 1:73). In his "L'émergence du refus," Beaulieu addresses Québec's relation to "[le] grand cancer américain" as the latest avatar of monumental history, concluding that "entrer dans l'Histoire, c'est entrer dans le meurtre et le viol collectifs puisque pas de pouvoir sans violence, puisque pas de pouvoir sans ce qui corrompt, et assassine, et fait saigner" (*EST* 454). The post-historical perspective that Beaulieu adopts as a result of this refusal of modernity also informs his reading of *Moby Dick*'s whiteness as "tout à la fois la démocratie et son envers, l'évolution même du monde blanc, sa monstrueuse machinerie" (*Melville* 2:254). In his reading of "The Whiteness of the Whale," he comments that "Moby Dick est une plénitude de sens et son absence même, tout à la fois Dieu et Diable, pureté et déraison, tous les désirs: la grande baleine est ce qui est,

secret et connaissance du secret, connaissance du secret et ce qui, indéfiniment, secrète le secret, c'est-à-dire le secret même" (*Melville* 2:232). Hence, the "mystery" of Being or Nothingness infinitely secretes itself. But it is the will to truth/power as knowledge of the secret that would seem to be the root cause of all anguish, because it divides the secret in itself. One calls the secret forth as secret by distancing oneself from "ce qui est" in the denegation of *sunyata* and the grasping after self-presence through the concepts that grasp at Being.

In *Moby-Dick*, the gaze of self-reliant, "atheistic" humanity is itself characterized by its "lack" of a ground, as evidenced by the "blank tinge" of "the great principle of light, for ever...white or colorless in itself," which "operating without medium upon matter," purges all non-conceptual "significance" from the "round world" and, consequently, transforms it into an "empty cipher" (169, 170, 358). Similarly, in "The Chart," Ahab's Promethean project mobilizes the "sane means" of instrumental reason, and yet his absolutistic quest leads only to a terrific "unbidden and unfathered birth," a "formless somnabulistic being, a ray of living light...but without an object to color, and therefore a blankness in itself" (175). In Aeschylus' play, Prometheus' foresight consists precisely of the "secret" that can annihilate the gods. Ahab himself represents the great biblical idolator; yet as "Prometheus," he also assumes the role of "manmaker." His "complete man after a desirable pattern" represents the Melvillean Isolato as self-positing

Cogito *tout pur*, a Titan "fifty feet high" with "no heart at all...about a quarter of an acre of fine brains...[no] eyes to see outwards...and a sky-light on top of his head to illuminate inwards"; it is an "indifferent architecture" and "a blind dome" (390). To the positing of the foundational subject of Enlightenment reason thus corresponds (to recall Heidegger's famous critique of Descartes) the proposition of the world as *Bild*, as the theater of representation. The truth-claims of empirical knowledge emerge as a theft of light, a "mechanical" (417) determination of the "dumb" yet truly generative "blankness" of Being or Nothingness--a theft, moreover, that plunges man into an idolatry of his own representations so that effectively "the wretched infidel gazes himself blind at the monumental white shroud that wraps all the prospect around him" (170). Terrorized by the "heartless voids" and "Descartesian vortices" of Nature, the Cartesian mind responds by imposing form upon the abyss (169, 140).¹⁵

Inversely, in *Sagamo Job J*, Job J Jobin's reconciliation with the immortal sadness and love of Ruth is evoked by word-images that are called upon to abolish themselves in the blankness and nakedness of the page:

Vous étiez comme des images l'un pour l'autre, d'une minceur étrange, à voir au travers, cette nudité qui n'avait rien à voir avec celle de vos corps, inexprimable parce qu'elle se vivait avec trop d'intensité pour ne pas faire disparaître les mots au fur et à mesure qu'ils étaient dits. (*SJJ* 78)

In the tranquillity of Job's ineffable union with the Ruth, "tout

ça ne faisait plus que disparaître, tout ces mots que vous forciez à s'envoler comme une flopée d'ortolans," revealing the blank, motionless screen or "blanc d'espace" upon which these semiotic illusions have been projected (*SJJ* 78; see *Una* 232). Vivekânanda compares the universal soul, *Atman* or *Purusha* to "a crystal without any color, before which different colors are placed, and then it seems to be colored by all the colors before it, but in reality it is not" (10-11). In "The Whiteness of the Whale," the "essence" of "whiteness" is both the "visible absence of color" and the "concrete of all colors" (*MD* 169). Hence, in *Una*: *romaman*, the heroine, an Ishmael-like "orpheline," frees herself from anguish by becoming one with the whale and then re-conceives the universe through writing, re-coloring the white world with "un grand tas de feuilles, des milliers de crayons de toutes les couleurs, mais rien qu'une gomme effaçante" (109). As the One, *Una* then becomes distended into the manifold; she gives birth to "une petite truie noire qui a la tête de Job J" so that the cycles of *maya* can rebegin: "Je sais pas encore ce que je vais faire avec, pas plus que je sais ce qu'elle va faire avec moi" (*Una* 234). Yet it is always possible, as Melville puts it, to "refuse to wear colored and coloring glasses," and the snow blindness that results from this erasure need not be anguishing as long as one also relinquishes the "fiery hunt" for truth (*MD* 170).

Ahab seems to glimpse such a possibility for transcendence when he discusses his "genealogy" and speaks of "some unsuffusing thing beyond [his fiery father]...to whom all [his] eternity is

but time, all [his] creativeness mechanical" (*MD* 417). Brodtkorb argues that "Ahab's defiance at this point suggests that it is an attempt to break out of human time; out even of the falsely eternal, actually temporal, order of the evil gods; and perhaps by so doing to reach the notice of the all but totally unknown gods beyond them existing in true eternity." As a consequence of this reading, he goes on to speculate that "perhaps Ahab is Christ" in search of a "new hope for all men" (91). Beaulieu's interpretation of *Moby-Dick* in *Monsieur Melville* also underscores this apparent paradox, figuring Ahab as "un super-héros, ses actes se retournant contre lui, dans un paroxysme déchirant; c'est le combat du Christ qui porte en lui son envers même" (3:16). Beaulieu repeatedly maintains that the "grandeur" of *Moby-Dick* stems from its nondualistic treatment of the problem of truth and evil:

Parce que les héros, autant Achab que la baleine, sont sans couleur. Sans couleur et, en même temps, de toutes les couleurs. La grande Baleine n'est blanche qu'en apparence et Achab n'est noir que de tout le blanc accumulé en lui.... [C]'est la fin du manichéisme, l'un se retrouvant non dans le tout mais dans l'un même, étant à la fois sa vérité et sa contre-vérité et tout ce qu'il y entre leur espace, c'est-à-dire l'aveuglement venu du fait que cela se vit, que cela est, mystère et absence de mystère. (*Melville* 2:269)

Like the offspring of Una, Ahab is black only because of all the blankness he has gathered in himself by begetting himself as the counter-truth of the white whale. Ahab's "elementary wrath," for

instance, testifies to his Titanic "defiance" (*MD* 416). His Promethean nature itself bears a "family likeness" (161) to the Old Testament God's "Titanism of power" (315); it is most strikingly personified by the "Samson"-like "strong, troubled, murderous thinkings of the masculine sea" (442) in "The Symphony." Asks Beauchemin, "Pourquoi Achab veut-il tant tuer le contre-Achab, ce qui lui est renvoyé par le miroir de l'océan?" (*Melville* 2:230). A different mode of being-in-the-world seems to be prescribed by the failure of Ahab's pursuit of Job's whale, one that realizes a *clôture* to the endless, self-reflexive folding back of language in the search for an unconditioned meaning comparable to Ahab's solipsistic quest for self-presence.

Hyperbole is brought to its utmost possibility by Beaulieu when the productive imagination becomes conscious of its overdetermination. In this case, even if its effects hinge on the double intentionality of the metaphor and its function of semantic innovation, hyperbole does not simply designate a figure of style. In the vehemence of poetic redescription, Beaulieu's use of hyperbole de-marks an attempt to *overthrow* the literality of expression in a *throwing beyond* the world of ontological commitments and in the proposition of a different mode of being-in-the-world. Hence, in his discussion of "Appropriation," Ricoeur opposes the dynamic of the "relinquishment of the subject" to the traditional understanding of the "narcissism of the reader" who practices the purely constitutive and unilateral act of "taking possession." Due to the play of imagination, hermeneutic appropriation, on the contrary, becomes "primarily a

`letting-go': "Reading is an appropriation-divestiture."
 Ricoeur explains this function of appropriation through the
 "revelatory power of the text" (HHS 191). In its highest sense,
 then, hyperbole designates exactly what it typically means: a
 "figure of speech not intended to be taken literally." Such a
 vision of the necessity to exceed the purely ostensive limits of
 referential discourse remains characteristic of Indian
 aesthetics, as well as much of Eastern philosophy and
 spirituality.

Harold Coward gives a remarkable instance of an attempt to
 "'pole-vault' [the self] right out of the realm of language and
 difference" *through* language in an intuition of Brahman, when he
 cites the Upanisadic phrase *tat tvam asi* (that thou art), or as
 Vivekânanda says, "I am He, I am He" (Coward 211; Vivekânanda
 23). As Coward, drawing extensively upon the insights of
 Sankara's student Suresvara, argues, it is not a case here of
 predication: *tat tvam asi* is an identity statement. The phrase
 itself has an aporiatic quality, since "that" and "thou" seem
 mutually to preclude each other in the order of assignation.
 This particular instance of semantic impertinence transgresses
 the domain of literality insofar as the clash of dissimilar
 meanings is resolved by the reader only in "the *is* of identity:
 That (Brahman), Thou (Atman) art; therefore, Atman = Brahman,"
 for which (as Suresvara maintains) "no literal `translation is
 possible'" (qtd 208). If "art" or "being" seems pre-eminent, *tat
 tvam asi* is silent concerning its attributes; the "sense" of the
 phrase can only be grasped in the experience of the sacred that

throws consciousness beyond itself and beyond language in the being of atonement. Nevertheless, the unveiling of this "new form of life" (to refer to Wittgenstein) occurs from within discourse; in Ricoeur's words, "it is the projection of a world, the proposal of a mode of being-in-the world, which the text discloses *in front of itself* by means of its non-ostensive references" (HHS 192). Beaulieu often employs an apophatic method similar to Vivekânanda's *neti, neti*, or as Una describes it, "du médire et du dédire" (Una 13), thus cancelling out all subject-object positions in the unconcealment of a nondual apprehension of language: a "langage-silence" that is emphasized by way of aposiopesis (Melville 3:59). Melville seems to exploit a similar strategy to evoke "GOD" as the silent "MIDDLE WAY" between the "YEA AND NAY" in "The Conflict of Convictions" (CP 7). In "Bartleby" and *Billy Budd*, according to Beaulieu, such a poetics culminates in "une économie de moyens qui confine au grand détachement bouddhique," a Buddhist economy of writing (Melville 3:50).

The acknowledgement of the limits of a grammar of Being has serious implications for a parallel reading of Melville and Beaulieu. In the first place, a type of "deconstructive" thinking can be circumscribed in Melville's and Beaulieu's self-reflexive poetics. Beaulieu's desire for a "reddition," for instance, clearly rejoins the revisionist tendency of modernism, yet more fundamentally, his fictionalization of being corresponds to Nietzsche's tropological reduction of the Cogito, which rejects

any transcendental signifieds, any "prétexte" or pre-text as a semiotic illusion (*Melville* 1:19). Interestingly, Ricoeur suggests that Nietzsche himself plays the role of the evil genius in his deconstruction of the Cogito, which "act" finally eclipses the will to truth that Descartes had sought to protect from hyperbolic doubt (cf. *OA* 14). Beaulieu's fictionalization of Being indeed eliminates "[le] faux partage entre le réel et l'imaginaire," crossing into the mirror-world of simulacra, since "une fois débarrassé de ses stéréotypes, le réel n'est plus que de l'imaginaire" (*Melville* 1:53; 2:196).

In his interpretation of "The Doubloon," Beaulieu bluntly states that "seuls Achab et Pip ont raison" (*Melville* 2:265). Ahab's copular reading, of course, implies a form of "egotistical" solipsism, yet it is significant that the transcendental ego is once more decentred (*MD* 359). It apprehends itself only in the movement of signification and at the impossible price of deciphering the "text" of the doubloon that is "but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self"; furthermore, as the "white whale's talisman," the doubloon is neither stolen nor won at any price, but remains a "cipher" to the end (362, 359, 358). As the inscriptions on Queequeg's body suggest, the "secret" of the world can only be solved with the aid of a hermeneutical key that has been lost, or in the act of self-understanding (399). The "mystery" of the "doubloon," therefore, stems in great part from the "mysterious" nature of the "self," as well as the circularity

of all interpretation and reflection.

The "signs" or "inscriptions" on the doubloon can be read as the Pentecostal "flame," the "tower" of Babel, and St. Peter's "crowing cock," which multiple readings would validate a variety of exegetical possibilities, from divine inspiration to divine blinding and self-deception, all of which arguably have analogues in the narrative of *Moby-Dick*. Albeit typologically related, the order of the signs does not follow a Christological telos of revelation; in terms of biblical history, the last sign occurs first, suggesting the same circularity with which Ishmael perverts Pauline maturity or even a regression away from the origin of truth (see *MD* 406). Ultimately, these types also become signifiers given over to the will to interpretation, like "that cunning alphabet" of Nature in *Pierre* "whereby selecting and combining as he pleases, each man reads his own peculiar lesson according to his own peculiar mind and mood" (*P* 384).

"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look," repeats Pip the student of "Murray's Grammar." "And I, you, and he; and we, ye, and they, are all bats" (*MD* 362). For Beaulieu, as well as for Melville, "l'écriture considérée comme une connaissance rend aveugle" (*Melville* 3:36-37). Moreover, Beaulieu intimates that when a writer's affectivity is troubled with sadness, this blindness to truth becomes intolerable. In the preface to *Moby Dick as Doubloon*, the editors speak of the doubloon-novel's capacity for "tormenting fascination" (xix). At the beginning of the solipsistic nightmare of *Un rêve québécois*, the *Pequod*'s mainmast suddenly appears and astonishes the anti-

hero: "Le souffle de la baleine blanche sentait fort. Tout autour d'elle se levait une nappe d'eau pourrie où sombrerait le baleinier. Au mât de hune, la pièce d'or aveuglait Barthélémy" (28). The reference to the whale spout recalls the idea of eternity, understood as belonging to the province of the Wholly Other, that has become unbearable and even noxious to Barthélémy in his apprehension of absurdity. Finally, in *Don Quichotte de la Démanche*, "les mots brillaient...l'éblouissaient" so that Beauchemin finds himself at the center of "un champ d'angoisse parfaitement circulaire" (13). The impression that emerges from these descriptions certainly does not conform to the predominantly ludic mood of the post-modern imagination immersed in textual freeplay. It conjures, rather, the idea of literality as entrapment, as a prison of *maya*.

Moby-Dick itself can be approached as a monumental attempt to signify the mystifying enigma of Job's whale within the domain of discourse, as evidenced by the "Etymology" that opens the novel with a host of "old lexicons and grammars" "SUPPLIED BY A LATE CONSUMPTIVE USHER TO A GRAMMAR SCHOOL" (1). Such a grammar, Melville ironically intimates, is already dead; it is a "reminde[r]" of "mortality" and it can only consume itself. Both Loy and Beaulieu employ the figure of a self-consuming Ouroboros to represent not only Buddhist deconstruction, but also the impossible search for self-presence and absolute truth: "[le] savoir cherchant à devenir connaissance" in its "solitude farouche" ("Clôture" 74; *Melville* 1:101-02). Even though "whale" is the first word that concerns the author of *Moby-Dick*, the

whale never really appears; the word is written out but is already divided amidst a multiplicity of words, just as Leviathan is named in several languages, effectively demonstrating the arbitrariness of the sign. This "grammar school" exercise in the language game of signification will also ultimately prove circular, as presaged by the very etymology of "WHALE...to roll, to wallow," already referring and remembering back in forgetfulness of itself to its own predicates; it is not the whale as such that the "Etymology" figures forth self-reflexively, but rather the endless circulation of the sign.

The pale Usher dusts these grammars "with a queer handkerchief, mockingly embellished with all the gay flags of all the known nations of the world" (*MD* 1). For Beaulieu, the unpronounceable name of God that is the White Whale never appears in any dictionary or any book (see *Melville* 3:61). Ishmael himself is "horror-struck at this antemosaic, unsourced existence...of the whale, which, having been before all time, must needs exist after all humane ages are over" (*MD* 380). Beaulieu reads the final image of *Moby-Dick's* main narrative--Tashtego capturing "le faucon impérial" between Ahab's flag and a hammer--as an allegory of the apocalyptic end of American imperialism. *Moby-Dick* indeed ends with a vision of the beginning, the great biblical Flood that abolishes the novel's firmament in a "white surf" (*MD* 469); as in Beaulieu's *Una*, Leviathan swallows the sun and a primeval Nothingness emerges (see 232-34). Hence, Beaulieu further hails this ending as "cette figure du Jugement premier"; and he goes on to add, "c'est

là où se trompe Ishmaël qui met la grande baleine à la fin de tout alors qu'elle en est le commencement, parce qu'elle est à l'origine même des choses, c'est-à-dire ce qui est déjà porteur de fin" (*Melville* 2:270).

Has Beaulieu misread the novel? *Moby-Dick*, after all, begins with the etymology of the whale. But it is not a matter here of texts or quotations; it is a question of the "hors-texte." In *Una*, "la baleine est le premier mot," but it is a muted word, "et les requins sont ceux qu'elle a forcé à apparaître"; hence, *Una*'s book cannot begin with the whale, since in the fiction of life "la baleine peut pas être le premier mot mais le dernier" (150). If the whale is both the first and last word, but a silent one, then, as Beaulieu's Job realizes, "l'Apocalypse est au commencement de soi puisque la fin précède toute naissance puisqu'il n'y a pas de parole originelle rien que du mauvais langage" (*SJJ* 170). And yet, concerning the nondual experience of the world, dramatized in the wordless union of Job and Ruth, Beaulieu suggests, "C'était là dès les origines et ça attendait" (*SJJ* 79). This "origin-which-cannot-be-name" (to use Loy's phrase) can be experienced only in the silencing of the need to signify or interpret Beaulieu's "ça," a need or sense-of-lack that ineluctably reifies the infinitude of Being or Nothingness. Loy states that "insofar as *nirvana* might be taken as...origin, it is not something that needs to be regained or even gained, but only to be realized by ending the delusion that keeps us from understanding the way things have always been" (see "Clôture" 61-62). Following Nagajurna, the "ultimate serenity"

that the undoing of the finite grammar of being discloses might be described as "the coming to rest of all ways of taking things, the repose of named things" (qtd "Deconstruction" 246). Hence, Vivekânanda enjoins, "throw away even the Vedas, throw away even the personal God, throw away even the universe, throw away even your own body and mind, and let nothing remain, in order to get rid of hypnotism perfectly" (22-23). Beaulieu writes that at the end of *Moby-Dick* "ce n'est plus Moby Dick qui apparaîtra dans toute la blancheur de l'eau, mais l'énorme corbillard de tous les rêves et de tous ce qui vit parce que rêves, avec une multitude de requins dans son sillage" (*Melville* 2:270). The Cartesian Age *somnium* and the feverish dream-voyage come to an end, a *clôture*, when the spirit's fascination with the manifold is overthrown and *Atman* awakens to itself: *tat tvam asi*.

In his reading of *Pierre*, Richard Gray succinctly summarizes the fundamental "alternatives" in Melville's fiction as "silence or artifice, stillness or imposture" (131): the contemplative "dead-wall reveries" of Bartleby or Ahab's vehement attempt to "strike" through the "wall" of fictions even if "there's naught beyond" (see "B" 112; *MD* 144). These same alternatives clearly subtend the logic of Beaulieu's *Voyageries*. By wresting consent from subjectivity, Job J Jobin's whale-koan has fulfilled its purpose in leading the ego to an impasse, a blind wall; and this same prison of misery, regarded in the selfless light of *samadhi* or *satori*, becomes *nirvana*:

Tu as dit Parvenir à cet état qui ferait que plus rien ne saurait être possédé, défabriquer sa mémoire, virer à

l'envers toutes les données. Autrement dit, ne plus être celui qui poursuit les baleines mais se concevoir soi-même comme baleine blanche creusant le lit du golfe...peut-être seulement pour comprendre qu'il n'y a ni bien ni mal et pas davantage de culpabilité...qu'une prodigieuse vitalité, que ce qui se meut dans de la contradiction--cette série de mouvement s'annulant dans ses propres suites. Il n'y a jamais de mort ni de dépossession par la mort.... Même pas de temps ni d'espace, signes qui ne renvoient à rien, qu'à l'épuisement de celui qui à défaut de se voir baleine s'en fait le poursuivant. (*SJJ* 78-79)

Both Bobi and Una come to the same understanding: there is no solution because there is no problem (*EST* 103). Having reached "l'âge de la raison," Una lives in the belly of the whale, oblivious to both past and future, because of an eternal return--"tout est tout le temps à recommencer"--which provokes the desire for self-liberation and self-forgetfulness (*Una* 17-18).

The tensions and the terror of history, and specifically the anguish of its guilty conscience, are abolished along with the retentions and protentions that constitute the flux of temporality in favour of an archetypal or nondual form of living (in) eternity, thus annulling meaningless repetition and temporal distention: "Ne plus rien justifier mais tendre à être tout parce qu'on est tout dans le privilège de l'instant, ainsi que le prétendait le vieil abbé Ferland quand il disait qu'il n'y a pas de fleuve" (*SJJ* 79).¹⁶ The abolition of the dichotomy between being and time, the collapse of time and space as signs without

assignable referents, discloses a world of nondual experience that Loy aptly calls "being-time" and that he likens to "living (in) eternity" or "the Eternal Now." "The interdependence of time and causality," he maintains, "means that to live (in) the Now-which-does-not-fall-away is freedom, for that Now is an unconditionality which is not incompatible with conditions as long as I *am* those conditions" ("Clôture" 69, 70). "A dire vrai," writes Beaulieu in *Monsieur Melville*, "tout était immobile quand on savait déconstruire le mouvement apparent et aller au-delà de ce qui paraissait l'agiter" (1:82). The Augustinian *distantio animi* is overcome once the sense of the self as an outside observer grasping at "le passé plus bien présent" and "le présent très passant" dies away (see *Una* 234). Moreover, history is not justified through a Stoic or Leibnizian calculus, but surpassed in the direction of another way of perceiving reality: the world remains incalculable, because there is nothing with which it could be compared. The metaphysical anguish that stems from the Cogito's apprehension of a bad foundation is overcome by the hyperbolic consent that affirms the unity of being and the innocence of becoming.

Such a re-writing of *Moby-Dick*, stressing a metaphysical combat with Job's whale and all that it embodies, again recalls Ahab's tormented cries in "The Symphony," his "Is Ahab, Ahab?" and his "Who's to doom, when the judge himself is dragged to the bar?" (*MD* 445). If, as the historian Gérard Tougas claims, Melville is Beaulieu's evil genius, it is only insofar as Beaulieu re-enacts Melville's struggle with the evil god and the

"Calvinistic text" of History and the Law (cf. *BB* 65). Indeed, Beaulieu's *Monsieur Melville* describes the Melvillean project as one of suspicion and emancipation marked by a series of initiatory deaths. At the pole opposite from the monomaniac Ahab, who perishes in his absolutistic quest and in his combat with his own wilfulness, Beaulieu finds in Babbalanja Melville's most veridically reflective fictional embodiment (see *Melville* 2:134-35, 270). Babbalanja is also tormented by his metaphysical demons, and most particularly, by his demonic aspect Azzageddi, yet he attains a state of quietude and serenity by renouncing desire and the will to truth to "rest content with knowing naught but love" (*M* 523). The philosopher also affirms the goodness of being as "mystery":

Oro delegates his scepter to none; in his everlasting reign there are no interregnums; and time is eternity; and we live in eternity now. Yet some tell of a hereafter, where all the mysteries of life will be over and the sufferings of the virtuous recompensed.... But to make restitution implies a wrong; and Oro can do no wrong. Yet what seems evil to us may be good to Him. If He fears not nor hopes--He has no other passion, no ends, no purposes. He lives content; all ends are compassed in Him; He has no past, no future; He is the everlasting now, which is an everlasting calm; and things that are--have been--will be. (*M* 513)

Babbalanja has attained the suprahistorical "wisdom that is woe" (*MD* 355), affirming that "All Mardi's history--beginning, middle and finis--was written out in capitals in the first page

penned" (*M* 479).

Moby-Dick and *Les Voyageries* effectively mirror this view of history. Following Nietzsche's typology, "we may use the word 'suprahistorical' because the viewer from this vantage point could no longer feel any temptation...to take part in history; he would have recognized the essential condition of all happenings--this blindness and injustice in the soul of him who acts" (*UM* 65). Brodtkorb's analysis uncovers the repetitive and circular aspect of time in *Moby-Dick*, an "infinite repetition" that is a "kind of degraded eternity" (100). Melville's use of the doctrine of "metempsychosis" perhaps best demonstrates this eternal return, but other passages also underscore "the endlessness, yea, the intolerableness of all earthly effort" (*MD* 358, 59). As opposed to St. Paul, the author portrays "life... not [as] [an] advance through fixed gradations," but as a vicious circle which "once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys and men, and Ifs eternally" (406). Nietzsche further explores this view, which is poisonous "to all historical modes of regarding the past," when he argues that "[suprahistorical men] are unanimous in the proposition: the past and the present are one, that is to say, with all their diversity identical in all that is typical," like those "hundreds of different languages [that] correspond to the same typically unchanging needs of man" (*UM* 66). In Beaulieu's work, as in "L'île aux Basques comme démonstration de l'impuissance," the Tibetan wheel, or the *nidana* chain, symbolizes the circularity of history, destiny and life (cf. *EST* 106).

In *Don Quichotte de la Démanche*, even the repetitive rhythm and alliteration of Beaulieu's prose real-izes this eternal return of desire, as in the following passage: "cette roue roulant dans la ténèbre, cette roue roulant dans la ténèbre immobile et ne faisant rien d'autre que de dessiner dans l'obscurité un cercle froid" (*DQ* 274). Like most of Beaulieu's heroes, Job evinces a marked interest in Eastern religion, and existence for him is stricken by this same purposeless eternal return about the immovable center of the abyss: "Rien qu'un monde circulaire d'énergie qui se prend et se déprend pour oublier qu'il tourne à vide" (*Bf* 121; see 144). Melville's evocation of Solomon and Ecclesiastes also has as its corollary the acknowledgment of the "vanity" of all endeavours in the "wilful world" (*MD* 355). Ultimately, Melville's "Everlasting No" and Beaulieu's "refus total" correspond, in Nietzsche's words, to the "No of the suprahistorical man, who sees no salvation in the process [of History] and for whom, rather, the world is complete and reaches its finality at each and every moment." But, to pursue Nietzsche's initial interrogation, it is necessary to inquire whether the "sense of this teaching...[is] happiness or resignation or virtue or atonement" (*UM* 66).

Babalanja, "adepte, sans le savoir sans doute, du bouddhisme zen" (*Melville* 2:134), perhaps best articulates the Melvillean desire for atonement when he says, "Great love is sad, and heaven is love. Sadness makes the silence throughout the realms of space; sadness is universal and eternal; but sadness is tranquillity, tranquillity the uttermost that souls may hope for"

(M 526). Significantly, Nietzsche himself ends his meditation on history in a "meditative calm" that does not seem quite analogous to the "calm" he associates with Giacomo Leopardi (comp. UM 66; 120). Resentment and nausea have effectively been converted to the quietude of non-attachment. Melville's and Beaulieu's collective works would seem to describe a great circular odyssey of the human will returning at last to the "calm" at the beginning of the great voyage of *Mardi*, "a state of existence where existence itself seems suspended," or "the region of the everlasting lull, introductory to a positive vacuity" (34, 35). Loy describes this calm as "an unrepresentable ground of serenity" ("Clôture" 75).

Melville was undoubtedly thinking of Ecclesiastes 1:9 when he wrote in *Moby-Dick* that "these marvels (like all marvels) are mere repetitions of the ages; so that for the millionth time we say amen with Solomon--Verily there is nothing new under the sun" (MD 181). Ricoeur argues that such a view conforms to "an essentially nonspeculative, nonphilosophical mode of thinking, for which eternity transcends history from within history" (TN 3: 266). Significantly, in Babbalanja's final pronouncements, no distinction is made between time and eternity, or between eternity and being. In the suprahistorical view, time effectively becomes eternity in the sense that the *nunc movens* is simply a moving picture of eternity, the "Now-which-does-not-fall-away" or an eternal return of the same energy, differing "in incident" but not "in essence" (M 205), just as in the Vedanta philosophy "Maya gives the name and form to what Brahman or God

gives the material; and the latter seems to have been transformed into all this" (Vivekânanda 13). As Beauchemin says, "Tout est là, et ça se sait depuis les commencements," yet it is the will to knowledge/power that fosters "le malentendu" and "la fausseté," destroying even "[le] souvenir de l'origine" (*Samm* 229). Since "time is eternity; and we live in eternity now," however, an archetypal or cosmic existence in the "everlasting calm" and the "everlasting now" of the *aevum* remains possible. Such a transfiguration of experience certainly seems to subtend Babbalanja's mystical vision.

Babbalanja's encounter with the ethereal, elemental beings consists of an increasingly ineffable and awful experience. The encounter itself begins with "a low, sad sound--no voice," and Babbalanja also answers silently, "for voice was gone" (523). The experience withdraws from conceptual representation; voice is muted as an expression of violence, while "moods" are evoked by way of different tones. The very movement of worlds is conceived as "wild music" and "tracks of sound," and in Mardi's heaven the sage hears "sounds...of gladness...mixed with sadness--a low, sweet harmony of both." The successive levels of being are marked by varying degrees of sadness and quietude so that the first guide claims that "as a sudden shout in thy hushed mountain passes brings down the awful avalanche, so one note of laughter here might start some white and silent world" (523). The second angel effectively speaks "in a snow of softest syllables" (525). Increasingly subtle levels of expressivity are thus indicated by assonance and metaphorical redescription; in this case,

Melville's use of synesthesia demonstrates an instance of predicative impertinence that institutes a kind of poetic "sixth sense" (524). Before this second vision, the sage can "but blankly list," and the last "awful glory" he witnesses is characterized by an "unutterable utterance." The response of the listeners to the story is also one of "wonder," leaving them "silent." Melville multiplies the instances of aposiopesis, thus undoing language in the silencing of all ontologizing thought and disclosing "Silence," in Beaulieu's words, as "l'accomplissement de l'homme, son intégration sans issue au monde, donc à lui-même" (*EST* 92).

In his reading of *Mardi* Beaulieu also establishes an analogy between the ultimate meaning of Christian hope and Buddhism:

Sérénia, c'est ce qui reste de l'enseignement du Christ une fois dépouillé de toutes les hérésies, c'est-à-dire la paix de l'esprit lorsque l'esprit accepte de ne pas aller plus avant: bien qu'incapable de comprendre le monde, l'homme peut y vivre heureux, *enfin apaisé parce qu'espérant*. C'est la leçon chrétienne: la joie est intérieure, le mystère est non en soi mais soi, et porteur d'amour. Voilà pourquoi Babbalanja va rester définitivement dans l'île de Sérénia, autrement dit à l'intérieur de lui-même, comme un moine bouddhiste, pour faire rayonner cette grande blancheur qui est la signification même du monde. (2:151; emphasis added)

As Melville's Ishmael claims, "in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half known life. God keep thee! Push not off

from that isle, thou canst never return" (*MD* 236). Beaulieu aims to attain this enabling calm, this sense of spiritual atonement, throughout his *Voyageries* (see *Melville* 3:129; *EST* 464). The quietude of sainthood thus attests to the hope of Beaulieu's uchronia, which aims at nothing less than the realization of "l'homme essentiel" or the Chinese "Fils du Ciel" through the mystery of existence, which he describes in *Discours de Samm* as "la joyeuse folie" (*EST* 92; see *Samm* 229).

In his letter to Hawthorne dated November, 1851, following the completion of his "wicked book," Melville himself seems to have envisioned this alternative mode of writing and thinking in the form of a hypothetical letter:

If the world was entirely made up of Magians, I'll tell you what I should do. I should have a paper-mill established at one end of the house, and so have an endless riband of foolscap rolling in upon my desk; and upon that endless riband I should write a thousand--a million--billion thoughts, all under the form of a letter to you. The divine magnet is in you, and my magnet responds. Which is the biggest? A foolish question--they are *One*. (*Correspondence* 213)

It is not a question here of immutable senders and addressees, nor is it at all a question of a literal undertaking, which would be utterly exhausting (see 214). In fact, as the author points out to Hawthorne concerning the first 'temporal' letter, "if you do answer it, and direct it to Herman Melville, you will missend it--for the very fingers that now guide this pen are not

precisely the same that just took it up." In the author's "pantheistic" mood, however, even ceaseless change is experienced nondually as an expression of the One, wherein all notion of sender and addressee is dissolved: "Lord, when shall we be done changing?" (213). Beaulieu describes a similar *aevum* of writing in his essay "La main gauche de l'écriture," where he envisions an endless host of hands drawing their inspiration from "le génie du collectif" and working towards "la réalisation du devenir collectif étant donné que la liberté, même dans l'acte d'écriture, ne peut se situer à quelque autre niveau que celui-là" (*EST* 480).¹⁷ "Freedom in the Light of Hope," as Ricoeur suggests in an essay so entitled, "is nothing else than this creative imagination of the possible" (*CI* 408). Beaulieu's utopian concept of "l'ineffable humain" rests on this nondual understanding of creativity as the dream-like becoming-human of mankind, "cette volonté non pas du pouvoir, mais cette volonté toute simple d'être, d'être tout, tout le temps, à n'importe quel prix" ("Entre la sainteté et le terrorisme," in *EST* 489). In this respect, Ricoeur speaks of "an *economy of superabundance*." "To be free," he writes, "is to sense and to know that one belongs to this economy, to be 'at home' in this economy" (*CI* 410).

After re-invoking his counter-poisons or antidotes to the malady of history, Nietzsche concludes his essay by calling upon "the Greek conception of culture...as a new and improved *physis*, without inner and outer, without dissimulation and convention, culture as a unanimity of life, thought, appearance and will" (*UM*

123). The suprahistorical thus answers to what Mircea Eliade, in his *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, calls the "terror of history." By pointing to the eternal and stable, the eternalizing powers of art and religion respond to man's "thirst for the 'ontic,' his will to be, to be after the fashion of the archetypal beings whose gestures he constantly repeats" (Eliade 91).

But this untimely belonging to an economy of superabundance derives its orientation from the eschatological, Christian commitment to universal redemption. Hope forsakes the present as the only "time of salvation," under the sign of a discontinuity, a break with historicity; and yet, by breaking apart closed systems, this fissuring, a-logical power also "opens up a career for existence and history" (CI 411). A Ricoeurian hermeneutics calls for a renewed appreciation of *mimesis* as implying "a metamorphosis according to the truth," in which playful *mimesis* "reality truly becomes reality, that is, something which comprises a future horizon of undecided possibilities, something to fear or to hope for, something unsettled" (HHS 187). The marriage of Buddhism and Christianity in Beaulieu and Melville's work unveils a tension between the intuitive immediacy of atonement and the "not yet" of eschatological hope. This "not yet" is the gap between History and any post-History, between disclosure and any hoped-for *clôture*.

Notes

1. "[La littérature québécoise] se trouve aujourd'hui au même stade décisif de son développement qu'a connu, au début du siècle, la littérature américaine, quand il s'est agi, dans la conscience collective des écrivains et des érudits, de doter une littérature de sa mythologie et de ses moyens d'action" (*Destin* 65). Tougas envisions the destiny of *les lettres québécoises* as an assumption of power in the world-market of French literatures homologous to the more generalized American literary hegemony (see 184).

2. In *Puissance littéraire des États-Unis* (1979), the socio-historical study that directs his analysis in *Destin littéraire du Québec* (1982), Tougas argues that this anti-intellectualist form represents the basic configuration of American narrative. A theoretical position which Tougas himself underscores reveals a great deal concerning his presuppositions: "*Nous posons ici comme principe cette idée...que c'est illusion pure que de croire que les chefs-d'oeuvre s'imposent et que les auteurs se font connaître par on ne sait quelle évidence littéraire*" (*Destin* 19). Similarly, in the reading of *Moby-Dick* in his *Puissance littéraire des États-Unis*, Tougas assimilates to "superstition" the notion that works possess any intrinsic value ("une valeur indépendante des lecteurs"); instead he stresses "[le] facteur déterminant de la puissance" (*Puissance* 151).

3. "Victor-Lévy Beaulieu, dans ses premières oeuvres, s'est engagé dans un sentier qui, s'il avait été suivi avec moins de

fougue et plus de méthode, eût pu fournir les premiers exemples de ce style mitoyen qui est l'aboutissement, aux États-Unis, des tentatives éparses d'une légion d'écrivains et qui est devenu la respiration habituelle de la littérature américaine contemporaine" (*Destin* 109). Tougas seems to operate within a realm of discourse whose borderlines and rules of exchange are largely predetermined by the nodal point of all his analyses: Nietzschean monumental history.

4. Tougas' epistemology resembles Roland Barthes' in "What Is Criticism?": "One can say that the critical task...is purely formal: not to 'discover' in the work or the author something 'hidden,' 'profound,' 'secret' which hitherto passed unnoticed (by what miracle? Are we more perspicacious than our predecessors?), but only to adjust the language his period affords him...to the language, i.e., the formal system of logical constraints, elaborated by the author according to his own period. The 'proof' of criticism is not of an 'alethic' order...for critical discourse--like logical discourse, moreover--is never anything but tautological: it consists in saying, ultimately...what thereby is not insignificant: Racine is Racine, Proust is Proust" (Barthes 258-59). A professed admirer of Barthes, Tougas also rejects the positivistic notion of a literature that would be "une matière statique, qu'il est possible de cerner comme si nous n'étions pas nous-mêmes emportés par le mouvement de l'histoire" (*Puissance* 156). Following a discussion of the renewed appropriation of the past by Québec literary historians, Tougas concludes *Destin littéraire du Québec*

by conducting an ideological closure: "Et parce que les nations, pas plus que les individus, n'échappent pas à leurs *origines*, on constatera, dès lors, que bien au fond, les écrivains québécois, *en dépit des apparences*, rejoignent les aspirations qui ont abouti naguère à la fondation de la Nouvelle-France" (185; emphasis added). Nietzsche warns that "if...the monumental mode of regarding history *rules* over the other modes...the past itself suffers *harm*: whole segments of it are forgotten, despised, and flow away in an uninterrupted colourless flood.... Monumental history deceives by analogies: with seductive similarities it inspires the courageous to foolhardiness and the inspired to fanaticism" (*UM* 71).

5. On the concept of play and its relation to the theory of the imagination and the world-disclosing function of texts, see Ricoeur's essay on "Appropriation," *HHS*, 182-93.

6. Tyrus Hillway, in his preface to *Mardi* (12).

7. At this point, Paul de Man's refutation of "positivistic history" can be read against Tougas' aspiration to complete a monumental *Aufhebung* that would subsume all the differential forces of history and literature. De Man maintains that "if literature rested at ease within its own self-definition, it could be studied according to methods that are scientific rather than historical. We are obliged to confine ourselves to history when this is no longer the case, when the entity steadily puts its own ontological status into question" (164). This caveat, moreover, is essentially Nietzschean. Nietzsche holds that "insofar as it stands in the service of life, history stands in

the service of an unhistorical power, and thus subordinate, it can and should never become a pure science such as, for instance, mathematics is" (*UM* 67).

8. As Ricoeur notes, "the notion of difference/deviation, as the fruit of labor at the limit, provides only a kind of negative image, one, moreover, divested of its properly temporal intention" (*TN* 3:151); it is logical difference--"the past [as] what is missing, a `pertinent absence'" (150) in relation to historical meaning, for example--and not temporal difference that is underscored "under the sign of the other." Thus Paul de Man can write that "there is nothing modern about the concept of modernity," since in this case the "temporal" concept refers "to events that are in essence linguistic" and so universal (144). In his article on "Américanité et anthropophagie littéraire dans *Monsieur Melville*," Jean Morency amply demonstrates the centrality of the detemporalizing gesture to Beaulieu's appropriation of Melville. Morency takes as his starting-point Oswald de Andrade's notion of cultural cannibalism as a countermanding strategy *vis-à-vis* the colonizing discourses of American nationalism. See also Ray Ellenwood, "Victor-Lévy Beaulieu and the Québeckization of American Literature." Both essays end in a stalemate: Beaulieu, in totally appropriating the "other," would have reduced the *québécois* identity to a merely oppositional term bereft of any positive value. The anthropophagic model of counter-assimilation does not transgress the narcissism of the reader; on the contrary, it fails to produce otherness or difference. Jean-François Chassay seems to

go further when he adopts a dialectical and communicative model of interference/information transfer. The abolition of historical time and historical realism corresponds to the logical moment in which Melville's texts break away from their spatio-temporal moorings, but this timeless distancing has as its obverse the historicization of the "matter of the text" (to use Ricoeur's phrase) through Beaulieu's actualisation/appropriation (*Aneignung*) of Melville's work. Hence, Chassay concludes, "C'est ainsi que les 'bruits' qui viennent brouiller la communication, deviennent, à un autre niveau, de l'information, puisqu'ils permettent peu à peu de définir une poétique" (84). Chassay hints at this new poetics when he states that "toute la prose du livre [*Monsieur Melville*] est d'abord une quête de la connaissance, quête quasi alchimique--on connaît l'importance du sacré chez Beaulieu--non pas de la vérité mais d'une certaine cohérence qui passe à travers l'Amérique étatsunienne, focalisée sur la figure d'un homme, Herman Melville" (82). Beaulieu's Melvillean odyssey thus becomes a fictive-reflexive experience, a detour by way of the signs of the Other, that attempts to elicit Beaulieu's own otherness, "toute la négativité liée à ce territoire qu'il habite et qui pourtant n'existe pas vraiment" (84). Chassay, however, perhaps understandably resists Beaulieu's post-Historical vision: "Ouverte, l'oeuvre d'Abel Beauchemin ne peut imposer une clôture qui signifierait par la même occasion la fin de la lecture et la fin de l'Histoire." Chassay also proves highly critical of Beaulieu's reading of Melville: "Les lectures...font preuve...d'un académisme...qui

déçoit" (83). And yet, in "La tentation de la sainteté," Beaulieu writes that "on n'a pas le droit de devenir universitaire. Moi, je suis pour l'aventure et non pour le commentaire. A force de voyager...de défoncer des portes ouvertes, de violer, d'assassiner...on arrivera bien à la Fixation, c'est-à-dire au rêve accompli, c'est-à-dire à la paisible immobilité" (EST 147). In disregarding Beaulieu's interpretation and re-writing of Melville in *Les Voyageries*, Chassay fails to follow Beaulieu on his apophatic Melvillean journey, thus confirming Beaulieu's claim that "la critique bourgeoise est malicieuse en ce sens qu'elle isole un roman de l'oeuvre" (see EST 250). Chassay's portrayal of Beaulieu as a stodgy scholar obfuscates this resistance to the "world of the text" in the form of an inversion: the critic substitutes himself for the creative author, who then becomes the lackluster critic. The otherness to which Beaulieu's treatment of Melville points must be fully acknowledged if the narcissism of the reader is to be overcome. Essays such as "Une certaine idée de l'Amérique" (373-81) and "Décrochez la lune américaine" (281-92), in *Entre la sainteté et le terrorisme*, suggest that Beaulieu's equivocal politics and sidereal uchronia remain inseparable from a utopian conception of America. See also *Kérouac* (82), on the American dream.

9. In "Culture québécoise et problématique péquiste," Beaulieu reveals to what extent his project both encompasses and exceeds the bounds of any nationalistic project, including his own. "Une fois l'ambiguïté canadienne résolue," he writes, "c'est bien plus

que d'un nouveau pays dont il va s'agir, mais d'une liberté extrêmement exigeante: celle de l'invention d'une méta-culture qui, s'appuyant sur le pays québécois, fera s'ouvrir les constellations." As a consequence of this larger utopian vision, Beaulieu rejects both English Canada and the traditional nationalism of the Parti québécois: "L'avenir...est dans un Québec culturellement révolutionnaire, capable d'appréhender dès maintenant cette assomption de l'homme que doit être la civilisation des étoiles" (*EST* 426).

10. David Loy relates the state of *duhka* to the "plight" of modernism: "we feel that we are (or should be) free, but we know that our lives are physically and psychologically determined; we feel that we are (or should be) timeless, yet we realize that we are mortal, inextricably trapped in time" ("Clôture" 64).

11. "Ce passage ressemble fort aux interprétations qui ont déjà été brodées autour de la baleine blanche, *Moby Dick*." In fact, the preceding description of whiteness, emphasizing "des harmoniques sublimes," bears no trace of the terrific "demonism" of whiteness which Melville invokes in "The Whiteness of the Whale"; it remains mired in black-and-white thinking: "au fur et à mesure que les forces de l'obscurité se font plus menaçantes, celles de la blancheur n'en triomphent que davantage." Tougas reiterates his thesis that a nation bestows the status of monumental literature only upon works that satisfy its mythic self-image, then he surprises his reader: "Car le passage plus haut cité n'a rien à voir avec Melville et se rapporte au roman d'Edgar Poe, *La narration de A. Gordon Pym* (1838)!" He argues

that on the basis of the resemblances between the work of Poe and Melville, the annunciation of Melville and the rejection of Poe bespeak an ideological rather than an aesthetic order. While such an hypothesis explains the indifference of the nineteenth century American public towards Poe, it fails to exhaust the meaning of "The Whiteness of Whale."

12. Brodtkorb reads "The Whiteness of the Whale" in terms of Kierkegaardian "Angst," the agonizing "reality of freedom as a potentiality before this freedom has realized itself" (qtd 161; see also 109). Ricoeur, however, maintains that "in its very stubbornness to want to doubt, [the cogito] confirms its will to certainty and to truth...thus giving doubt as such a kind of direction: in this sense, Cartesian doubt is not Kierkegaardian despair" (OA 6). As Ricoeur further notes, "If the cogito can arise out of this extreme condition of doubt, it is because someone is doing the doubting": the "subject of doubt" (5).

13. As Ricoeur remarks "the fantastic image of the great deceiver is conquered in me, as soon as the Other, actually existing and entirely truthful, takes its place" (10). "By a sort of rebound effect of the new certainty (namely that of the existence of God) on that of the cogito, the idea of myself appears profoundly transformed.... The cogito slips to the second ontological rank.... One must therefore go so far as to say that, if God is the *ratio essendi* of myself, he thereby becomes the *ratio cognoscendi* of myself, since I am an imperfect being.... In the 'Second Meditation' I knew myself as existing and thinking, but not yet as a finite and limited nature. This infirmity of

the cogito is far reaching indeed: it is not related only to the imperfection of doubt but to the very precariousness of the certainty that conquered doubt, essentially its absence of duration. Left to itself, the 'I' of the cogito is Sisyphus condemned, from one instant to the next, to push up the rock of its certainty, fighting the slope of doubt. In contrast, because he maintains me in existence, God confers on the certainty of myself the permanence that it does not hold in itself" (9).

14. If Descartes had conflated God and the evil genius, then the idea of God would not have occurred as the ultimate ground of all certainty. Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* constitute just as much an exercise in faith as in doubt, and the acknowledgement of the Christian God seems inextricably linked to the exclusion of folly and blindness. In *Fallible Man*, Ricoeur argues that "philosophy conceived as ethics not only presupposes the abstract polarity of the valid and the non-valid, but a concrete man who has already missed the mark" and "forgotten the origin"; he adds that it is this "man" that "Descartes rouses from prejudice and leads to truth by way of hyperbolic doubt" (218-19). The ethical *terminus ad quem* of Descartes' exercise in doubt should not be disregarded.

15. In his interpretation of *Billy Budd*, Bernhard Radloff distinguishes two divergent dispositions in the face of the "void": Vere's approach to the world as *Bild*, as the theater of representation subject to the calculus of reason, and the "landlessness of the absolute sailor...who is always but a hand's grip away from plunging into the void" (54).

16. In *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Mircea Eliade maintains a speculative position that in many ways rejoins Nietzsche's existential stance in "On the uses and disadvantages of history for life." He writes, for instance, that "in the simplest human societies, 'historical' memory, that is, the recollection of events that derive from no archetype, the recollection of personal events...is intolerable" (75). Both theorists focus on archaic societies. Nietzsche criticizes German historical culture from the perspective of "a pupil of earlier times, especially the Hellenic," championing the "unhistorical sense" of the Greeks (*UM* 60, 79), while Eliade speaks of the "atemporal present" (86) achieved by "archaic man" through the periodic, ritual "abolition of profane time, of duration, of 'history'" (35). Archetypal participation in the myth of the eternal return, therefore, involves an "unhistorical" act "of forgetting and of enclosing oneself within a bounded horizon" (*UM* 120). Eliade also argues that in re-envisioning the eternal return, Greek ontology attempts to arrest the flux of "historical becoming"; because "if all moments and all situations of the cosmos are repeated *ad infinitum*, their evanescence is...patent; *sub specie infinitatis*, all moments and all situations remain stationary" (Eliade 123), or in Nietzsche's words, "the motionless structure of a value that cannot alter" (*UM* 66).

17. On the nondual experience of creativity, see "Clôture" 79. Loy points to a passage from Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* and to Heidegger's work after the *Kehre* as indicative of nondual thinking and the freedom which such nonduality involves.

Chapter 3

The Wisdom of Woe and *la Sainteté*: Uchronia in Melville's
 "Bartleby," *Billy Budd* and Beaulieu's *Discours de Sann*

"...you are no more than a mist that appears for a little while
 and then disappears."

- James 4:14

"Swooning swim to less and less,
 Aspirant to nothingness!
 Sobs of the worlds, and dole of kinds
 That dumb endurers be--
 Nirvana! absorb us in your skies,
 Annul us into thee."

- Herman Melville, "Buddha" (CP 232)

"baleine! baleine! baleine!--évents--vapeur d'eau est toute
 vie."

- Victor-Lévy Beaulieu, *Sagamo Job J* (118)

At once an exercise in literary hermeneutics, metaliterary reflection and mimetic appropriation, Victor-Lévy Beaulieu's *Les Voyageries (I-VI)* offers students of Melville an occasion to re-visit and re-examine Melville in the context of contemporary literary theory and practice. Such an exercise, however, should not be reduced to a merely structural displacement or formal transcription of Melville's work into a modern mold without any regard for the work's alethic intention or narrative configuration.¹ On the contrary, the effort to read Melville *through* Beaulieu and Beaulieu *through* Melville implies a

dialectical process. Beaulieu's fascination with Melville involves an analogical and mimetic style of reading and writing that rarely surfaces in strictly methodological interpretations, a mode of ipseity or reciprocity which Beaulieu associates with a Sartrean "irréalisation totalisante" (*Melville* 1:101).²

Beaulieu's attempt to re-actualize what he judges to be the sovereignty of Melville's denial of history and the latent power of Melville's hidden and silent affirmation of being in his own contemporary social context and poetics makes Beaulieu in many ways an untimely author and polemicist. Similarly, once approached with the care that informs Beaulieu's *Monsieur Melville*, Melville will be seen not only to prefigure but also to problematize the present scene of writing and the diacritics that have been post-scripted to his narratives.

In his "Manifeste pour un nouveau roman," Beaulieu explores literary history, and particularly its French chronicles, through the insights of such influential thinkers as Sartre and Blanchot. Beaulieu delineates the changing social effectivity of literature, chiefly underscoring its gradual alienation from the centre of power over and against its legitimation of the seventeenth-century French elite and the eighteenth-century revolutionary bourgeoisie. Significantly, his analysis of literary modernity begins with the quest for emancipation from ideological constraints in the nineteenth century and culminates with the author's contemporary refusal of all forms of identitarian thinking. Hence, he maintains that "nous sommes tous des Rimbaud qui n'écrivons plus que notre propre négation,

que notre propre refus d'écrire" (*EST* 79). Blanchot's insight becomes paradigmatic at this point for Beaulieu, as he makes himself the haruspex of anti-book: "Où va la littérature? Oui, question étonnante, mais le plus étonnant, c'est qu'il y a une réponse, elle est facile: la littérature va vers elle-même, vers son essence qui est la disparition" (qtd *EST* 70).

By way of this denegation, the writer effectively becomes the bleeding conscience of history, a consciousness of amputation, crisis, judgment and separation; and the *telos* of the literary text paradoxically constitutes the reversal of both destination and representation. Hence, "on s'interroge...non plus sur l'orientation ou sur les formes nouvelles que doit prendre la littérature, mais sur son essence même" (*EST* 70). A schism, consequently, emerges between the first and the second term of literary history, a schism constitutive of the very attitude of modernity and dependent in the first instance upon the structure of "le langage littéraire," which, according to Roland Barthes, "est essentiellement anachronique" (qtd *EST* 70). Hence, if literature suddenly finds itself in a metaphorical flight towards its "essence" in what is simultaneously claimed to be an ontological break with its mode of being and the source of its duration, a vertical *cassure* or *absence d'oeuvre* heralded by Beaulieu as the very death of literature, this break has as its zero degree the suspension of historical time or the historical given that has always been the prerogative of fiction.³

Beaulieu's rejection of historical Christianity and his turn to Eastern mysticism announce the withdrawal and the silencing of

the truth of Being, the death of its intrahistorical and intranarrative presence in and through the referential or representational function of discourse. At the same time, however, this refusal announces an end to the anguish that strongly permeates his own work, which could be described, alternatively, as a literature of exhaustion, sterility and alienation. "En fait," Beaulieu writes, "cette littérature qui meurt depuis longtemps annonce la fin d'un monde angoissé, d'un monde que l'on pourrait qualifier d'adolescent...un monde faible de sa force possible, encore tout imbu d'un christianisme foncièrement pessimiste" (EST 91). Flatly contradicting Blanchot, he states that "il importe peu que la littérature meure: c'est l'homme qui doit s'éterniser" (92; comp. 90). Claiming that his country suffers from a lack of prophecy, Beaulieu heralds not a "nouveau roman," but rather a new *aevum*:

L'avenir appartient à ceux qui *dès le présent apprennent à vivre dans l'autre monde*, celui de l'Homme, celui de ce Fils du Ciel comme il est dit dans la Tradition chinoise. Et n'oublions pas que pour que le langage vrai commence, il faut que la vie qui va porter ce langage ait fait l'expérience de son néant, qu'elle ait sombré dans les profondeurs et que tout ce qui en elle était fixe et stable ait vacillé. Ce langage vrai ne peut être que celui de *l'écrivain de demain, parlant déjà à travers son Silence de l'intégralité de sa réalisation*. (EST 92; emphasis added)

Typically, in political articles such as "Culture québécoise et problématique péquiste," "L'émergence du refus" and "Et saigne la

conscience," Beaulieu rejects "cette vieille culture judéo-chrétienne" in the name of "la trans-histoire sidérale" or "la post-Histoire" (*EST* 426, 455). In other words, he contemns Judeo-Christianity because it ostensibly invests its hope in a historical process that he wholly abjures in the name of a radical nihilization and renewal. This denial rejoins the extreme exigency of the will to sainthood.

Beaulieu's idea of a cleanly executed amputation, however, is misleading in many ways. In the first place, the apparent repudiation of Christianity embodies one of his revealing ambiguities, since the notion of sainthood is both thoroughly *québécois* and thoroughly Christian, as he himself acknowledges in "L'écrivain québécois et la question nationale" and further implies in many of his cultural analyses, such as "La tentation de la sainteté" and "Entre la sainteté et le terrorisme" (cf. *EST* 392). Beaulieu perhaps never entirely escapes from his geopolitical and social situation through a hyperbolic "refus global," but rather manages a kind of Beaudelarian heroicization of his present that also implies a more fundamental adhesion to its aborted possibilities, its buried hopes and dreams, as the secret capital of existence-value. Specifically, Beaulieu's narrativization of the philosophy of Vivekananda, "oubliée depuis des siècles," would seem to constitute an attempt to distance himself from his historical belonging to *québécois* culture that in fact refigures and redescribes this culture and his own selfhood in the light of a fictive or imaginative experience (*EST* 102). In this sense, Beaulieu is both timely and untimely.

Certainly, the end that Christianity posits to history in the form of eschatological and metaphysical hope has not been dismissed, but rather the validation of that same history, and particularly, the quiet sufferance of its vicissitudes and the cynicism that results from the belief that the light of justice is already manifest in the world (cf. *EST* 29).⁴ For Beaulieu, in fact, in spite of his denial of Judeo-Christian culture, "toute écriture est juive...elle vient de l'exil et de tout ce qu'il y a dedans" (*Samm* 213). The wandering vagrancy, the absence of God and the Promised Land that pervades his writing may at first glance be mistaken for the "way through the Desert" that Jacques Derrida evokes in his famous essay on "Edmond Jabès and the Question of the Book," yet Beaulieu's writing reveals an "excess" in relation to the thinking of differance which emerges on the side of uchronia and the desire for *la sainteté* (*Writing and Difference* 68; see *Samm* 216).

In "Rien d'autre qu'un désert et qu'un manuscrit," Beaulieu speaks of "l'épais manuscrit qui n'est rien d'autre que la longue traversée du désert, que l'extrême patience et l'extrême lassitude qui vient du fait qu'on voudrait, en changeant le monde et soi-même, l'arrêter et s'arrêter enfin, pour jouir de l'immobilité de sa beauté et de l'accomplissement de sa beauté" (*EST* 315). This overriding desire for simultaneity, "l'accomplissement de l'homme et non sa désagrégation," remains forever unassimilable to Derridean *différance* (comp. *EST* 91). On the contrary, this desire points to the fundamental difference in the economy of Derrida's discourse and perhaps even within the

Derridean Idea, which Frank Kermode admirably demarcates in his "Endings, Continued" when he argues that "the discourse of differance is defined by its *not* being the discourse of apophatic theology, and therefore, in the mind of its inventor, must continually be referred to that discourse" (89).⁵

Apophasis means "denial," yet this denial is itself split into two different meanings. In the first instance, according to the OED definition Kermode retains, it designates "a kind of Irony, whereby we deny that we say or do that which we especially say or do," and in the second instance, it pertains to "negative theology" and "knowledge of God obtained by way of negation" (qtd 73). This difference is reechoed in the work of Melville and Beaulieu, wherein the failure of explanatory theodicy seems to impel a leap into *uchronia*, which "place" has the quietude of eternity rather than history as its horizon. This leap manifests itself in a denial of literality and historicity that is a denegation of the presence of God *in* monumental history and *in* narrative time, a negation of a negation, which in speaking doubly, silently attests to metaphysical hope, a desire for a good totality of being. Beaulieu's denial of Judeo-Christianity constitutes an instance of apophasis, wherein he emerges in the end as one of Derrida's Jewish "rabbis" (although he may sometimes speak in the interim like one of Derrida's Jewish "poets" [cf. *WD* 67]). *Entre la sainteté et le terrorisme*, the title of an anthology of his essays, resumes "la problématique définitive" that arises within Beaulieu's oeuvre as a result of this doubly apophatic style of writing and of thinking (*EST* 492).

The terrorism of deconstructive thinking is exceeded in the anticipation of the end of all terrorism.

Beaulieu understands the significance of the theodicean crisis in Melville so well that when he re-writes *Moby-Dick* in *Blanche forcée*, he names his protagonist Job. He furthermore imitates his precursor by assigning biblical names to most of his characters. Beaulieu himself becomes Abel Beauchemin, a victim of the will to murder. His demonic brother Jos embodies this will to terror, even as he represents the "negative" aspects of the author's own fictional project. This duality points to the fault that separates man's destination from his inclination, and hence to the fallen state of the man-of-war world. The narrator of *Pierre, or the Ambiguities* also reflects upon this "solecism" of Christendom, namely the gap that separates the truth of Christian agape, incarnated in the Sermon on the Mount as the symbol of "all the love of the Past and all the love which can be imagined in any conceivable Future," and the "Lying World" whose history is marked by the rule of terror (P 241).

This first paradox substantially informs Plotinus Plinlimmon's consideration of "chronologicals" and "horologicals," which pursues the initial dichotomy between holy and profane history within the ambiguous sphere of acting and suffering humanity. The pamphlet concerns itself with the meaning of the presence of the pacifist, the chronological man living in the *aevum* of God, within the horological world that seems to privilege precisely those "negative virtues" that a Claggart employs to his advantage and to the detriment of any

positive affirmation of love and charity (see P 249; comp. BB 30). Plotinus claims that he will resolve the paradox that arises from the incongruity of chronological time and horological time, yet to the narrator the pamphlet "seems more the excellently illustrated re-statement of a problem, than the solution of the problem itself" (P 243). There is, in addition, no disclosure of this promised resolution or sublation: "But here the pamphlet was torn, and came to a most untidy termination" (249). Its "untidy termination," much like the disfigured narratives of Melville and Beaulieu, which "have no proper endings; but in imperfect, unanticipated, and disappointing sequels (as mutilated stumps), hurry to abrupt intermergings with the eternal tides of time and fate" (170), adumbrates the ambiguity of history and the instability of any professed telos. The apparent impossibility of Aristotelian *Iusis* opens a tear in being, wherein metaphysical anguish apprehends the nothingness of a purely nonsensical existence.

This impossibility is narrativized within Beaulieu's "lecture-fiction." The pivotal point of Beaulieu's analysis of Melville rests on Sartre's analysis of Flaubert. At the core of the life of Melville's work, particularly in the works that follow upon *Moby-Dick*, would lie the failure, the absence, or the death of the Father with whom he identifies himself, and consequently, the loss of identity and totality (*Melville* 1:98). As well, the whole of Beaulieu's *Voyageries* underscores the failure of tradition figured as the Father's impotence: it is "l'impossibilité du dénouement" in Melville's life and work that

fascinates Beaulieu. Referring to the death of Melville's son Malcolm, he writes, "C'est à l'âge de trente-sept ans que Melville vivra cette cassure qui entraînera des modifications profondes dans l'écrivain qui était en lui, au point que tout le reste de sa carrière, si on excepte *Billy Budd*, ne sera peut-être plus que la souveraineté de son refus." He speaks of this "non obstiné, trop prodigieusement calme pour n'être que cela," and stresses again the centrality of *Billy Budd*, which explores "l'unique sujet, celui de la paternité et de son impuissance. C'est le fils Malcolm qui est ici le Personnage." If in *Billy Budd* Melville is both himself and his son, then inversely in "*Bartléby l'écrivain*...il sera à la fois son propre père et lui-même, véritable janus de la dépossession et du refus passif absolu." According to Beaulieu's reading, then, the two narratives form a pair, reciprocally lending each other a greater degree of intelligibility in relation to the question of genealogy and modernity and the ultimate import of uchronia insofar as the latter recaptures an "excess" in relation to the former, an excess signaled here by the denial that Beaulieu describes as "trop prodigieusement calme pour n'être que cela" (1:35).

In his essay on the "Non-violent Man and His Presence to History," Paul Ricoeur takes as his starting-point the question of the historical meaning of the Christian agape, stating that for him "the *Sermon on the Mount* concerns our history and all history along with its socio-political structures"; in fact, "it introduces vertically into this history a *difficult* and largely incalculable exigency and places whoever has been struck with it

in a fundamental malaise, in a state of vehemence that often finds no other outlet than in untimely, awkwardly historical acts (*à contretemps*)" (HV 235; HT 223). Pierre's "self-renouncing Enthusiasm" (P 238) and his "effort to live in this world according to the strict letter of the chronologicals" (246) seem to illustrate a catastrophic instancing of this untimely demand, just as Beaulieu's *Un rêve québécois* narrativizes a failed uchronia, ending as it does with the irruption of monumental history.

But *Pierre* and *Un rêve québécois* do not constitute the last words of their authors on the idea of uchronia. Beaulieu's totalizing project itself embodies a denial of all that he calls "facilité" in a quest for the self-apophasis that is the authentic "exigence de l'oeuvre" (EST 76); it is a drive towards "[une] expérience-limite de l'homme, une assomption de liberté," an attempt finally to engender "la sublime différence, celle qui abolirait le vieux temps et ferait donc passer le seuil à ce que je suis" (Melville 1:20-22). Similarly, Beaulieu resumes "le projet melvillien" as a quest for sainthood and immobility (1:53-54). It is this verticality as the appearance and non-appearance of an other time, a uchronia, both *in* history and transcending it, for which the non-violent or chronological man is a "witness," that ultimately concerns this chapter. The "inside story" of *Billy Budd*, for instance, at once conceals and reveals this verticality in both its holy and its perverted manifestations, as suggested by the words of the lieutenant who impresses Billy, leaving the mark of the war-world: "blessed are

the peacemakers, especially the fighting peacemakers" (6).

This tension between the denial and acceptance of History also sheds light on the apparently insuperable equivocalness--what Beaulieu calls the "malentendu"--of his own work, his Melvillean odyssey, and more generally, his understanding of the *québécois* identity (see *EST* 465). "Notre littérature," he writes, "ne nous appartient pas.... Nous écrivons en une langue que nous ne pouvons que mutiler car elle ne dit à peu près rien de notre être collectif. Où nous entendons poudrerie, nous disons vent, et ce vent-là n'est pas de chez nous, n'étant plus qu'un *mot privé de son essence véritable*" (*EST* 83; emphasis added). Québec's geo-political presence on the North American continent, on the one hand, and its psychical, umbilical attachment to the motherland, on the other hand, represent antithetical poles of attraction so that between the Franco-American dichotomy *québécois* culture itself emerges as essentially disarticulated, homeless, equivocal, inessential. Beaulieu consistently portrays the *Québécois* as ahistorical and achronological (see *EST* 84); and his Beauchemin depicts himself as the victim of history in an equivocal country "qui ne peut trouver ses appuis dans l'histoire, sinon pour se percevoir comme colonisé, ce qui ramène tout de suite la notion d'absence et celle de l'immobilité" (*Melville* 1:22).

Beaulieu, however, transforms this virtually pathological consciousness of victimization into an affirmation of difference. The detritus/negativity of history, which apparently mediatizes nothing, holds in store the unknown potential of history, which

is first captured by metaphysical anguish. Paradoxically, precisely by virtue of his *absence* from a history of terror, the Québécois becomes the equivocal figure of a uchronia realized in eternity, finding therein "[le] devenir essentiel" that he presently lacks and that history also lacks: "C'est ici que le Canadien français peut trouver son identité: qu'il apprenne la réflexion et le pas immense vers son accomplissement sera fait" (EST 84, 92). Like the chronologicals in *Pierre*, and like all pacifists and all enthusiasts in the man-of-war world, Beaulieu's Québécois is always intempestive in that he does not belong to the "China time" of monumental history, its logic and its chronology, but rather announces another order of time and of being. In Beaulieu's prophetic uchronia, history is not justified; rather, it is transcended from within its own limits by the liminal figure of the non-violent man and the testimony he bears to the hope in a different way of life.⁶

In his map of the social imaginary in "Imagination in Discourse and Action" and "Ideology and Utopia," Ricoeur positions ideology and utopia within a productive constellation actuated by a dialectical "tension" which above all expresses for the philosopher the living tension between history and truth, between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation. Hence, this tension between ideology and utopia constitutes the fundamental ethical tension of history and being, understood not simply as being-there or historicity but also as existence-value and being-true within an ontology devoted to "the meaning of being as act and potentiality."⁹ Ricoeur begins by opposing the

credibility "gap" that ideology bridges to the "utopian imagination," which "appears...merely eccentric and erratic." The theorist argues that on the one hand, "there is no movement toward full humanity which does not go beyond the given," while "on the other hand, elsewhere leads back to here and now." Finally, Ricoeur appeals to Levinas in order to define "utopia" not as "the prize of some wretched wandering, but [as] the clearing where man is revealed" (qtd TA 322-23). The tension between ideology and utopia, between Same and Other, works upon the social imaginary as a centripetal or centrifugal movement either tending towards integration or subversion and involving both wholesome and pathological effects. Ideology thus has a healthy function at the level of the symbolization of action, and it is within this symbolic order that the "dialectic of concealment and revelation" occurs (TA 323).

Hence, on the side of *uchronia*, it is in the sense of "a *surplus*, a *greater* than history," projected by the bleeding conscience, that the meaning of the sacred and the will to sainthood can be approached in Melville's and Beaulieu's works; the leap of consciousness in its judgment of actuality "posits an end to history: its suppression as violence" (HT 224). However, as Ricoeur asks, "If this non violence comes from elsewhere, how shall it be present to history?" (HT 228). The paradox of *uchronia* is that it can be effective only insofar as it is simultaneously another time and here and now, insofar as a hermeneutics can point to its concealed instantiations, and, more particularly, unearth the affirmation of a potentiality for being

that lies buried beneath refusal. Thus the dialectic of concealment and revelation occurs on two planes: ideology and uchronia. Apophasis in Melville and Beaulieu signs a "withdrawal" from the "truth" of "unconcealment," a "concealment" within the empire of representation.⁸

The *question* of theodicy arguably traverses all of Melville's work. While he undeniably undertakes a skeptical rethinking of biblical revelation and biblical faith in terms of human history, this monumental effort at suspicion constitutes the crux of his *oeuvre amputée* to the point that Beaulieu claims that the Bible is the only character in a novel such as *The Confidence-Man* and perhaps in all of Melville's narratives (see *Melville* 3:115). J.C. Rowe argues that *The Confidence-Man* itself constitutes "a fundamental confidence-game that tricks the reader into accepting either a facile nihilism or a sort of religious echolalia" (114). It is precisely the conflict between New Testament faith and Old Testament law, however, that Melville exploits in most of his work. In *The Confidence-Man*, he problematizes Pauline charity and contemporary varieties of historical idealism, such as Emersonian transcendentalism and Kantian cosmopolitanism, which modes of thought explicitly fulfill a theodicean plan.

In his "Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," Kant posits as the telos of nature and mankind "a great future political body," "a universal cosmopolitical institution, in the bosom of which all the original capacities and endowments of the human species will be unfolded and

developed" (32). In less formal terms, Emerson's essay "Politics" advances "the broad design of renovating the State on the principle of right and love," opposing to "governments founded on force" a "society...maintained without artificial restraints, as well as the solar system" (220-21). These discourses converge in Melville's *The Confidence-Man*, as evidenced, in the first instance, by the cosmopolitan's "philanthropic pipe," "its great porcelain bowl painted in miniature with linked crests and arms of interlinked nations," which clearly emblemizes the cosmopolitan's advocacy of the Kantian ideal of a federated union of states (*TCM* 165, 159). In the second instance, the cosmopolitan's extinguishing of the "light...of the horned altar," a symbol of Old Testament worship, its horns evoking the last possible appeal to Yawheh's mercy and justice (1 K 1:50; 2:28), leaves men without "artificial restraints," thus "den[ying] the authority of the laws, on the simple ground of [man's] moral nature" or faith "in Providence, as in man" (see "Politics" 220-221; *TCM* 297-98).

It is precisely this perfect "trust," of course, that the confidence game undercuts. Melville even seems to explain and defend his narrative method in the fourteenth chapter of *The Confidence-Man*, "Worth the consideration of those to whom it may prove worth considering." (Beaulieu qualifies this chapter as "theoretical," and he hinges his reading and his re-writing of the novel upon it [see *Melville* 3:116].) The reformist recourse to the calculus of rationality, so Melville argues, necessarily requires a rigid concept of the "human nature" it aims to

moralize, as exemplified by the "psychologists" who seek via "fixed principles" a "mode of infallibly discovering the heart of man." In *The Confidence-Man*, Melville advances the rigorously epistemological figure of a "true map" of "human nature" in order to illustrate the "general and pretty thorough ignorance of it," simultaneously rejecting the "objection" that "human nature [is] subject to variation." Indeed, he claims that "the grand points of human nature are the same to-day they were a thousand years ago. The only variability in them is in expression, not feature" (*TCM* 86). These nonidentical particularities of "expression," including an inexhaustible array of social gestures and artifice that dissimulate the unchanging "features" of human need, confound the manipulation of the reformist in pursuit of unalterable psychic laws.

According to Rowe, *The Confidence-Man* "participates in the selfishness and brutality to which it responds; in the confidence-man's masquerade, deception of others is celebrated as a self-deception, the very nature of which is inextricably involved in a basic will to authority and power" (118). Melville so read would thus seem to set what Nietzsche, in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," calls the "the No of the suprahistorical man, who sees no salvation in the process [of history]" over against the reformist hopes of cosmopolitanism and Christianity:

Whether the sense of this teaching is happiness or resignation or virtue or atonement, suprahistorical men have never been able to agree; but, in opposition to all

historical modes of regarding the past, they are unanimous in the proposition: the past and the present are one...a motionless structure of a value that cannot alter.... *Just as the hundreds of different languages correspond to the same typically unchanging needs of man*, so that he who understood these needs would be unable to learn anything new from any of these languages, so the suprahistorical thinker beholds the history of nations and of individuals from within, clairvoyantly divining the original meaning of the various hieroglyphics and gradually even coming wearily to avoid the *endless stream of new signs*: for how should the unending superfluity of events not reduce him to satiety, over-satiety and finally to nausea! (*UM* 66; emphasis added)

Insofar as Rowe sees in all language acts expressions of the basic features of the Nietzschean will to power and authority and the "Freudian difference," celebrating the "dance of life and death" as the ineluctable freeplay of the sign, he also subscribes to a suprahistorical perspective, effectively banishing charity (133; 136; see 118). Beaulieu concurs with this economy of life and death as "la mascarade de la vie elle-même" and assimilates this economy to the movement of capitalism: "Il n'y a rien de gratuit dans le monde, ni l'amitié ni celui qui y aspire. Tout se paie parce que la vie même est capital - rien de plus qu'un énorme cancer, sa fin étant inscrite dans son propre mouvement" (*Melville* 3: 115; 123-24).⁹ For Beaulieu, however, this realization leads not simply to nausea, but, more fundamentally, to "une nouvelle conscience," a bleeding

conscience belonging to "l'extra-monde" by virtue of the denial which the wisdom of woe fosters, just as this wisdom ultimately induces in Nietzsche a "meditative calm" (*Melville* 3:124; *UM* 120).

In his poetic fragment "Rammon," Melville notes the affinities between Buddhistic thought and Solomon's "despondent philosophy" (*CP* 411). He also prefixes his hymnal poem to "Buddha" with an epigraph from the Epistle of James (4:14) that is quite obviously inspired by the Old Testament wisdom writings (see Ps 39:5-7, 11; Ws 2:4, 5:9-14). "These marvels (like all marvels)," claims Ishmael, "are mere repetitions of the ages; so that for the millionth time we say amen with Solomon--Verily there is nothing new under the sun" (*MD* 181). Nietzsche says of the suprahistorical man that once "he would have recognized the essential condition of all happening--this blindness and injustice in the soul of him who acts; he would, indeed, be cured for ever of taking history too seriously, for he would have learned from all men and all experiences...from a single hour of the first or of the nineteenth century, to answer his own question as to how or to what end life is lived" (*UM* 65; emphasis added). The "comedy of thought" and "action" in *The Confidence-Man* (87) certainly seems to attest to Melville's over-satiety.

This same nausea in the face of the "endless stream of new signs," the multiple avatars of man, pervades Beaulieu's narratives: "Je suis un homme qui commence seulement à se rendre compte du mal qu'il fait, de tout ce qui se trouve brisé parce que tout lui échappe, parce que rien ne dure jamais, parce qu'il

n'y a pas de sens--qu'une pluralité de signes" (*N'évoque* 28). The truth of being, "le langage vrai," withdraws quietly beyond narrative time, and beyond literality and historicity. Hence, the Beauchemin of *N'évoque plus que le désenchantement de ta ténèbre, mon si pauvre Abel* wonders "si ce qu'on appelle l'oeuvre d'un écrivain, cette série de phrases enfermées dans un temps d'écriture, n'est pas une méprise: il n'y a que le prochain mot, il n'y a que l'ultime mot, celui qui ne pourrait s'écrire que dans la mort transgressée, de l'autre côté du miroir de vie, là où l'écriture serait vérité, parce que limite franchie, parce que sans limites enfin, parce que sans lieu autre qu'elle même" (126-27; emphasis added). As Melville's Babbalanja claims, for the ascetic will to sainthood "there is no place but the universe, no limit but the limitless, no bottom but the bottomless" (*M* 381). Hence, if the failure of theodicy motivates a leap into uchronia, a questing to find in the calm of eternity a release from the injustice and blindness of history, then the suprahistorical, Solomonic "wisdom that is woe" (*MD* 355) should be examined in its own right to see whether the sense of uchronia and what it teaches are, in Nietzsche's words, "happiness or resignation or virtue or atonement" (*UM* 66).

In the first place, if in Beaulieu and Melville being fictionalizes itself, negating its being-there, then it is because History, the Book, and the Law can no longer be justified in their given totality. The narrator of *Mardi*, for instance, assumes the fictional identity of Taiji, a demigod, in his pursuit of truth. As Beaulieu claims, *Mardi* is a totalizing work

or *livre impossible*, overdetermined by metaphysical anguish, in which the totality of the world and the book that is the place named Mardi is surpassed through Taiji's "symbolic suicide," and yet this denial is only a denegation of historicity and finitude that conceals a more fundamental meaning (*Melville* 3:16). Hence, Beaulieu writes of *Mardi's* endless ending, "Cet océan sans fin qui n'est toujours que le désir et ce qu'il y a en lui, cette exigence phénoménale pourtant impossible à circonvenir, toujours là mais en même temps effrayamment ailleurs, dans l'au-delà du monde, au pays de l'espoir" (2:152). Beaulieu's re-writing of this ending also extends into infinity by way of a deliberate evocation of the unsayable--"Cinquante pieds de mer se disent-ils lorsque Job J Jobin passe près d'eux, courant après son souffle de Blanche" (*Bf* 212)--as well as by further endings continued (see *N'évoque* 17, 25, 33, 43, 55). Such uchronic or utopian hope, projected beyond the finite and beyond the actual closure of *Mardi* through a figurative suspension of the "three arrows" of time and through the image of an "endless sea," bespeaks the vehemence of a truly phenomenal and untimely tension at the core of being that is dissimulated but not effaced by historical ambiguity and existential anxiety (*M* 540).

In his *Don Quichotte de la Démanche* and "L'île aux Basques comme démonstration de l'impuissance," Beaulieu speaks of "le mensonge de l'écriture" (*EST* 93), yet he adds by way of precisising, "Mais dans l'au-delà de l'écriture, il y avait cette vérité que commençait à comprendre Abel et qui semblait perceptible seulement dans le silence de la mort" (*DQ* 28). Both

narratives end with a vision of *Mahat*, the cosmic mind beyond the suffering of the *nidana* chain symbolically rendered by the ceaseless revolutions of the Tibetan wheel. Unconvinced by the writer Giono, Beaulieu invites the reader to construe Melville's work not as a regression into a "silence total" but rather as "une fascinante inversion de moyens" (*Melville* 3: 22). In "Bartleby" and *Billy Budd*, according to Beaulieu, such a poetics culminates in "une économie de moyens qui confine au grand détachement bouddhique," a Buddhistic economy of sublime difference as opposed to an economy of differance (*Melville* 3:50). According to David Loy's Mahayana critique of Derrida, the "Zen master...plays with language--moving in and out of it freely--because he is not bound by it. His laconic expressions emerge from and are-one with, an unrepresentable ground of serenity; and although they cannot point directly to this ground, there are ways to suggest it for someone else" ("Clôture" 75). Melville's work precisely incorporates, though in mutilated form, the mourning of a loss of being, which is also a loss of sacred and prophetic expressivity.

The "music-moan" of the Memnon Stone in *Pierre*, for example, has fallen silent in a "bantering, barren, and prosaic, heartless age," dispersed or "lost among [the] drifting sands" of the desert, just as the bell of the Church of Apostles has ceased tolling the call to faith, and "every Sunday it presented an aspect of surprising and startling quiescence" (164, 304). The vehemence of this silence seems inseparable from the loss of a meaningful language and the breakdown of signification. As

lawyers invade the Church of the Apostles, a veritable tower of Babel is built for them in the church-yard, "a fearful pile of Titanic bricks, lifting its tiled roof almost to a level with the top of the sacred tower," which the narrator suggests is going "too far" (P 302). In "The Doubloon" chapter of *Moby-Dick* the ordering of biblical "signs"--the "flame" of the Holy Spirit, the "tower" of Babel, and St. Peter's "crowing cock"--implies a gradual alienation from truth (359). In *Billy Budd* as well, the narrator repeatedly stresses the unpopularity of that "lexicon" of signs from "Holy Writ" (BB 29). Hence, from the temporal standpoint of the implied author of *Billy Budd's* retrospective narrative, prophetic and holy language is historically "anachronistic," yet for this very reason this same language is proper to the logic of uchronia, which is always untimely in its means and in its aspirations.

The paradoxes and aporias of uchronia stem from this very untimeliness. If Beaulieu's uchronia is to be in any way effective, the "proleptic" signs and portents of his prophetic vision of another world and a future time given as man's authentic destination must be deciphered in *this* world and *this* time; and to the extent that they have been silenced, have fallen silent, or are quintessentially silent, this very silence must paradoxically be spoken, heard and lived in the present of anticipation and expectation, as Beaulieu's own prophecy clearly suggests (cf. EST 92). In other words, Beaulieu's uchronia must be internalized as dialectic if it is to further the limit-idea of a pure and unfettered communication that he renders through

"le langage vrai" of silence indicative of "l'accomplissement de l'homme, son intégration sans issue au monde, donc à lui-même." The author of "Manifeste pour un nouveau roman" foresees that "lorsque l'homme sera arrivé à ce point, il sera libéré de toute littérature: il sera dans le Silence, c'est-à-dire dans la plénitude, dans l'immobilité de son destin démiurgique" (EST 92). To accomplish this prophetic aim, however, Beaulieu as seeker after uchronia must evoke this Silence by indirection and by adequation, even through the dead mark of language, to announce the plenitude of the sense it holds in reserve.

The obituary to literature Beaulieu proclaims is thus continually deferred even as it projects an end; in fact, this requiem is not a literal fall into the silence of a quietus wherein the work would not appear at all, but rather a metaphor for the withdrawal at the core of his work away from narrative time construed as the mimesis of action towards the quietude of another order of time and of being. Like the chronologicals in *Pierre*, "l'homme essentiel" in Beaulieu's vision already belongs to a world other than that of evil committed and evil suffered. His saint belongs to eternity, as illustrated by the anecdote from Vivekânanda that Beaulieu notes in his journal: Vivekânanda relates the story of a "bakti" who, questioned concerning calendar time, responds, "Dieu est ma date éternelle, aucune autre ne m'intéresse" (EST 53).

The tension of Beaulieu's project resides in this very broken circularity. He wants to assume language and silence as a *via negativa* in order to achieve a deeper "silence dans le

silence," a Melvillean "calm" such as the Buddhist-like Babbalanja attains in *Mardi* (Melville 1:36). Beaulieu believes that "[une] poésie véritablement intemporelle" is the *terminus ad quem* of Melville's imaginative process (Melville 3:90). The specific meaning of this intemporal silence and poetry must be approached within a dialectic of explanation and understanding--that is to say, the mystery of a silence within silence, an essential Silence with abysmal weight, should not simply be rejected on an empirical basis as a mythical origin.¹⁰ As Ricoeur points out, fiction need not obey the censorious "sobriety" of philosophical speculation and scientific investigation. He suggests, on the contrary, in regards to the question of the ultimate inscrutability of time and the "other" of time, that the privilege of fiction is to indulge in a certain inebriety by exceeding philosophical reflection on phenomenological and cosmological time and exploring the refiguring, or even transfiguring, power of archaisms and hermeticisms (cf. *TN* 3:271).

The sense of "numinous" Silence invoked in the writings of Beaulieu and Melville can be translated in the terms used by Rudolf Otto in his *The Idea of the Holy*, where the "language arts" are approached as "ideogrammatic expressions or allegories of the ineffable" (Radloff 50). Melville's and Beaulieu's apophatic quest for the sense of the other of historicity and temporality brings them to the very limits of narrativity. Given that "momentum," the remainder of this study will focus for the most part on those "breaches" within narrative emplotment and

narrative time opened by the use of monologue, dialogue and lyric poetry that point to an "inside narrative," a Silence protected by aposiopesis, and whose contours are thus shaped by modes of indirection and metaphorical redescription (*TN* 3:272-73). This redescription, moreover, ultimately involves a "seeing-as" that unfolds the possibility of "being-as," which is the very function of uchronia. A reading of "excess" in "Bartleby," *Billy Budd*, *Una* and *Discours de Samm* in relation to the question of literality and genealogy serves to demonstrate such a potentiality.

In his reading of "Bartleby," Rowe celebrates the bleeding conscience and the *oeuvre amputé* along the order of "human destiny," but entirely and unapologetically dismisses any transcendent meaning, or any "inside narrative" within the story, to which such verticality would seem to point (Rowe 138). Thus he substitutes *Pierre's* tragic notion of endings as "mutilated stumps" for the final lament of the narrator of Melville's tale of the Law: "Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!" ("B" 130). There is certainly no attempt on Rowe's part to recover the sense of "ce qui parle au coeur même du silence," and thus restore to humanity what it lacks or what has been excluded, which lack Beaulieu expresses through the "souffrance silencieuse" and the feeling of "mutilation" of Samm, an Amerindian who helps Beauchemin in his voyages and figures as the heroine of *Discours de Samm*. For Beaulieu, "*Bartléby l'écrivain, c'est l'homme agonique, et le cri lancinant, et cette prodigieuse fin de non-recevoir, et--*" (*Melville* 3:64). Rowe construes this non-reception of the "dead

letters" or "dead men" as the play of the sign. But the specificity of these exclusions should be better respected, as Melville's text discretely intimates:

Sometimes from out the folded paper the pale clerk takes a ring--the finger it was meant for, perhaps, molds in the grave; a bank note sent in swiftest charity--he whom it would relieve nor eats nor hungers any more; pardon for those who died despairing; hope for those who died unhoping; good tidings for those who died stifled by unrelieved calamities. On errands of life, these letters speed to death. ("B" 130)

The tragic failure of communication, "cette fin de non-recevoir," recalls the plaint of Holy Writ's Job (3:20-23). Once again the theodicean crisis, the (un)justifiable nature of suffering, motivates the play of the imagination and its flight into uchronia, or to surcease and quietude in the womb of eternity, in a sleep "with kings and counselors" at the "heart of the eternal pyramids"--"cette régression absolue et cet accomplissement absolu," in the words of Beaulieu ("B" 129; *Melville* 59). Beaulieu's *Una* likewise nihilizes her memory and returns to the womb of the whale in order to free herself from "la vie d'avant ma naissance," her true birth to *Mahat* or to herself as the One (*Una* 175-76; 220; 230-31). The negative moment of uchronia figured in Beaulieu's *Una* corresponds to the negative moment of the imagination, the suspension of the historical given. And it is followed by an apophatic vision of otherness.

Says the biblical Job of the day of his birth, "Let it be

cursed by those who curse certain days and are ready to rouse Leviathan" (3:8). In their gloss of this passage, the editors of the New Jerusalem Bible speak of "sorcerers or magicians whose curses and spells were believed capable...of producing eclipses, when 'Leviathan' temporarily swallowed the sun" (759). Una, who explicitly repudiates any incestuous relation with the sun, quite literally rouses Job's Leviathan, the primordial chaos or nothing, in order to annihilate the Book of History as the Book of *maya*, "le grand livre pas écrit de ce qui a jamais recommencé et refinira jamais: l'histoire impossible de ce qui aurait pu s'appeler MÈRES, de ce qui aurait pu s'appeler PÈRES, de ce qui aurait pu s'appeler ENFANTS" (*Una* 27, 232-34). In calling forth the end of the world, Una resembles Pierre, who likewise suppresses his memory and his genealogy in a quasi-apocalyptic ending that nevertheless fails to end the drama of history: his is the overman's apocalypse of apocalypse. In *Una*, however, the heroine escapes the man-of-war world with its phallic "longues épées téléguidantes" and "le grand cancer" of life in "le blanc de l'espace," simultaneously realizing Beaulieu and Melville's sidereal uchronia: "Nirvana! absorb us in your skies, / Annul us into thee" (*Una* 232; *CP* 232; see *EST* 426).

But Beaulieu's Una eventually goes on to give birth to Job so that a history of suffering and distention can rebegin (see *Una* 234). According to Job J Jobin, the hermeneutical key to unlock the secreted sense *Blanche forcée* lies in "le sens de l'entrelacs que forment mes initiales" (13). The always incomplete stutter of "J-(e)" suggests the incompleteness of the

individualized ego, a fractured I, continually reiterating the tragedy of Job in cycles whose center is nothingness: the "o" in Job J Job/in Job J Job/in Job. In this sense, the book that destroys itself as illusion is also the book that conceives the world as illusion. *Una: romaman* is the story of an Ishmael-like "orphan" who frees herself from anguish and re-creates the universe through writing, re-coloring the white world with "un grand tas de feuilles, des milliers de crayons de toutes les couleurs, mais rien qu'une gomme effaçante" (109). According to H. Bruce Franklin's *The Wake of the Gods*, "Bartleby" concerns "this strange being, who replays much of the role of Christ while behaving like a Hindu ascetic, and who ends by extinguishing himself and making dead letters of the scriptures which describe his prototype" (136). "Bartleby" is also a narrative that annuls itself in a fire which consumes the "dead letters" of the Law. But what remains once the cinders of the Book have been dispersed?

In Beaulieu's view, it is the sense of the holy and the eternal that is the letter that is lacking in the economy of the Law:

Du commencement à la fin, il s'agit d'une lettre, la première du langage, qui ne peut se dire parce qu'inaudible. Entendue, elle serait éclatement. Car dans la première lettre est la finalité. Ce nom même de Dieu qui, dans la religion juive, ne doit pas être nommé: le Verbe, donc la connaissance, est muet. Et c'est cela même, et c'est au milieu de cela même qu'il parle tant. De sa blancheur. De

sa blancheur de grande Baleine blanche. (*Melville* 3:61)

According to Ricoeur, the "unpronounceable name of JHWH designates the vanishing point common to the suprahistorical and the intrahistorical" (*TN* 3:266 n. 31). In *Moby-Dick*, the sailors believe that the White Whale is "not only ubiquitous, but immortal (for immortality is but ubiquity in time)" (158). In *Una*, the first word is the whale, and it is also a muted word; hence, *Una*'s book cannot begin with the whale, since in the fiction of life "la baleine peut pas être le premier mot mais le dernier" (150). The rhetoric of aposiopesis thus takes a decidedly apophatic turn, designating the other of time as the other of literality and historicity.

In his own denegation, *Bartleby* manifests the denial of Art and the Bible, for which his name is an acronym, and in his desire for immobility and silence, he points to the retreat of truth into eternity. The name of God and the kingdom of God, henceforth, will be crossed out from history and concealed behind its contrary--death. This is the paradox of the cross.¹¹

Wadlington describes this withdrawal through the "root of 'inert' [which] is *in ars*, without art" (114). "Without" here designates a "lack" in and beyond historicity and literality, which designation has the hyperbolic effect of a *throwing beyond* the grammar of being. Hyperbole designates a mode of writing not to be taken literally; it is at once in art and without art, demonstrating the possibility of language to *overthrow* its semantic limits in quest of the suprahistorical. According to Beaulieu, it is precisely this Otherness that haunts the

anonymous narrator of "Bartleby the Scrivener": "l'autre de lui-même," withdrawing from representation and language, "ce langage-silence qui le rend fou" (*Melville* 3:58, 59). Bartleby embodies "ce rien, que ce qui se refuse au dévoilement," and yet his muted history speaks from within its very silence (*Melville* 3:54-55). The terrorism and fascination Bartleby exercises upon the narrator as his "*double blanc*" and his "moi muet" would represent an instance of this sublime "difference" working at the heart of language, "(la) négation et omniprésence du langage" (3:54, 57). This sublime difference can be circumscribed by way of the breaches in the text that point to the other of time that haunts both the narrative and the narrator.

The imaginative variations in "Bartleby" offer at least two different levels of "horological" temporalization in addition to the inscrutability of Bartleby's "chronological" time. Turkey and Nippers are clearly associated with cosmological time, and especially with the movement of the sun. Turkey in his "old age...blot[s] the page" in the afternoon due to his love for "red ink," while Nipper's young "diseased ambition" manifests its restlessness in the morning; both characters successively disturb the "stillness" of the narrator's order ("B" 98-99, 100). These explicitly "natural" phenomena, dividing the day between the copyist's "eccentricities" and their respective "temper[s]," are made to coincide with the narrator's needs in "a good natural arrangement, under the circumstances" (100). Cosmological or solar time is thus "assumed" by authoritarian time, but Bartleby's "preference" for inertia cannot be "assumed" by any

order.

Bartleby is designated from the moment of his arrival as "a motionless young man" (101). He precisely follows no order, "[running] a day and night line, copying by sunlight and candlelight," and his omnipresence is attested to by the fact that "*he was always there--first in the morning, continually through the day, and the night*" ("B" 102, 108). Like Pierre, Bartleby "has assassinated the natural day," and "waked the infinite wakefulness in him"; he also "learn[s] how to live, by rehearsing the part of death" so that in the end he too "Lives without dining" (P 344-55; "B" 129). As Una suggests, *chronocide*, killing time, or "tuer le temps," seems immanent to the logic or "secret" of *uchronia* (see *Una* 231).

Bartleby is a typical Melvillean *Isolato*, "absolutely alone in the universe," and like Ishmael, "[a] bit of wreck in the mid-Atlantic" (116). Furthermore, like Pierre, the scrivener figuratively stands as "the last column of some ruined temple...mute and solitary" (117). He even implements Plotinus' method of ascetic withdrawal, relinquishing as he does both reading and writing. In the "interview" late in the story, when he demonstrates "unwonted wordiness," he explicitly refuses "change" or becoming; he prefers to be "stationary" and "not particular" (125-26): what he desires is immobility and transcendence. Bartleby's first refusal "not to" leaves the narrator "in perfect silence," the predicate "to do--namely, to examine a small paper with me" refused in favor of the nameless breach, the lack, the "--" or "the not" of Bartleby's "point-

blank," explicitly colourless denial (103, 108, 119). The movement of signification, the certainty of "meaning" that the narrator here "assumes" by way of his authoritarian "voice," is disrupted by Bartleby's "flutelike tone" ("B" 102-104), which recalls the flute-playing mystic upon the tower of the Church of the Apostles and the sad "complaining" of the "Eolean pine" in *Pierre* (64; see 306).

Bartleby's denying signifies a "preference" for a "calm" not "ordinarily human," a sublime "nothing" rather than simply a refusal of "will" (103, 119, 107). Such a "calm" rejoins the "everlasting calm" sounded in *Mardi*, "a state of existence where existence itself seems suspended," or "the region of the everlasting lull, introductory to a positive vacuity" (513, 34, 35). Says the philosopher Babbalanja, "Sadness makes the silence throughout the realms of space; sadness is universal and eternal; but sadness is tranquillity, tranquillity the uttermost that souls may hope for" (*M* 526). This quietude far exceeds the "assumed tranquillity" of "Bartleby's" narrator, and he must inevitably make "unheard-of exemptions" for it; in other words, he cannot make Bartleby's "perfect silence" and the wisdom of woe speak, but silence and wisdom clearly haunt his every utterance (123, 109).

Bartleby's immobility disrupts both authoritarian and narrative time, as evidenced by the breaches that punctuate and hollow out the Melvillean text in the form of dashes and omitted predicates. No "biography," no mark of life, can capture what is an "irreparable loss" to literature, a Being beyond being that

"is" a lack--the hallowed Oro (L *or*=>*os* mouth) of *Mardi* or the Coelus (Gk *koflos* hollow) of *Pierre*--and so can never appear in the mark or the utterance as such but which manifests itself by way of an economy of negativity ("B" 95; P 388). As in *Blanche forcée*, the "sense" of the holy in "Bartleby" beyond the violence of suppressions and omissions would reappear only in Una's "blanc d'espace," between the letters of Beaulieu's re-telling of Job, "le sens de l'entrelacs que forment mes initiales" (*Una* 232; *Bf* 13). What has been excluded in history remains in the hope of uchronia, the "double blanc" of history. Moreover, this terrorism of the Other and this denial of literality and historicity is followed in Melville's *Billy Budd* and Beaulieu's *Discours de Sann* by a vision of the healing power of the holy.

Billy Budd, of course, is also an *oeuvre amputé*, "Truth uncompromisingly told...[with] its ragged edge...[and] a narration...less finished than an architectural finial" (75). Yet, as the wording of *Pierre* shows, death is also a meeting with the "eternal tides of time and fate," and Billy Budd's good death ("euthanasia"), demarked by its "phenomenal" stillness and by an "emphasized silence," deserves to be approached with a different attitude than that of a clinical skepticism which rejects anything that is "imaginative and metaphysical--in short, Greek" (P 170; *BB* 72). Perhaps it even has to be approached with the prejudice of the "superstitious" like that of the sailors who behold the "prodigy of repose" that is Billy Budd (74); such an attitude would certainly be untimely, even from the temporal point-of-view of the implied author. To say this otherwise, the

"lexicon of science" must be replaced by that "lexicon which is based on Holy writ," or at least one that preserves a sense of the holy in writing. Baby Budd's death can then be construed as a suprahistorical phenomenon, a temporal break extending vertically into uchronia; according to the surgeon's "hypothesis," his heart might have ceased "like a watch when in carelessly winding it up you strain at the finish, thus snapping the chain" (72). Billy's "suspension" momentarily overthrows and transfigures horological time. Melville thus inserts a uchronic vision of the end of Man, the "finish," "inside" a historical and personal narrative "less finished than an architectural finial" (BB 75).

In "L'île aux Basques comme démonstration de l'impuissance," Bobi raves every year for a period of three days, claiming that he has been murdered, then falls silent while contemplating an image of the Tibetan wheel of life. His doctor and his guard have a conversation strikingly similar to that of the surgeon and the porter in *Billy Budd*:

--Pourtant, on dirait qu'il est heureux. Regardez-le,

Monsieur Brunton: ne dirait-on pas qu'il est heureux?

--Il doit l'être, sinon pourquoi garderait-il le silence?

Mais peut-être à son prochain délire nous dira-t-il enfin sa véritable histoire. (EST 106)

Uchronia and the will to sainthood would express the desire for cosmic atonement and eternity, a "happy time" that is not, however, "no time"; rather this time denotes the abolition of profane time. For Beaulieu, the meaning of Baby Budd's

hyperbolic consent transcends the "Calvinist text" (BB 65) of History and the Law, and so, like the truth of Bobi and Bartleby's "histories," it cannot be spoken:

Il n'y aura pas de pitié, la Loi ne l'autorisant pas. Pour elle ne compte que l'acte. Et juger un acte interdit toute sensibilité, même et surtout celle du Père. C'est ce qu'affirme le capitaine Vere..."Le coeur, c'est la femme dans l'homme et, si cruel que cela soit, nous devons la chasser"--car le coeur est la profondeur, donc l'envers de ce qui se vit sur *l'Indomptable*, cette usine guerrière qui ne s'occupe que de la façade, de l'apparence. Voilà à quoi va être sacrifié Billy Budd. Et voilà aussi pourquoi même la mort ne l'atteindra pas: Billy Budd n'habite pas le même monde que le monde, il est le Christ souverain dans l'au-delà de tout langage. (Melville 3:210-11)

The mark of the fallen man-of-war world with which Billy is impressed as a "fighting peacemaker" occults and crosses out but does not obliterate the other-worldly possibility of the holy, the hope of a re-creation *ex nihilo*, that is, beyond death. Considered along the lines of Beaulieu's genealogical "lecture-fiction," Billy's gesture of forgiveness would represent the transfiguring power of agape that goes beyond history from within history, offering the "pardon" of which both Abel and Leonard originally despair in *Discours de Samm* (see 216). According to Beaulieu, "Melville écrira *Billy Budd* pour se délivrer de sa culpabilité" over the death of Malcolm, just as he writes *Les Voyageries* to sublimate the image of the Father and take up the

work of mourning (*Melville* 3:161-62).¹² When Vere lies dying, he finds solace in the act of murmuring Billy Budd's name, a name like a "magical drug," just as Billy's "agony" "survived not the something healing in the closeted interview with Captain Vere" (*BB* 76, 67). This "diviner magnanimity" between the patriarchal figure and the type of the Son, pointing to "what remains primeval in our formalized humanity," is itself preserved in a "holy oblivion" (63-64).

The possibility of the holy is thus concealed beneath the surface of monumental history and ideological distortion, as exemplified by the official "record" (77) that misreads the *character* of Billy Budd and Claggart. Furthermore, in both Beaulieu and Melville, this possibility is expressed through apophatic writing, which by virtue of its equivocalness always allows for at least two readings. The "smooth white marble" of the "circumambient air" in the "clearness of its serenity" can be related to the Mardian "calm" of Serenia or Una's "blanc d'espace," each of which silently attests to the numinous quality of the holy. Otherwise, this white space can be "rechristen[ed]" like the St. Louis into "the *Athée* (the Atheist)," the "aptest name" for the complete absence of the holy in the man-of-war world (*BB* 75). Similarly, Billy Budd's blessing can be read as "a conventional felon's benediction," or in terms of his illiteracy and the song it calls forth, in "the clear melody of a singing bird" (70; see 9).

The truth of Vere is redeemed only by Billy's gesture of forgiveness, which preserves those "feminine" values of

compassion and mercy that the imperial conscience recognizes but ignores in the name of progressive violence. Just as the narrator of *Bartleby* rationalizes "charity and philanthropy" within a theory of "self-interest," Vere's coercive laws form a "dike" against revolutionary upheavals deemed "at war with the peace of the world and the true welfare of mankind" ("B" 120; *BB* 18-19). In both cases, it is a question of the rational delimitation and pragmatization of charity over and against its truly artless, selfless manifestation. In the man-of-war world, the truth of the chronological man is pacified; it is not excluded outright from the war economy, but rather included and thereafter occluded by this metonymic strategy of propitiation. The "Prince of Peace," then, is impressed "in the host of the God of War--Mars," and, obtaining propitiation by "brute Force," this usurpative God appropriates the "religion of the meek" as his own imprimatur (69). Billy Budd's "unconscious simplicity" is severely censored and ill-judged by martial law; but, slipping free of the mechanisms of discipline and the imperial nihil obstat, a sailor with an "artless poetic temperament" also celebrates and gives "rude utterance" to the peacemaker's charitable innocence (78). Billy's inertia (in Wadlington's sense) is thus evinced by a withdrawal at the core of Melville's narrative. Vere's manipulation of truth through Orphic "forms" contrasts with Billy Budd's Orphic consent, which additionally gives resonance and shape to "le silence dans le silence" through an "emphasized silence" (*BB* 74, 72; see *Melville* 1:36).

Like the abbreviation of Job J Jobin's name into the initial

littera that are then pluralized into literary form, the breakdown of signification brought about by Billy Budd's stutter opens a space for the holy as the true Alpha, the muted name, that exists prior to the first alphabetical character of language and thus precedes all utterances. Aposiopesis gives voice to this silence through omission. In *Don Quichotte de la Démanche*, Beaulieu speaks of a truth "dans l'au-delà de l'écriture...dans le silence de la mort" (28), a kind of holy oblivion. Leonard's suicide in *Discours de Samm* constitutes just such an apophatic ending: "Alors c'est la fin et c'est terrible parce que c'est encore le corps qui a gagné et que ça ne tient pourtant plus à rien" (246). The privatives that follow tend to transform Leonard's denial and absence into a form of euthanasia and then into an affirmation of the blessing and the hope of Serenia: "Samm et moi debout l'un à côté de l'autre et secs comme de vieux pommier, sans larmes, sans cris, sans plus de mal nulle part: il est là, au-dessus du sofa-lit, dans la musique de Gustav Mahler, et se balance tranquillement" (*Samm* 246-47).

Haunted by the death of her father, Samm is also strongly associated with nature, while Abel plays the role of the patriarch who violates Samm and who fears that he has failed his daughters. Leonard's hyperbolic consent seems to point to the possibility of a reconciliation between the "masculine" and the "feminine," just as Beauchemin hopes that "l'histoire va se terminer" with Samm's body "enfin réconcilié, sans culpabilité et sans angoisse" (219). The whole narrative foreshadows this ending and this reconciliation by constantly referring to

Virginia Woolf's suicide as an instance of euthanasia intending of "la sérénité immobile" (32).¹³ What does this *enfin*--an oft-repeated mantra in *Discours de Samm*--mean in the end? What does it signify about the end? In his essay "Une certaine idée de l'Amérique," Beaulieu maintains that "le problème posé à l'homme en est un d'espèce et de finalité" (EST 381).

As a prolonged meditation on illness and death, *Discours de Samm: comédie* answers to the economy of "le cancer de la vie" that surfaces in Rowe and Beaulieu's reading of *The Confidence-Man*: desire/fear of death (see *Samm* 166, 232). Fiction, as Ricoeur notes, does play a part in the "apprenticeship to death" (OA 162). What truth does *Billy Budd* and *Discours de Samm* have to teach the reader concerning death or being-towards-death? Billy and Leonard's deaths clearly have an effect of "counterdesolation" (to use a term from Kermode) on the living. Due to his proximity to "unadulterate Nature," Billy Budd does not share the "irrational fear...more prevalent in highly civilized communities," but rather serves to characterize a different attitude towards nature and death, just as Leonard emanates "[une] grande force tranquille" (BB 68; *Samm* 205). In *Sagamo Job J*, Beauchemin poses as Melville: "Je m'appelle Herman Melville. Mettons." From beyond the pall, "ce lieu sans limites...sans référence," Melville imparts a certain wisdom: "Toute mort est blanche et c'est pour oublier cette toute petite chose qu'on la remplit de mots graves et bruyants comme des corbeaux" (SJJ 109-10).

Bernhard Radloff points to the fundamental "lack" within the

war economy as a "trying to say," a stutter within the endless proliferation of the sign. "Instrumental reason," he goes on to suggest, "rationalizes demise--*ad infinitum*--but it has no word for the mystery of death; it has occulted the mystery and renders itself innocent of death." Radloff's Heideggerian approach allows him to demark the "mystery" and the "immense power of the holy" occulted within the "ersatz economy" of logocentrism (64). Alternatively, given Beaulieu's interest in Eastern philosophy and a Buddhistic economy of writing, this "mystery" of silence manifested in a "good death" might be circumscribed through Nagajurna's use of language as *via negativa*. David Loy provides an excellent model for such a reading in "The Deconstruction of Buddhism": according to Nagajurna, "Ultimate serenity is the coming to rest of all ways of taking things, the repose of named things" (qtd in Loy 246).

The possibility of the holy concealed beyond conceptual discourse seems to have haunted Melville even as he wrote his most ambitious novel. In a letter to Hawthorne dated April 16, 1851, wherein it is notably a question of "cross[ing] the frontiers into Eternity," Melville writes, "But it is this *Being* of the matter; there lies the knot with which we choke ourselves. As soon as you say *Me*, a *God*, a *Nature*, so soon you jump off your stool and hang from the beam. Yes, that word is the hangman" (*Correspondence* 186). Perhaps to say "Me," "God," or "Nature" really means to hang, to take an intuitive leap by relinquishing the "carpet-bag" that is the "Ego" (186). Such a leap would imply a superseding of the "Murray's Grammar" of Being which Pip

recites in "The Doubloon," as well as the "alphabet" of "Nature" which appears in *Pierre* (MD 362; P 383). Both of these grammars suggest an "egotistical" model of reading and interpreting perceptions as "signs" of named things (MD 359). To invoke silence, on the contrary, would mean wholly to relinquish objectifying thought. Hence, Beaulieu claims that the "ego" is simply a "pre-text," a transcendental signified, and that the aim of literature is to lead the self to silence (EST 92).

In similar terms, Candrakirti, a commentator of Nagajurna, paraphrases the latter's notion of *nirvana* as the "coming to rest, the non-functioning, of perceptions as signs of all named things" (qtd in "Deconstruction" 249). Babbalanja himself asserts that "truth is in things and not in words; truth is voiceless" and "that there are those who falter in the common tongue, because they think in another; and these are accounted stutterers and stammerers" (M 245, 330). When Ishmael compares the Sperm Whale to "all ponderous profound beings, such as Plato, Pyrrho, the Devil, Jupiter, Dante," and even himself, in the midst of "composing a litte treatise on Eternity," he stresses the "incommunicable" character of their "contemplations" and "divine intuitions" and likens them to a "stammer," since "the whale has no voice" (MD 312-14). Pierre avoids the hangman, and thus leaves the reader entangled "in ebon vines" with no impression of his character and no revelation whatsoever (P 405). Aristotelian *lusis* is transformed into paralysis, and the "ever-encroaching appetite for God" is itself characterized by sterility (P 386).

The last image of Billy Budd is also that of an ambiguous hero caught in a ravel of "oozy weeds" (BB 79), but the withdrawal from narrative configuration and figuration characteristic of his "inside story" both veils and unveils a "mystical vision" (71) that quietly bespeaks the secret hope of uchronia and the mystery of the "chronological" man. In *Sagamo Job J*, when Job achieves atonement with the whale, he affirms that "il n'y a jamais de mort ni de dépossession par la mort" (SJJ 79). As Loy argues, "If there is no one who is born and dies, there is only birth and death, but if there are only the events of birth of death, then there is no real birth and death"--there is only, in Beaulieu's words, "une prodigieuse vitalité, que ce qui se meut dans la contradiction" ("Clôture"; SJJ 79). The pervasive sense of lack that drives the economy of life and death evaporates along with this realization.

In his reading of *Mardi*, Beaulieu marries Buddhism to Christianity. "Sérénia," he concludes, "c'est ce qui reste de l'enseignement du Christ une fois dépouillé de toutes les hérésies, c'est-à-dire la paix de l'esprit...[B]ien qu'incapable de comprendre le monde, l'homme peut y vivre heureux, *enfin apaisé parce qu'espérant*. C'est la leçon chrétienne: la joie est intérieure, le mystère est non en soi mais soi, et porteur d'amour" (Melville 2:151; emphasis added). This *enfin* seems to imply the serenity of belonging to what Ricoeur, in his essay on "Freedom in the Light of Hope," calls an "*economy of superabundance*." "To be free," he suggests, "is to sense and to know that one belongs to this economy, to be 'at home' in this

economy. The 'in spite of'...is only the reverse...of the joyous 'how much more' by which freedom feels itself...conspire with the aspiration of the whole of creation for redemption" (CI 410).

Finally, freedom in the light of hope is freedom for the denial of death: the break, the discontinuity, imparted by uchronia, perhaps signals only this hope, this "in spite of death" and this "how much more" born and reborn beyond the cross.

In the "schematism" and perfectionism that characterizes uchronia, the "pathology" of the utopian imaginary arises as the fallacy of black-and-white thinking, attested to by its lack of concern for the "work of time" and the incompatible and unpredictable aspects of human praxis (TA 185). Ricoeur, however, issues an admonition to skeptics in the form of a paradox in the style of Nietzsche at his (un)timely best:

This pathology is rooted in the excentric function of utopia.... But who knows whether this or that erratic mode of existence is not a prophecy of humanity to come? Who even knows whether a certain degree of individual pathology is not the condition for social change, to the extent that this pathology brings to light the sclerosis of dead institutions? To state this in a more paradoxical fashion, who knows whether the illness is not at the same time the therapy? (TA 187)

Nietzsche's suprahistorical poison to the historical sense, which mobilizes the "eternalizing powers of art and religion," points beyond the historical and the manifold to the "stable and eternal," thus annulling the endless distention of consciousness into the past through the poetic capacity of art and religion to

redescribe human experience. The significance of Nietzsche's use of the suprahistorical as a counterpoison to objectifying thought is especially pertinent to this analysis, since it effectively converts the "nausea" of history into an affirmation of the fullness of being, "things that are, things eternal," as man's proper existential horizon (*UM* 120). Nietzschean forgetfulness thus functions as a subversion of time immanent to the logic of uchronia in its excentric movement towards an ineffable communion with the eternal. The suprahistorical represents an alternative to the "unhistorical" attitude of modernity; coming as it does *after* modernity, it is a species of post-modernity that conducts an anamnesis of the present in order to disclose the propitious signs of its authentic propitiation.

Hope does not seek to justify the world as such; it is a metaphysical virtue that has as its regulative idea a totality of being. Hope does not, however, result in the *Aufhebung* of absolute knowledge, but rather "affronts" and "consoles." In fact, "this insignificant act works in silence and at one and the same time is hidden and reveals itself in its power to recapitulate all the degrees of primary affirmation" (*HT* 303-304). Perhaps no mode of reflection privileges the healing power of hope and tragic optimism so much as the utopian imaginary; it is hope that bridges the gap between the factual and the ideal and thus constitutes the very sense of uchronia. This silent power of hope, occulted by virtue of its very untimeliness, is nevertheless intimated by the apophatic denials and withdrawals at the core of Melville and Beaulieu in their enterprise as writers.

Notes

1. In the postscript to *Through the Custom-House: Nineteenth-Century Fiction and Modern Theory*, J.C. Rowe admits to having enacted a type of Nietzschean reversal, a self-fathering act of forgetfulness, when he speaks of "the regressive history of [his] study, which reads backwards from twentieth-century 'influences' to nineteenth-century 'followers'" (193). Hence, in his reading of "Bartleby," Melville is given over to the interpretative will to power, and Jacques Derrida ironically becomes the theoretical precursor of the American author. Rowe's own performative conception of modernity and discourse as inextricably tied to a will to authority/power constitutes an invitation to think more and differently. It calls for an interpretation of his interpretation of interpretation, and consequently, a surpassing of modernity as a ubiquitous and meta-historical term. Only another theory of discourse can uncover the particular repressions and ellipses of "modern theory," especially insofar as it is enmeshed with the prejudices of modernity; these prejudices include, for example, its prejudice against prejudice and its overvaluation of the present.

2. Consciousness is reduced by Rowe to a divided structure, a function of the semiotic economy of the custom-house with its admissions and suppressions and its endless "circulation" (195), an ecliptic orbiting about the negativity of the sign; it is this "abstract power of language" that carries life, a somnambulistic being or an "unreasoning wheel," like the carpenter in *Moby-Dick* (see Rowe 194). But the elaboration of this semiological

unconscious, proceeding as it does from unwarranted hypostases, expresses only the negative moment of signification; it ignores its extra-linguistic aim or reference (*visée*), which Ricoeur calls alternatively the "matter of the text," the "world of the text," or the "being brought to language by the text." Within the scope of Ricoeur's hermeneutical model, on the contrary, "it is the text, with its universal power of unveiling, which gives a *self* to the *ego*" ("Appropriation," in *HHS* 193). Ricoeur opposes this detour by way of the signs of the other to the narcissism of the reader and the illusions of the subject. Beaulieu's *Monsieur Melville* also undertakes a dialectic between explanation and understanding, between distanciation and participatory belonging, which precludes any *Aufhebung* and subverts the immediacy of the self-same subject (see 1:101).

3. In "Literary History and Literary Modernity," Paul de Man suggests that the "appeal of modernity, the desire to break out of literature toward the reality of the moment, prevails and, in its turn, folding back upon itself, engenders the repetition and the continuation of literature." Modernity is thus both "a falling away from literature and a rejection of history" and "the principle that gives literature duration and historical existence" (162). Paul Ricoeur describes this zero degree as the "Cartesian moment: free choice in the realm of the imaginary" (see *TN* 3:177).

4. In his "Christianity and the Meaning of History," Ricoeur provides a very different reading of Christianity and its relation to history, which intersects with the philosophical

message of *History and Truth*. It seems that Beaulieu, however, is more interested in a critique of authenticity leveled at historical Christianity; in his treatment of *Mardi*, he assimilates the kerygma, once it is freed of its institutional "heresies," to the Buddhistic message that traverses most of his work (*Melville* 2:151). What Beaulieu says of Jack Kerouac-- "cette folie du Zen, qu'était-ce au fond sinon la mystique catholique" (*Jack Kérouac* 50)--might just as appropriately be applied to himself.

5. See Derrida's "How Not to Speak: Denials."

6. On Christ as the mysterious "archetype" and the "figure of the End" in Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, see Ricoeur's "Freedom in the Light of Hope." "It is within the strict limits of a theory of the schema and analogy, hence, of a theory of transcendental imagination," writes Ricoeur, "that the philosopher approaches not only the meanings of hope but the figure of Christ in which these meanings are concentrated" (*CI* 424, n.7).

7. Compare *OA* 20, 302; *HT* 7, 323; *TN* 3:215; *CI* 405.

8. Concerning this Heideggerian theme, see Bernhard Radloff's "The Truth of Indirection and the Possibility of the Holy in *Billy Budd*," to which this chapter owes a large debt.

9. Beaulieu's critique of capitalism remains inseparable from his attempt to supersede what he judges to be the inauthenticity of this simulacral economy. In the opening pages of the labyrinthine *Sagamo Job J*, for instance, Beauchemin writes, "je suis pris par ça...à croire qu'il n'y a de vie que spirale

fiévreuse, à croire que je ne saurai jamais la qualité des sangs qui hors de moi coulent, devenant livres manufacturiés, devenant gestuelles d'écrivain courant après le livre de soi-même" (11).

See also "Les raquettes de l'hiver de neige," in *EST*, 293-99.

10. E.D. Blodgett begins his essay on "Sublations: Silence in Poetic and Sacred Discourse" by "suggest[ing]...that perhaps there is no silence, as Jacques Derrida would say, *hors-texte*. And so the silence with which I wish to begin I have called an alpha privative of silence, a silence codified at the beginning of an alphabet, and a silence negated." Because pure silence does not exist even in an "anechoic chamber," it becomes simply "the response to a certain desire," a fictitious silence (207-8).

11. "Hope, insofar as it is hope of resurrection, is the living contradiction of what it proceeds from and what is placed under the sign of the Cross and Death" (see *CI* 410). Ricoeur opposes an ethics of the possible and a religion of the promise to an ethics of the eternal present.

12. In "La tentation de la sainteté," Beaulieu stresses the importance of coming to terms with the past; in this respect, he speaks of "[un] passé...assumé et dé-passé" (*EST* 148). Beaulieu describes the paternal burials in Kerouac's *The Town and the City* and *Vanity of Dulvoz* as "une ultime tentative dont l'object est de sublimer son déracinement," and he admits to having employed this same tactic in *Jos Connaissant* (*Jack Kérouac* 80-81; see also *Melville* 2:17-18).

13. Interestingly, Ricoeur himself offers a reading of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* in *Time and Narrative*. Septimus' suicide and its relation to eternity play a large part in his interpretation.

Works Cited

- Barthes, Roland. *Critical Essays*. Transl. Richard Howard.
Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern UP, 1972.
- Beaulieu, Victor-Lévy. *Blanche forcée (Les Voyageries 1)*, récit.
Montréal: VLB, 1976.
- Beaulieu. *Don Quichotte de la démanche*. Montréal: Éditions de
l'Aurore, 1974.
- Beaulieu. *Discours de Samm (Les Voyageries 6)*, comédie.
Montréal: VLB, 1983.
- Beaulieu. *Entre la sainteté et le terrorisme: essais*.
Montréal: VLB, 1984.
- Beaulieu. *Jack Kérouac: essai-poulet*. Montréal: Éditions du
jour, 1972.
- Beaulieu. *Monsieur Melville (Les Voyageries 4) (1. Dans les
aveilles de Moby Dick)*, lecture-fiction. Montréal: VLB, 1978.
- Beaulieu. *Monsieur Melville (2. Lorsque souffle Moby Dick)*,
lecture-fiction.
- Beaulieu. *Monsieur Melville (3. L'après Moby Dick ou la
souveraine poésie)*, lecture-fiction.
- Beaulieu. *N'évoque plus que le désenchantement de ta ténèbre,
mon si pauvre Abel (Les Voyageries 2)*, lamentation. Montréal:
VLB, 1976.
- Beaulieu. *Sagamo Job J (Les Voyageries 3)*, cantique. Montréal:
VLB, 1977.

- Beaulieu. *Una (Les Voyageries 5)*, romaman. Montréal: VLB, 1980.
- Beaulieu. *Un rêve québécois*. Montréal: VLB, 1977.
- Blodgett, E.D. "Sublations: Silence in Poetic and Sacred Discourse." In *Silence, the Word and the Sacred*. Ed. E.D. Blodgett and H.G. Coward. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier UP, 1989. 207-20.
- Brodtkorb, Paul Jr. *Ishmael's White World: A Phenomenological Reading of Moby-Dick*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1967.
- Chassay, Jean-François. "L'obsession de connaître (Beaulieu face à Melville)." *Tangence* 41 (Octobre 1993): 69-85.
- Coward, Harold. "A Hindu Response to Derrida's View of Negative Theology." In *Derrida and Negative Theology*. Ed. Harold Coward and Toby Foshay. Albany: State U of New York P, 1992. 199-226.
- De Man, Paul. *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983.
- Derrida, Jacques. "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." In *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*. Ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser. New York: Columbia UP, 1989. 3-70.
- Derrida. "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Newly Adopted in Philosophy." In *Derrida and Negative Theology*. 25-72.
- Derrida. *Writing and Difference*. Transl. Alan Bass. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978.
- Eliade, Mircea. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. New York: Bollingen, 1965.

- Ellenwood, Ray. "Victor-Lévy Beaulieu and the Québeckization of American Literature." In *Context North America: Canadian/U.S. Literary Relations*. Ed. Camille R. La Bossière. Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1994. 89-96.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Politics." In *Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. New York: AMS P, 1968. Vol. 3. 197-221.
- Foucault. "Le Langage à l'infini." *Tel quel* 15 (1963): 44-53.
- Foucault. "What Is Enlightenment?" In *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984. 32-50.
- Franklin, H. Bruce. *The Wake of the Gods*. Stanford, CT: Stanford UP, 1965.
- Gray, Richard. "'All's o'er, and ye know him not': A Reading of *Pierre*." In *Herman Melville: Reassessments*. London: Vision P, 1984. 116-34.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View." Transl. W. Hardie. In *Theories of History*. Ed. Patrick Gardiner. New York: Free P, 1959. 22-34.
- Kearney, Richard. *Poetics of Imagining: From Husserl to Lyotard*. London: Harper Collins, 1991.
- Kermode, Frank. "Endings, Continued." In *Languages of the Unsayable*. 71-94.
- Kermode. *The Sense of an Ending*. London: Oxford UP, 1968.
- Kröller, Eva-Marie. "Postmodernism, Colony, Nation: the Melvillean Texts of Bowering and Beaulieu." *University of Ottawa Quaterly* 54.2 (April/June 1984): 53-61.

- Lawrence, D.H. *The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence*. Ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts. London: Heinemann, 1964.
- Loy, David. "The Clôture of Deconstruction: A Mahayana Critique of Derrida." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27.1.5 (March 1987): 59-80.
- Loy. "The Deconstruction of Buddhism." In *Derrida and Negative Theology*. 227-255.
- Melville, Herman. *Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories*. New York: Bantam, 1990.
- Melville, Herman. *Collected Poems*. Ed. Howard P. Vincent. Chicago: Packard, 1947.
- Melville. *Correspondence*. Ed. Lynn Horth. Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern UP, 1993.
- Melville. *Mardi, and A Voyage Thither*. Ed. Tyrus Hillway. New Haven, Conn.: College and UP, 1973.
- Melville. *Moby-Dick*. Ed. Harrison Hayford and Hershel Parker. New York: Norton, 1967.
- Melville. *Pierre or, The Ambiguities*. New York: Signet, 1949.
- Melville. *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade*. Ed. Stephen Matterson. London: Penguin, 1990.
- Morency, Jean. "Américanité et anthropophagie littéraire dans *Monsieur Melville*." *Tangence* 41 (Octobre 1993): 54-68.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals*. Transl. Francis Golffing. New York: Doubleday, 1956.
- Nietzsche. *Untimely Meditations*. Transl. R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.

- Radloff, Bernhard. "The Truth of Indirection and the Possibility of the Holy in *Billy Budd*." *Religion and Literature* 20.3 (Autumn 1988): 49-70.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Fallible Man*. Part II in the *Philosophy of the Will*. Book I of *Finitude and Guilt* series. Transl. Charles Kelbey. Chicago: Gateway, 1965.
- Ricoeur. *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*. Transl. with intro. by Erazim V. Kahak. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern UP, 1966.
- Ricoeur. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. Transl. Denis Savage. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1970.
- Ricoeur. *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II*. Transl. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1991.
- Ricoeur. *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. Transl. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981.
- Ricoeur. *Histoire et vérité*. Paris: Seuil, 1964.
- Ricoeur. *History and Truth*. Transl. Charles A. Kelbey. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1965.
- Ricoeur. *Oneself as Another*. Transl. Kathleen Blamey. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992.
- Ricoeur. *The Conflict of Interpretations*. Ed. Don Ihde. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1974.
- Ricoeur. *The Symbolism of Evil*. Book II in *Finitude and Guilt* series. Transl. Emerson Buchanan. Boston: Beacon P, 1967.

- Ricoeur. *Time and Narrative*. Transl. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago, London: U of Chicago P, 1984.
3 volumes.
- Rowe, John Carlos. *Through the Custom-House: Nineteenth-Century American Fiction and Modern Theory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982.
- The New Jerusalem Bible*. Ed. Henry Wansbrough. New York: Doubleday, 1985.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *Tree and Leaf*. London: Grafton, 1964.
- Tougas, Gérard. *Destin littéraire du Québec*. Montréal: Éditions Québec/Amérique, 1982.
- Tougas. *Puissance littéraire des États-Unis*. Lausanne: L'Âge d'homme, 1972.
- Vivekânanda, Swami. *The Vedanta Philosophy; an address before the Graduate Philosophical Society of Harvard University, March 25, 1896*. New York: Vedanta Society, 1901.
- Wadlington, Warwick. *The Confidence Game in American Literature*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975.