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Melville's Portrait of Same-Sex Marriage in *Moby-Dick*

STEVEN B. HERRMANN

Same-sex marriage is a central concern affecting America's cultural identity. Supporting it as a basic human right will not only promote individuation and psychological growth, but also advance a new stage of sociopolitical development in the world.

The Ishmael-Queequeg "marriage" in Herman Melville's classic *Moby-Dick* (1851/1988) is the first portrait of same-sex marriage in American literature. Might same-sex marriage have always been an unconscious aspect of the American spirit—a central part of our living myth?

I find it surprising that we can find no serious examination of the meaning of same-sex marriage by Jungian analyst Edward Edinger, the first Jungian who attempted to decode the mystery of Melville's homoerotic tropes within the context of a full textual analysis. On this important issue Edinger wrote, "I doubt there is any question of overt homosexuality here" (1995, 36).

My position is that we do not know, given the historical data, whether the *homoerotic symbolism* in Melville's novel was patterned on actual homosexual experiences in his life. My hypothesis is that Melville's vision has everything to do with homosexuality from a social, political, religious, and human rights point of view. It simply cannot be ignored.

I will provide the reader with a synopsis of some pertinent aspects of the story. Then I will trace Melville's portrait of same-sex marriage to its roots in Polynesian society. I will end by grounding the "wedding" symbolism in *Moby-Dick* in Melville's literary relationship with Nathaniel Hawthorne, so the reader may begin to see, feel, and experience the remarkable ways in which this poet of the homoerotic imagination (Herrmann 2007) embodies the archetype of same-sex marriage in the interpersonal field of male-male love.

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A substantial number of Melvillean scholars from his time to ours have been drawn to him by the almost irresistible pull they feel toward his vision of universal brotherhood with all men. This *homoerotic feeling* in his work has appealed to male and female homosexuals alike, as well as to bisexuals and heterosexuals, because it is based upon an archetype of the *coniunctio* (Beebe 1993)[1] that is universally grounded in the body and, hence, in the human psyche as a whole.

Melville's Myth for Post-Modern Times

No one can read *Moby-Dick* without being impressed with its rich religious symbolism. Any examination of such a controversial subject must flesh out the lineaments of the shadow side of the symbols Melville portrays, as well as illuminate their light side. For what we are concerned with here is an issue that is sure to raise religious eyebrows, and the problem of evil that surrounds our topic—same-sex marriage—needs to be thoroughly analyzed from a psychological and spiritual point of view.

Let me begin with a basic postulate. At the center of the complex of same-sex marriage is an archetypal symbol, an image, a self-portrait of homosexual instinct that is numinous in its native Ground. What do I mean by *Ground?* In his essay, "Mind and Earth," Jung spoke of the archetypes as the "roots which the psyche has sunk in the earth" and "through which the psyche is attached to nature, or in which its link with the earth and the world appears most tangible. The psychic influence of the earth and its laws is seen most clearly in these primordial images" (1931/1968, CW 10, ¶53). During the writing of *Moby-Dick,* Melville penetrated to the archetypal Ground of same-sex marriage at his home at "Arrowhead" and emerged from his descent into history with a veritable spiritual revelation.[2]

Melville's portrait of same-sex marriage is part and parcel of the American mythos, a first attempt to move beyond religious fanaticism regarding homosexuality toward a "fourth" standpoint in the Self—Jung's term for the all-inclusive principle of the collective human psyche. The myth and the letter Melville sent to his friend Nathanial Hawthorne suggest what the archetype of same-sex marriage might *mean* in light of contemporary world events. Here, I include not only an interpretation of its light and loving side, depicted in Melville's portrait of the Ishmael-Queequeg marriage, but also its shadow side, seen in the Ahab-Parsee pair: the shadow of homophobia, male hate, vengeance, and war.

The origins of Melville's portrait of same-sex marriage can be traced to his voyage to Polynesia in 1842. The archetype of same-sex marriage reached apotheosis, however, in the Melville-Hawthorne letter, where Melville appears to have broken through to transcendental Ground, which gives him his subjective truth, his personal myth, and a generally agreed upon American myth. In order to understand the historical significance of *Moby-Dick* as a myth-narrative for post-modern times, we must first familiarize ourselves

with some of the key figures in the tragic drama, namely Ishmael and Queequeg (the same-sex couple with whom we will be primarily concerned), Father Maple, the White Whale, Ahab, and Fedallah. As Leslie Fiedler stressed long ago,

> Though Ahab and Ishmael are opposites, they are also one—two halves of a single epic hero; and only in their essential unity is the final unity of the book to be found. What Melville disjoined, in a typically American stratagem of duplicity, the reader must re-unite. (1966, 386)

Father Maple in "The Sermon"

In Chapter 9 of *Moby-Dick,* "The Sermon," Melville disguises himself in the religious habit of Father Maple through whom he recounts the story of Jonah and the Whale. He tells his "shipmates" before the whaling excursion begins that, while God has lain but one hand upon them, both hands press down upon him. This colloquy in *Moby-Dick* is not a dialogue with a conventional image of God; it is a conversation with the cosmic mystery of the Godhead, the primal Ground of all being, and two bipolar images that have arisen from it. (I will examine those two images momentarily.) It is this dialogue with the *living God* that Melville attempts to portray in his circumambulation around the White Whale image. In "The Sermon" he says,

> And now how gladly I would come down from this mast-head and sit on the hatches where you sit, and listen as you listen, while someone of you reads *me,* as a pilot of the living God... Jonah, bruised and beaten—his ears like two sea-shells, still multitudinously murmuring of the ocean—Jonah did the Almighty's bidding. And what was that shipmates? To preach the Truth to the face of Falsehood! That was it! ... Delight is to him—a far, far upward and inward delight—who against the proud gods and commodores of this earth, ever stands forth his own inexorable self. (1851/1988, 47–48)

In this "Sermon," Melville sounds "unwelcome truths" into the ears of his readers. The two hands of God, the right and the left, pressing down upon him correspond to the two sides of the transcendental Deity: light and the dark, good and evil, masculine and feminine.

Father Maple is a man who found his calling after many years of whaling. He knows the sea quite well. He knows its dangers, and he knows its meaning as a symbol for "the living God." In this evocation of a salty nineteenth-century sermon, Father Maple is clearly an aspect of Melville's spiritual/religious character. By extending and amplifying the Jonah and the Whale story, Melville taps into an underlying archetype of the quest-myth and its meaning for modern and post-modern times.

The White Whale

The quest in *Moby-Dick,* the search for the great Phallic Sperm Whale and his unending, unceasing, unlimited supplies of spermaceti oil, speaks from the depths of the American psyche to a spiritual need of the new nation to make an authentic religious experience of the *numinosum* possible for all readers. By having it out with fundamental religious

belief in Puritan America, Melville was able to create a new God-symbol for the collectivity that is still pregnant with meaning and alive for us today.

The White Whale is not only spiritual; it is chthonic, grounded in the body, chaos, and Nature. Its "linked analogies" unite the mind with matter. As a symbol of the "living God," Moby Dick is a harbinger of death, dissolution, and transformation to our limited conceptions of the Deity: a death of the myth of God's omnipotence over the Feminine principle of the sea, symbolized by Tiamat. In Jung's Introduction to *Psychology and Alchemy,* he says the "fundamental idea of alchemy points back to the . . . (Tehom), to Tiamat with her dragon attribute, and thus to the primordial matriarchal world which, in the theomachy of the Murduk myth, was overthrown by the masculine world of the father" (1935/43/1968, ¶26). Moby-Dick is a son of Tiamat, a savior of the macrocosm. Melville suggests that we can no longer exist with a one-sided God-image, whether masculine or feminine, matriarchal or patriarchal, good or bad. We must experience a symbolic death to our religious one-sidedness if we are to survive as a species. By this, he means a death to our prideful heroism. This realization was made clear to me during a talk with Dr. Joseph L. Henderson during his 100th year. On January 10, 2004, I asked Dr. Henderson what he thought Melville was trying to get at in Chapter 42, "The Whiteness of the Whale." Henderson said,

> The symbol of the White Whale is a symbol for *death***.** Whiteness does not represent rebirth in itself; it represents death. There can be no rebirth without death. Symbols of death have a tendency to be weak unless they embody this white element. After destruction and death there can be rebirth, but not until that point. A ritual death creeps in where it otherwise might be left out.[3]

God is not all-good and superior to Nature, in Melville's view; the right hand and left hand of God are instinctual and spiritual—a paradox of opposites. Thus, the White Whale may presage a world-shattering event in the collective psyche of humanity: the transformation of the God-image by the transcendental Godhead underlying all religions. It might represent the coming death of religious onesidedness, or *monolatry,* in the consciousness of humanity as a whole. In Henderson's words, "Not Captain Ahab, the ostensible hero but the white whale, as an embodiment of the collective unconscious, becomes the true hero in the experience of nemesis which overwhelmed the captain" (2005, f 100).

Ahab

Ahab is named after the Biblical King of Israel whom the One God hated more than any other. Yet Ahab's character is not only post-Hebraic, but also post-Egyptian, post-Greek, post-Indian, post-Chinese, post-Christian, and post-Islamic, which makes him a universal prototype. He is an amalgam for the archetypal shadow and the problem of Evil in the myths of many ages and in the three monotheisms that are currently at war

in the Middle East. Ahab is referred to in the novel as a "Zoroastrian fire-worshiper," "dictator," "Grand Turk," "sultan," "Genghis Kahn," and "Khan of the Plank" (Melville cited in Dimock 1989, 117). In a famous passage, Ahab piles upon the Whale's White hump "the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his heart's hot shell upon it" (Melville 1851/1988, 200). Ahab cannot feel into his heart-wound and, therefore, cannot see into his own traumatic injury (the loss of his leg during a previous battle at sea with the White Whale). Because of his revengeful hubris as a Promethean sun-hero, he cannot truly love his fellow men in a spirit of universal brotherhood. His Egyptian chest has become a "mortar," like some insane suicide bomber, who, out of a "crazy" religious belief, is attempting to destroy the evil side of God, by bursting his "heart's hot shell upon it." We can see this archetypal insanity being enacted in the twenty-first century, in Israel, Bali, Russia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the United States. Moreover, in Chapter 32, Ahab speaks of wearing the Iron Crown of Lombardy that was forged from the nails of Christ's cross and worn during the coronation of the Holy Roman emperors; thus Ahab carries a "split" in his crown that is highly significant from a psychological point of view. What might this split mean psychologically?

Fedallah

The central figure in *Moby-Dick* who encourages Ahab to pursue the White Whale to his death is a sinister figure named Fedallah, an Islamic word meaning "God's assassin." Clearly, Melville read portions of the *Zend-Avesta,* the Zoroastrian Bible; the *Arabian Nights;* and Islamic Sufi poetry shortly before the publication of *Moby-Dick* (Finkelstein 1971, 94). He must have been aware of the legendary Old Man of the Mountain, the historical chief of the Persian Assassins (230), a terror to the Christian Crusaders about whom Marco Polo sent out shock waves of terror throughout the Western world. Fedallah is referred to simply as a "white-turbaned old man" who wears a crumpled Chinese jacket (Melville 1951/1988, 236).

Following a lead by James Kirsch (1961) and Edward Edinger (1995), in a previous paper (2003), I drew a historical link from the Old Man of the Mountain to Fedallah to Osama bin Laden, who launched a jihad against America from the White Mountains of Afghanistan on 9/11/2001. There I cited Ishmael's reasons for going to sea: "Grand Contested Election for the Presidency of the United States," and "Bloody Battle in Afghanistan" (Melville 1951/1988, 7).

Through the mouthpiece of Ahab we see, in a prospective or teleological way, what the consequences might be if the world cannot come to terms with the same-sex marriage that Ishmael-Queequeg represent on an intrapsychic and political level, coincident with a sacrifice of our heterosexual heroism on a cross-cultural, global basis. For Ishmael is not only the rejected son of Abraham and Sarah in the Hebrew Bible but

also the legendary father of the nation of Islam. If I read the story correctly, the rebirth Henderson has in mind for civilization and culture, if it is not realized as an imperative from the Self within, may come about through further persecution of gays, destruction, war, genocide, and environmental disasters. The decision appears to be ours.

Two Bipolar "Splits" in *Moby-Dick*

In *Moby-Dick,* two bipolar split-images need to be integrated: (1) the image of same-sex *marriage* between Ishmael and Queequeg and (2) the same-sex pairing[4] between Ahab and Fedallah. As a symbol, the Polynesian Queequeg holds a unique position in the story as a homosexual, an idolater, a pagan, and a Muslim (he observes Ramadan). He represents the democratic religious freedom vouchsafed to every American, and he also has tattooed on his body an entire mystical cosmology from his native island in Polynesia. Symbolically, he spans the gap of humanity's spiritual evolution from pantheistic nature worship to the highest and holiest religious observance in Islam. In Chapter 110, Queequeg catches a cold that lapses into a deadly fever, and he sacrifices his life willingly and consciously for his bosom friend, Ishmael, who is saved on his friend's coffin, which he uses at the end of the story as a life buoy. Together Ishmael and Queequeg form an inseparable pair. Ahab and Fedallah, on the other hand, live out the hero pattern to the end and are killed by the White Whale. What the story suggests is that humanity has a choice: to experience death willingly through a sacrifice of our inflated heroism or to be destroyed, in a literal way, by God, the Self, or the forces of Nature.

Within the instinctual-spiritual domain of these two bipolar images, we have the perpetuation of a "split" in the collective psyche of humanity, going back through the monotheisms to the original split in the Old Testament regarding the issue of heterosexual and homosexual love. It is this split that the two bipolar images carry in their generational line (Herrmann 2003). Melville was well aware of this split, and he presents them side by side in the portraits he paints for us. Our task is to reunite them. He presents two male couplings in symbolic form to describe the split perpetuated by all three Abrahamic religions in regard to homosexuality. Interestingly, this myth appears to conform to a pattern that is evident in the American *polis* and world today, where we have a "war against terror" and an Islamic jihad being fought out on one side of the split, and a battle over "same-sex marriage" on the other. Pope Benedict, for instance, has condemned homosexuality as "intrinsically evil," and he has viewed lesbian and gay people pejoratively, as suffering from an "objective disorder" (Dourley 2010) and "guilty of a moral evil." Melville's myth has much to say about these atrocious situations.

The Portrait of Same-Sex Marriage in *Moby-Dick*

Melville moves beyond the cultural imprints of homophobia in the opening lines of Chapter 4, where he begins by telling us that he awakened in the morning with "Queequeg's

arm thrown over" him "in the most loving and affectionate manner" possible. During his embrace with Queequeg, he adds, "You had almost thought I had been his wife" (1951/1988, 28). As the novel unfolds, in such chapters as "A Squeeze of the Hand" and "The Cassock," the dividing line between concrete homosexuality and homospirituality begins to thin itself out and the transcendent unity that the archetype of same-sex marriage potentially carries becomes more obvious. Whether Melville engaged in actual homosexuality or not does not matter so much. The fact that he leaves the question open for readers stands out as one of his greatest virtues as a writer. Melville was well aware that, to orthodox religion, to write a myth about same-sex "marriage" would be condemned as evil from the standpoint of the three monotheisms. He used his gift as a writer to express a psychological and religious truth about same-sex marriage to pre-bellum America, through the hidden language of allegory and symbol.

Let us entertain the possibility that at least one of the truths Melville was uncovering in pre-bellum America is a *truth* about the question of whether same-sex couples should be permitted to wed ("You had almost thought I had been his wife"), and that speaking his truth to religious falsehood led him to *melt* the walls of homophobia in himself and perhaps, let us hope, begin melting them down in human culture. In "A Bosom Friend," Ishmael describes his feelings of "melting" during his symbolic "marriage" with Queequeg:

> I began to be sensible of strange feelings. I felt a melting in me. . . . he [Queequeg] pressed his forehead against mine, clasped me round the waist, and said that henceforth we were *married;* meaning, in his country's phrase, that we were bosom friends; he would gladly die for me, if need be. . . . Thus, then, in our hearts' honeymoon, lay I and Queequeg—a cozy, loving pair. (Melville 1851/1988, 57–58. Emphasis mine.)

How does this portrait of same-sex marriage relate to actual events in Melville's life?

The Calling to Polynesia

Before setting sail on the whale ship Auschnet, which was headed for the South Seas on January 3, 1841, from New Bedford harbor in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, Melville, at the youthful age of twenty-one, had entered the famous Seamen's Bethel, where he and his older brother, Gansevoort, heard a sermon by the preacher Enoch Mudge. Along with Father Taylor, Mudge provided the prototype for Father Maple in "The Sermon," where Melville addresses readers on the subject of Jonah's refusal to follow the summons of his vocation from God to speak truth to the people of Nineveh.

Melville did not refuse. Once he picked up his pen and began writing after returning to the mainland, at the age of twenty-five, he could not put it down until he uttered a truth he had carried home with him from his travels to the South Seas, namely the truth about same-sex marriage. The issues in the American psyche that are currently

"up" for debate in this edition of *Jung Journal* are not new. Some of them have been around for a long time, the most problematic of which, I feel, is the religious issue: is same-sex marriage an aspect of the Deity? In his letter to Hawthorne, discussed at the end of this article, Melville provides us with an answer.

Melville's calling to speak truth to the face of religious falsehood in *Moby-Dick* is an attempt to strike at the very heart of reality: through the symbols he creates, he raises a psychological and religious problem and penetrates to bedrock at his home in the Berkshires. By creating an American myth with the archetype of same-sex marriage as the central pivot upon which the whole novel turns, he seems to be speaking out of a core belief in the American psyche concerning the *inalienable rights of human beings to couple in sacred unions, regardless of one's sexual orientation.* He encountered the archetype of same-sex marriage through intimate personal experience in Polynesian society and created his portrait after he set roots down on his piece of earth at Arrowhead.

The National Custom of the Tayos

Melville's first book *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (1846/1968) is based upon his experience of "jumping ship" with his friend Tobias Greene on July 9, 1842. After arriving safely on the mainland, Melville lived on the Marquesan Island of Nukahiva for several weeks, where he slept side-by-side with a male *tayo,* a homosexual of the tribe. Melville's days on Nukahiva were some of the most delightful days of his life.

In *Typee,* Melville recounts that he and Toby descended a mountain slope to the edge of the Happar Valley, where they encountered the fierce tribe of the Typees. During their descent, he says he was "bitten" by a "venomous reptile" (1946/1968, 48, 49). Mehevi, the chief of the Typees, summoned an "aged Islander," a "native Aesculapius," who "might have been taken for old Hippocrates himself" (79). This old medicine man is said to have examined Melville's leg, pounded on it, and uttered "some kind of incantation" while trying to extract the "imaginary demon" out of it. He then swathed it with medicinal herbs in "leafy bandages" (80). Toby then left Melville with the natives while he went to seek medical attention for his ailing friend. Yarn or no yarn, this material is highly significant both personally and from an archetypal angle.

The lameness afflicting Melville's leg, the leg-wound, corresponds mythologically to an injury to phallus. At this point in the narrative, Melville says he was suddenly greeted by a Polynesian tayo, Kory-Kory, who became his constant companion. Kory-Kory fed Melville various types of food with his hands, putting bite-sized pieces into his mouth as if he were an infant (1846/1968, 88). Moreover, when Melville woke in the morning, he is alleged to have found himself between Fayaway, the loveliest female on the island, and Kory-Kory, in a polyandrous arrangement. The sleeping arrangement described was patterned upon the typical polyandrous marriage practices in indigenous Polynesia. Melville remarks on the "extraordinary" nature of this custom,

which consists of a "plurality of husbands, instead of wives," where "no man has more than one wife," but wives of mature age may have up to two or three husbands (191).

In order to facilitate the healing of his swollen leg, Melville rode on Kory-Kory's back to a stream, where he was ritually bathed in the healing waters (1846/1968, 89). At other times, Melville limped along by Kory-Kory's side, holding a spear to prop himself up (96). The leg-wound caused terrible pain and the condition worsened (97–98). The devotion of Kory-Kory in Melville's "treatment" is rather touching:

> Kory-Kory never for one moment left my side, unless it were to execute my wishes. The faithful fellow, twice every day, in the cool of the morning and in the evening, insisted upon carrying me to the stream, and bathing me in its refreshing waters. (109)

After the swollen leg began to heal, Melville met a second tayo, Marnoo, whose "unclad limbs were beautifully formed; whilst the elegant outlines of his figure, together with his beardless cheeks, might have entitled him to the distinction of standing for the statue of the Polynesian Apollo" (1846/1968, 135). Having said this, Melville then lauds the "friendships of some of the Polynesian nations" as far surpassing "anything of a similar kind among the polished communities of Europe" (203). In *Omoo,* Melville's second novel that takes place in Tahiti, he speaks further of the "troops of 'tayos' or friends" who are eager for "friendships after the national custom, and do our slightest bidding" (1846/1982, 480). In a historical note, Melville adds, "In the annals of the Islands are examples of extravagant friendships, unsurpassed by the story of Damon and Pythias; in truth, much more wonderful" (480).

Integrating the Splits in *The Whale*

Is Ishmael-Queequeg really a homosexual pair, as Leslie Fiedler (1966) suggests, or can their "wedding" also be taken as *symbolic* of something divine—a redemption through the *Logos Spermatikos*—imaged in the heart, soul, body, and mind? During his sojourn to the Polynesian island of Nukahiva in the Marquesas in 1842, Melville had made friends with at least two *tayos.* In *Moby-Dick: A Picture Voyage,* the editors write, "It is widely believed that Queequeg and his native Rokovoko are fashioned from the Maori of New Zealand, who are thought to have migrated in early times from other Polynesian islands" (Melville 2002, 25). When Ishmael says in Chapter 10 of *Moby-Dick*, "I was a good Christian; born and bred in the bosom of the infallible Presbyterian church . . . we undressed and went to bed, at peace with our own consciences and all the world" (58), in his literary imagination, he has in effect "married" his *tayo,* Queequeg, in a sacrament with Polynesian, Native American, African, and Islamic elements. Cuddling together with Queequeg before the ship sets sail, Ishmael's vision stands apart from historical Judeo-Christian-Muslim dispensations. The two men undress and go to bed together in a multispiritual/multicultural embrace and no national government, church, nor any judicial body have the power to infringe upon their human rights.

"Nature's God" transports them from the linear world into the transtemporal world of the *sacred.* As a transcultural *typos,*[5] Melville's portrait inflects a "*symbol of God's renewal*" or the "renewal of God" (Jung CW 6, ¶325) in world culture.

The Ishmael-Queequeg relationship may be *homologous* with homosexual coupling, but we can't quite be sure of it. Was Melville, through his writing, beginning to formulate a new, uniquely American myth of same-sex union, one that includes healthy integration of sex, bodily feeling, and homospirit that mirrors a hidden aspect of the Divine? The literary expression of the homoerotic imagination needs to be understood in its psychological and spiritual context as a channel for Melville's healing and for the potential healing of homophobia in society generally.

In many indigenous cultures, spiritual leaders and healers, the "shamans" and medicine men, were transgendered and/or homosexual (Eliade 1958, 39) and took a "husband" (1964, 351). In the premodern world, moreover, up to 64 percent of the indigenous societies surveyed by Ford and Beach in 1951 considered homosexuality to be "normal" and "acceptable" in the eyes of the community. The two spirits of the tribes—usually shamans and medicine men—enjoyed prestige in their societies, assumed positions of power, put on feminine clothing, and sometimes became a "wife" of another man (Ford and Beach 1951, 130): "In many cases this behavior occurs within the framework of courtship and marriage, the man who takes the part of the female being recognized as a berdache and treated as a woman" (131).

Let me cite a famous passage to illustrate my point about Melville's ambiguities regarding the psychological and spiritual dimensions of the same-sex archetype. While Melville was writing *Moby-Dick,* he declared, in a laudatory review for Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse,* "I feel that this Hawthorne has dropped germinous seeds into my soul. He expands and deepens down, the more I contemplate him; and further, and further, shoots his strong New-England roots into the hot soil of my Southern soul (1850/1987, 250).

A *homoerotic image* is constellated here: the image of being inseminated in his soul by "germinous seeds." Melville's soul is impregnated with *homoerotic shoots.* For marriage symbolism to become realized in the body and soul, shoots of *feeling* are necessary. Hawthorne's roots are not only personal; they are New England roots, part of the soil Melville inhabited at Arrowhead. The imagery in this passage is unmistakably homosexual, but we don't get the same feeling from it as we do in reading Whitman. There is something elusive about Melville's metaphors of same-sex imagery in the early chapters that leaves us wondering: "What does he mean?" Is he speaking metaphorically about a process in imagination? My hypothesis is that he is; yet he also speaks, in more concrete terms in "A Squeeze of the Hand" (455–458).

Paradoxically, everything that is elusive, ambiguous, and problematic about Melville's images of same-sex "marriage" is *emblematic* of what we find in shamanistic American poetry generally.[6] The poet-shaman straddles the opposites in a

beautiful way. A delightful paradox is at play in Melville's imagery, one that reveals the underlying archetype of the Trickster-as-shaman at work in his imagery (Beebe 1981; Herrmann 1997).

American God-Image

Melville knew that the framers of the United States Constitution wanted to protect our *religious liberties* at all costs (Davis 2000, 9). Perhaps because the archetype of freedom is inscribed in the first principle of the Constitution—the freedom of religion—the sacredness and holiness of same-sex marriage will inevitably emerge as a generally recognized truth transgressing the judgments of Puritanical religion.[7]

The current split within the American polis around the legitimization or delegitimization of same-sex marriage reached a maddening pitch in the controversial propaganda that eroded the rights of gay and lesbian people with the passage of Proposition 8 in California, which amended the State's constitution to undo the right to same-sex marriage. This occurred at the same time that the Bush administration was waging its unholy "crusade against evil" in the Middle East and Pope Benedict was waging his Holy War against gays and lesbians from the Vatican. An interesting historical note is that Melville's father in-law was Judge Lemuel Shaw, Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court.[8] Over 150 years after Melville had addressed this very issue, on November 18, 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled 4-3 that gays and lesbians have the legal right to full civil "marriage." Might Melville have been attempting to bring to birth a new aspect of the God-image? What might the archetypal symbol he painted tell us about the possible death and rebirth of the monotheisms?

The Theme of Same-Sex Marriage in the American Poetry Movement

By incorporating the socially unacceptable shadow of homosexuality into his narrative of facts, Melville made the issue of same-sex marriage translucent as a political and spiritual reality for anyone to see. He did this moreover in the form of a "sermon." Patterned upon the typos of the Polynesian *tayo* (Martin 1986, 16, 19, 22), and the Maori culture of New Zealand (Melville 2002), Queequeg's *telos* in *Moby-Dick* is to reveal *a hidden face of God.*

In the homospiritual tropes that are made self-evident in *Moby-Dick,* Ishmael leaves readers free to imagine whatever *we* might think transpired between the two men in their bride-bridegroom's chambers. Although readers might see the "marriage" between the two men as the product of nineteenth-century attitudes toward sex—where two men sleeping together could have tolerated body-to-body contact without the complications of sexual politics getting in the way—by today's standards, such an interpretation of these images, following the sexual revolution and the gay political movement in particular, would be naïve. What appears to have "melted" the

homophobia in Ishmael, moreover, is not sex alone, but the childhood memory of a *numinous* dream, where "a supernatural hand seemed placed" in Ishmael's hand as a little boy (Melville 1851/1988, 28). As Ishmael reflects back on having lain side by side with Queequeg, Melville muses from his writing desk, "I began to be sensible of strange feelings. I felt a melting in me. No more my splintered heart and maddened hand were turned against the wolfish world. This soothing savage had redeemed it" (57). What this suggests is that redemption comes through the healing function of the homoerotic imagination and the interpersonal spirit of male love and friendship between the author and fellow men.

Melville suffered two important losses prior to the writing of *Moby-Dick,* and each played a significant role in his relationship to his friend, Nathaniel Hawthorne. The first was the tragic loss of his father at age thirteen. The second was the death of his brother after the publication of *Typee.* The loss of Gansevoort, prior to the writing of *Moby-Dick,* reopened the painful father-gash in his psyche and evoked his feelings of a deep homoaffectionate longing for the two most important males in his life. The images of the traumatized young man in *Redburn* (1849/1969) mirror a heart-wound that many men in our culture experience even if they have not been subject to the loss of both father and brother. Melville's medicine for this type of cumulative trauma was to be found in the seeding-Ground of the homoerotic imagination and in his relationships with men. As I have shown, this fertile place of poetic visioning found its prototype in Nukahiva, Tahiti, and New Zealand, and, as we shall shortly see, its spiritual realization in his imagined marriage of two hearts with Hawthorne at Arrowhead.

Yet the image of Ishmael and Queequeg conjoined in bed together as a "cozy, loving pair" (1851/1988, 58) also arose out of a corresponding psychic shock Melville suffered on an American Man-of-War when he was forced with other naval officers to witness the flogging of men, some of whom were bloodily beaten for engaging in same-sex love (Hopcke, Carrington, and Wirth 1993). Melville recounts such scenes in *White Jacket* (1849/1970). As Rear Admiral of the Navy, Samuel Franklin recalled, *White Jacket* had "more influence in abolishing corporal punishment in the Navy than anything else" (Robertson-Lorant 1996, 235). When "Congress finally outlawed flogging in the navy" a short time after the publication of the novel, Melville is said to have "offered up 'devout jubilation's'" (237).

A Squeeze of the Hand

In *Mysterium Coniunctionis* Jung wrote, "Sexuality does not exclude spirituality nor spirituality sexuality, for in God all opposites are abolished" (1955-56/1970, CW 14, ¶634). Such an interpretation is consistent with the evolution of Melville's symbols in *Moby-Dick,* for instance, in a "A Squeeze of the Hand," where a symbol for homosocial

and homospiritual bonding between men emerges in the metaphor of the avocation of squeezing lumps of cooled and crystallized spermaceti into an unctuous and musky smelling fluid. Such an avocation is in relation to the brotherhood of men, which might be interpreted as a symbol of cultural and spiritual transformation in the men involved in this activity aboard the whaler, where the walls of homophobia are "*melted*" down on a psychological, social, and religious level.

Melville presages the development of a political program for America that, concomitant with Walt Whitman's revelations in *Calamus,* would make the incarnation of the archetype of same-sex marriage conscious for the world to see as a *cornerstone*[9] of American democracy (Herrmann 2007). Like Whitman, Melville goes outside of religious institutions to voice his own sermon for America, where *melting* becomes synonymous with the psychological, political, and spiritual process breaking down the walls of homophobia in individuals, nations, and the world. In "A Squeeze of the Hand," it is not Father Maple, but Ishmael, who steps up to the pulpit to deliver his homily for America prior to the outbreak of fratricide during the Civil War. As poet-prophet, Ishmael is preaching a myth of homosexual Eros for the modern and post-modern world. Here the meanings of same-sex marriage take on a cultural significance not only for Melville but also for many.

The Cassock

In "The Cassock," Melville uses the gigantic skin of the Whale's penis as a spiritual habit to compensate the Catholic Church's overly spiritualized representations of Christ as an all-perfect redeemer. He attempts to reclaim Christ's animal body, which was lost when the Church divided sex and spirit, heterosexual love and homosexual love, into a pair of irreconcilable opposites, into good and evil. Melville reunites these opposites through the vehicle of the homoerotic imagination. As Eliade tells us, among the shamans of the Far North, there were "drawings of the human sexual organs, which helped "to sanctify the [shaman's] costume" (1968, 153). Melville's symbols are not meant so much to offend or provoke his Puritan audience as to induce them and us to *laugh,* to break down the walls of homophobia dividing heterosexuals and homosexuals, as laughter is a dissolving activity. This strategy would be completely offensive to religious orthodoxy in any of the three monotheisms, so perhaps it is meant to enrage, as much as to please. Melville's vocation was to bring sexuality into mainstream American spirituality as an aspect of the sacred without shame, and although his images are blasphemous from an orthodox point of view, they sink deep roots in world democracy. Like Whitman, he is attempting to heal us from the Judeo-Christian-Islamic stereotypes and belief systems that make same-sex love morally wrong, "intrinsically evil," and illegal.

An Infinite Fraternity of Feeling: Breakthrough to Trans-Subjective Union

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote a congratulatory letter to Melville in November 1851, shortly after the publication of *Moby-Dick.* In his response, Melville wrote,

> My dear Hawthorne . . . I can't write what I felt. But I felt pantheistic then—your heart beat in my ribs and mine in yours, and both in God's . . . I speak now of my profoundest sense of being, not of an incidental feeling.
>
> Whence come you, Hawthorne? By what right do you drink from my flagon of life? And when I put it to my lips—lo, they are yours and not mine. I feel the Godhead is broken like the bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces. Hence this infinite fraternity of feeling . . .
>
> My dear Hawthorne, the atmospheric skepticisms steal into me now, and make me doubtful of my sanity in writing you thus. But, believe me, I am not mad, most noble Festus! . . . I am content and can be happy. I shall leave the world, I feel, with more satisfaction for having come to know you. Knowing you persuades me more than the Bible of our immortality . . . The divine magnet is in you, and my magnet responds. (1993, 212, 213)

Any perceptive reader might ask, how can Melville suggest that he and Hawthorne are not merely communing in the Godhead, but are part of the Host itself? Here, Melville is standing on the Ground of a metaphysical mystery, the Unknown. He has uttered an unmistakable Truth: *the homoerotic imagination is another face of God, a hidden side of the monotheistic God-image.*

As we have seen, Melville did not shy away from his homosexual leanings. He embraced them as an essential part of his American character. His letter suggests that he includes the factor of same-sex "marriage" into the Godhead, for the magnet is a direct reference to Ishmael's feeling for Queequeg in *Moby-Dick:* "I began to feel myself mysteriously drawn towards him. And those same things that would have repelled most others, they were the very magnets that thus drew me." (1851/1988, 57).

As I have said, Melville's path to healing was through the *homoerotic imagination and the feeling function.* This healing path has Biblical roots. In 1851, the same year Melville began to conceive of a marriage of sames with Hawthorne, underscored we find the following passage from Samuel II, 1:17, where David declares his affection for his friend Jonathan, killed in the civil war that pitted David's forces against those of Saul: "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." A psychic truth corresponds with Biblical Truth: *the homoerotic imagination etched an unforgettable portrait of the quintessentially American character.* Only today do we realize fully why the myth spoke so powerfully to American and British audiences in the 1920s, when there was a great Melville revival. In 1851, Melville doubted his sanity and feared that his truth-telling in *Moby-Dick* would be judged as "madness." This worry is completely understandable, considering the homophobic attitudes of his Puritan readers.

In Chapter 72, "The Monkey-Rope," Ishmael tells us that every man has within him an "inescapable twin brother," a homosexual or heterosexual other or *same* who may be realized within—an indivisible soul-companion extending outward from a "Siamese ligature" toward a "plurality of other mortals" (1851/1988, 320). Such an Eros-link may be found in the symbolic "tie," or "hempen bond," that extends between Ishmael and Queequeg, a cord by which the two men are, for better or for worse, "wedded." The word *Siamese* suggests that this same-sex ligature exists in the soul of every person from birth.

Jung speaks of "trans-subjective" marriage in his reflections on the contrasexual *coniunctio*. Melville's feelings for Hawthorne can help us extend Jung's notion of the transference to include a same-sex "transcendent unity" (1946/1966, CW 16, ¶454). Jung tells us that marriage is a metaphysical mystery (¶471) and adds that, in analytical psychological practice, what is needed for the full experience of it is the "heart of feeling," a "*feeling-relationship*" to the contents of the unconscious (¶¶487–489).

Melville's feelings for Hawthorne inspired him to write in this beautiful way. Is his delight-giving something Divine that comes from channeling nonordinary states of reality that are traditionally cut off to people by conventional mores of society? Melville paints a portrait of same-sex marriage as a *condition of feeling*, where the homoerotic imagination is fully awakened in an interpersonal friendship of delight that suggests that he was touched by the divine supernatural hand of destiny in an intimately emotional and personally human way.

There is no distinction between what the poet *feels* and what a man and woman might feel at a wedding ceremony before God, Nature, and friends. This is the spiritual marriage, the only difference being that it is an interpersonal and transsubjective union between two men. The sexes may be different than the traditionally sanctioned prototypes of marriage in the Christian West, but the *infinite fraternity of feeling* Melville experiences in the interpersonal field of the transference is transcendent of simple brotherhood between men. It is inclusive of the body, sexuality, and the full range of human emotions in a spiritual embrace of sames within the transcendent maternal Ground of all being.

ENDNOTES

1. In his paper "Toward an Image of Male Partnership," Jungian analyst John Beebe writes, "What can two men do to, and for, each other psychologically? What is the pattern of their union, their *coniunctio?*" (1993, 155).
2. I use the word *Ground* in this paper with deliberate intent: first because it was a favorite metaphor of Meister Eckhart, who spoke of the feminine Godhead as a fourth dimension of the transcendental Deity beyond the Trinity (Dourley 2010); and second, and most important, Melville's father-in law Judge Shaw provided a loan for Melville to purchase 160 acres of land in the Berkshires in proximity to Hawthorne's property. On this sacred ground, he found Native American artifacts, among which were Indian arrowheads. For

this reason, he called his piece of earth "Arrowhead." Hence, *Moby-Dick* was written on Native American soil, and the influences of the ancestors were undoubtedly operative in Melville when he picked up his Condor's quill and dipped it into Vesuvius' crater for his ink-stand. Not only was the archetype of same-sex marriage transported with him through cultural diffusion from Polynesia, but also the typos was inflected from the sinking of the roots of the archetypal image into the American earth—where same-sex marriage found its celebration in the rites and rituals of the *two-spirits.*

3. Joseph Henderson, personal communication, January 10, 2004.

4. I would like to thank Thomas Singer for his critical feedback on my original use of the term *coniunctio* here. Whereas the Ishmael-Queequeg *coniunctio* points toward the probability of psychological and spiritual transformation, the Ahab-Parsee *pair* holds the possibility of transformation only *if* it is made conscious as a destructive proclivity within individuals, groups, and nations. As we shall see, when it is fractured through warring splits in the cultural complexes of groups, its aim is annihilation.

5. In his "Introduction to the Religious and Psychological Problems of Alchemy," Jung says that, although from the religious point of view, the accent is on the Imprinter, analytical psychology emphasizes the *typos,* or imprint, by means of "a terminology that is not bound by time, place, or milieu" (1935/43/1968, CW, 12, ¶20).

6. John Beebe, personal communication (2000).

7. In a recent e-mail communication from Tom Kirsch, he commented about an unpublished paper I delivered for the 2009 *Journal of Analytical Psychology* Conference in San Francisco: "It brought me back to why *Moby-Dick* is such an important book for all of us, especially here in America. The enormously rich symbolism of *Moby-Dick* is so obvious, and how it breaks through the onesidedness of what Puritanical religion was at that time is truly striking."

8. In his dedication page to *Typee* (1846/1968), Melville writes, "To Lemuel Shaw, Chief Justice of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, THIS LITTLE WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY AUTHOR."

9. By *cornerstone,* I mean a sacred stone set at the corner of a new mythic construction of the American Self, inscribed with a starting (Melville 1851/1988) and completion date (Whitman 1860), along with the names of the architects. The third poet in this equation, whose name is inscribed on the cornerstone, is Emily Dickinson, her date being 1861—coincident with the outbreak of the Civil War. For the American poets, the stone—same-sex marriage—which the builders of the monotheisms rejected, became the head of the corner (Matthew 21:42).

NOTE

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ABSTRACT

Herman Melville's writings include portrayals of same-sex eros. In his own life, he encountered socially acceptable homosexuality when he lived on the Island of Nukakiva in the Marquesas in 1842. There he encountered a *tayo,* a homosexual who cared for him and shared his bed. In a number of novels prior to *Moby-Dick,* Melville provided fictional sketches of tayo figures. In *Moby-Dick,* Melville describes Ishmael's "wedding" with Queequeg, his "bosom friend," tayo, or "bridegroom" as a "marriage," or "hearts' honeymoon," between the two men. Thus, out of the indigenous rites of Polynesia, Melville formed his portrait of same-sex marriage. In this article, the author examines the archetype of same-sex marriage as a calling ("Call me Ishmael"). The author argues that Melville's portrait of same-sex marriage, and his passionate love-letter to his friend and mentor, Nathaniel Hawthorne, with its "infinite *fraternity of feeling,*" has universal significance for our times.

KEY WORDS

Hawthorne, healing, homoaffection, homoerotic imagination, homoerotic transference, homospirit, C. G. Jung, marriage, Herman Melville, Polynesia, same-sex marriage, tayo, transcultural myth