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For Bessie Showell and Ron Pritchard, for a love of words and nature.
The world today is sick to its thin blood for lack of elemental things, for fire before the hands, for water welling from the earth, for air, for the dear earth itself underfoot. In my world of beach and dune these elemental presences lived and had their being, and under their arch there moved an incomparable pageant of nature and the year. The flux and reflux of ocean, the incomings of waves, the gatherings of birds, the pilgrimages of the peoples of the sea, winter and storm, the splendour of autumn and the holiness of spring – all these were part of the great beach. The longer I stayed, the more eager was I to know this coast and to share its mysteries and elemental life …

Edward Beston, *The Outermost House*

*Premises of the machine age.* – The press, the machine, the railway, the telegraph are premises whose thousand-year conclusions no one has yet dared draw.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Wanderer and His Shadow*
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Synopsis

A perceived opposition between 'culture' and 'nature', presented as a dominant, biased and antagonistic relationship, is engrained in the language of Western culture. This opposition is reflected in, and adversely influences, our treatment of the ecosphere. I argue that through the study of literature, we can deconstruct this opposition and that such an 'ecocritical' operation is imperative if we are to avoid environmental catastrophe.

I examine the way language influences our relationship with the world and trace the historical conception of 'nature' and its influence on the English language. The whale is, for many people, an important symbol of the natural world, and human interaction with these animals is an indication of our attitudes to the natural world in general. By focusing on whale texts (including older narratives, whaling books, novels and other whale-related texts), I explore the portrayal of whales and the natural world. Lastly, I suggest that Schopenhauerian thought, which has affinities in *Moby-Dick*, offers a cogent approach to ecocritically reading literature.
Introduction: an ecocritical examination of whale texts

The antithesis of nature to the mind, 'as object to subject', we now know to be false, yet so much of our thinking is based on it that to grasp the substantial unity, the sense of a whole process, is to begin a long and difficult revolution in the mind.

Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*¹

Someone points a finger out to sea and all the binoculars and telephoto lenses swing like anemones in the wash of a wave. A kilometre down the beach, some twenty metres off the sand, two faint columns of spray can be seen hanging in the air. A large black object briefly breaks the surface. On the platform, there is a general exclamation of awe. This is what they have all come here in winter to see – a whale. For the majority of Warrnambool's visitors, this is all they will see of the much-publicised Southern right whale, a dark shape in the water that looks like nothing more than surf breaking over a submerged rock. A better view of the whales is usually obtained by walking east down the beach for half a kilometre, but few people take this option. Every day for months I sat alone on the dunes and watched the whales swim, just off the beach. This was not an act of mere observation, for they are the hub around which the spokes of the wheel of this study are connected. The whale is, for many people, an important symbol of the natural world and human interactions with this animal provide an indication of our attitudes to the natural world in general. This thesis explores the perceived opposition between 'culture' and 'nature', manifest as an antagonistic relationship, engrained in

English as the dominant language of Western culture.² Through the study of literature, it is possible to deconstruct this opposition, and, to this end, I have chosen to examine books about whaling, whales and other marine animals.

In this thesis, I argue that the language used, in literature, the media and conversation, reflects an anthropocentric bias.³ It does this in many ways: in the lexicon, grammar, the use of metaphor and imagery, codes and symbols, hidden ideologies, and by what is left unsaid. Looking at a range of historical texts that offer representations of whales, I examine this bias and attempt to ascertain whether the texts reflect any changes in environmental ethics or the practical treatment of our environment.⁴

As the task of the thesis is complex, it is divided into four parts. Firstly it makes an argument for ecocritical theory (the study of literature's relationship with nature), and suggests ways in which the nature/culture opposition can be determined in language. Secondly, the thesis offers a review of the historical perception and portrayal of nature, and specifically of whales. The section closes with an appraisal of current environmental thought. The third section provides an ecocritical reading of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*. Lastly, I discuss modern accounts of whales and scrutinise these for evidence of changes in environmental thought. In conclusion, I reappraise the role of ecocriticism and suggest that a Schopenhaurean reading of *Moby-Dick* offers valuable insights.

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² I am not convinced that some degree of this opposition is not central to all language; however, a cross-cultural linguistic study is outside the scope of this thesis, especially as 'linguistic relativity' is still a hotly debated topic.
⁴ There are many problems with using the term 'environment' (see page 38-9), and this is part of the problem of language this thesis tackles. However, I feel there is not a better term as yet to use in this discussion (perhaps 'panenvironment') and will use it throughout to mean 'the natural world'.
Ecocritical theory is still a contested field with many critics claiming that it does not fulfil the necessary requirements of a critical theory. While some of the criticisms of recent ecocritical theory are reasonable (see page 30), in my opinion it is a valid form of critical theory, one that is increasingly needed in modern Western society, concomitant with the need to examine the treatment of the environment at a time of looming crisis. To this end, the first part of this thesis investigates ways in which ecocritical theory can be made more rigorous. This is made possible by the inclusion of ecolinguistic theory and by investigating ecocritical theory in the light of the philosophy of language.

Essential to this thesis are several arguments about language. Firstly, that language can influence behaviour and, that as a result, reflection on, and modification of, language can also modify behaviour. Secondly, that some aspects of human language are a result of evolutionary processes and are thereby deeply entrenched. I have used the term 'innate', but this does not imply they are immutable. I suspect there is a continuum of knowledge within humans, from bodily responses to the communicative language we use. The third claim is that an opposition to nature may be one such entrenched aspect of language.

Further to these contentions, the thesis involves several central assumptions. It presumes that there is a non-human component to the world, 'nature', which is severely and adversely affected by human attitudes and actions. 'Nature' can be divided into

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5 The role of this thesis is not to debate whether or not there is environmental crisis. In my opinion, there is too much evidence of environmental problems such as global climate change, salinisation and pollution to dispute that there are serious concerns. For example, Fullerton, T., McDermott, Q. (producer), 2002, Search for a Supermodel. Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney.

6 Again, I am aware that my study applies only to English; however, the aspects of language I am discussing in this case possibly predate all known languages. For a useful study of the way in which languages other than English refer to the environment, refer to See Mühlhäusler, P., "Babel Revisited," from Fill, A. and Mühlhäusler, P., eds.: 2001, The Ecolinguistics Reader. Continuum, London and New York.
organic and inorganic components. In my opinion, while some aspects of our thinking are innate and there are evolutionary reasons for this, most aspects of our thinking are culturally constructed. It is also suggested that language is systematic, and an understanding of this aspect of language comes from and leads to an ecological understanding of the world, of both culture and nature. I propose that the failure to act 'appropriately' towards the natural world is the most pressing problem currently facing humanity. This is because the dominant Western Weltanschauung (world view) is affected by an ideology that constrains our relationship to the natural world. Our cultural attitudes to the natural world are 'relative' to this Weltanschauung. This leads to actions that are deleterious to the world. Fundamental to this investigation is the claim that a culture's language and literature reflect its Weltanschauung. In my opinion, if humanity is to act 'sensibly' with regard to the natural world, it is critical that there is an awareness of cultural attitudes to it. Acting 'sensibly' means acting in such a way that humanity does not reduce the conditions for a rich biodiversity on the planet, and does not increase the hardship of the planet's human population. I suggest that the critical study and production of literature can foreground cultural attitudes to the natural world. This thesis is an example of such a critical study. Its focus is on the marine, rather than the terrestrial environment, because ecocritical writers have mostly ignored the former.

The sea has its own mythic history in human thought, one that is as fluid and shifting as the medium itself. The field of ecocriticism is relatively new, and because the

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7 Of course, this point is open to debate and I would like to bracket the use of 'nature' for the time being.
8 I say most, rather than all, because I propose (refer page 47ff) that some aspects of human 'thinking' are innate and unconscious. Thus, I am terming the body's responses to such stimuli as pheromones as 'thinking' rather than just acting. If even a little of human thinking is not culturally constructed then using 'most' is more appropriate than 'all'.
9 There are those who argue that humanity has the technological resources to survive changes in the planetary ecosystem. Given that the population of the planet is numbered in billions, undoubtedly many people (the world's poor and disenfranchised) will suffer in the process.
existing studies come mostly from the United States, writers there tend to examine the literature of that country. On land, there has been a strong and obvious correlation between people's attitudes to wilderness and their actions, as the frontier advanced west and the nation was depopulated (and re-populated), deforested, degraded and settled. Ecocritics have studied this westward aspect of American history; yet they have largely ignored the sea. I would like to stress that the focus of this thesis is on the environment and literature of the sea. There is much contemporary environmental fiction and theoretical work on nature, and to examine even a small part of the land-based material would extend the size of this work far beyond a doctoral thesis. From the bibliography, it should be obvious that I have scrutinised much of this work. In the review of environmental thought (Chapter Three), I discuss philosophers of the land, such as John Muir and Henry David Thoreau. This is because there are no comparable philosophers of the sea, the environment of which was largely ignored until last century. The history of thought on environmental issues and on 'animal rights' is land based and I examine these philosophical positions.10

Whales have become an important symbol of the ocean and the natural world, partly because their existence is not restricted to national areas (unlike other 'logo' animals such as the giant panda, bison, or tiger). Furthermore, their 'awesome' aspect makes them difficult to ignore, and writers throughout history have felt compelled to consider them. In the early industrial world, they were one of the most important 'resources' available from the natural world and the contemporary texts reflect this.

10 The focus by many American writers on 'wilderness' as the most important issue has monopolised a lot of environmental thought. There are many writers, including those from America, who claim this obscures other problems, and restricts possible solutions. At a conference in Durban, Richard Leaky stirred up the controversy by suggesting that conservation had to come before the rights of indigenous people. Carrol, R.: 2003, September 12, "Leakey Puts Wildlife at Top of Tree," The Guardian. London.
Changes in Western attitudes to whales over the last four decades are coterminous with similar changes in attitudes to the human environment, and thus the texts in which whales feature are excellent resources for ecocritical analysis. The second chapter of the thesis therefore considers changing attitudes to nature throughout history, and examines the discernible change in the ways whales have been referred to in texts.

The third chapter is an ecocritical analysis of the paragon of whale literature, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*. This is not intended as an exhaustive piece of Melville criticism, but as a rigorous example of ecocriticism. There are many works that discuss Melville's life, his mythology and use of symbolism, *Moby-Dick*'s narrative structure, and its debt to Shakespeare\(^\text{11}\) and the Gothic. Critics have discussed *Moby-Dick* as a revolutionary text, revealing Melville's attitudes to slavery and American politics. The strength of a work such as *Moby-Dick* is that it can sustain a vast diversity of readings. It has defined how authors and readers have thought about whaling for one hundred and fifty years, and no ecocritical reading of books about whales or whaling could avoid a discussion of Melville's work. Although inspired by the work of Thomas Beale, William Scoresby and Frederick Bennett, *Moby-Dick* differs from these whaling books in that it is fiction. Its metaphors of interconnectedness, of looms, webs, and weaving, and the way that the self is ideated, reveal a way in which the natural world can be conceived which is at variance with the then dominant scientific, anthropocentric and atomistic perspective. Though Melville's characters generally show little sympathy for the animals they hunt, Ishmael is sympathetic to the plight of the whales at the hands of humanity

(though also involved in the hunt). Melville's text is full of ambiguities, which encourages the possibility of varied readings.

In *Moby-Dick*, a number of themes reflect human attitudes to the natural world. There is acceptance of the American nationalistic project (even though this is inextricably linked to American capitalism which is critiqued), and utilitarian acceptance that whales have to be killed to provide oil for American industry. There is the understanding that the act of killing the whale is cruel and *degrades* humans to the same level as natural predators (Melville's sharks). There is also the realisation that nature can be sublime, and that it can be perceived as indifferent to humanity. For Melville, this leads invariably to a discussion of whether or not there is a god and what the natural world's relationship to this god can be. This is framed in the novel's Calvinist mode. At a metaphysical level, Melville (through Ishmael) offers a Kantian concept of the noumenal world as distinct from the phenomenal world of surfaces. There is also in *Moby-Dick* the intuition that the real world is inadequately described by linear, anthropocentric and atomistic metaphors. However, embodied in Pip is the real suspicion that the human mind is incapable of maintaining this intuition, that a mind in full understanding of the holistic nature of reality would be indistinguishable from madness to a non-understanding mind. Melville uses non-traditional (Eastern) metaphysical traditions to show that there are alternatives to the dominant Western conceptions of reality. These traditions allow a conception of self, in the deep ecology sense of "as expansive a sense of self as possible in a world in which selves and things-in-the-world are conceived as processes." Melville's text is often comic, and there is an understanding that the comic mode offers a subversive alternative to the dominant tragic Western tradition. Finally,

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12 Fox, 1995, op. cit.: 197.
while supposedly written before Melville was aware of the writings of Arthur Schopenhauer, *Moby-Dick* presents many affinities with the thought of this philosopher, which can inform a new reading of the novel.

In terms of an ecocritical reading, there are several important symbolic themes and metaphors in *Moby-Dick*. They include: Melville's repeated use of metaphors of looms, surfaces, representation, fire, and the 'other'; utilitarian metaphors of resource; metaphors that allude to an antagonistic relationship with nature; and metaphors of armies and warfare (which extend back in usage to Oppian, and arguably to *The Epic of Gilgamesh*). His whaling ship is a polyphony of different voices and attitudes, which offer different entries into the discourse of whaling. The work is supremely ecological in the sense that all aspects of *Moby-Dick* suggest multiple interpretations and connections. It is wrong, however, to claim that *Moby-Dick* is only critical of the dominant Western attitudes. Melville is not averse to utilising old mythologies of opposition. Of course, my reading, a critical reading drawing on one-hundred and fifty years of other readings, produced in a country and culture that has banned whaling since 1978 (and actively campaigns against whaling) and with an understanding of the ecological problems facing the world, will necessarily be different from a reading produced in the 1850s. The power of *Moby-Dick* is that it can sustain such a different reading.

The fourth chapter of this thesis investigates modern texts on whales and whaling, including novels, a 'new age' website, and pro- and anti-whaling texts. Obviously, if the claimed opposition is no longer in evidence, then the argument that such an opposition in language influences behaviour would be nullified. This thesis demonstrates that this is not the case, that despite sections of Western society becoming
more environmentally aware, the dominant discourses of the Western world still
evidence an ingrained opposition to the natural world. I show that our attitudes have not
changed in ways that are necessary to avoid environmental disaster. Though the
language of description has changed, the underlying anthropocentric assumptions
remain. As Romand Coles writes: "our metaphors are tightly entwined with a process
that has brought us to the brink of global destruction, and it is clearly time – if there is
time – to consider a profound change."\(^{13}\) To change our language habits is an inordinate
task (if it is possible), but as a beginning point, it is important to disclose how language
is intertwined with the ways humanity treats the natural world.

Since a thesis of this size cannot hope to be an exhaustive examination of all the
relevant texts on the subjects it approaches, I am selective in my use of theorists.
However, while I have attempted to discuss the most relevant thinkers and writers, I
have also included the ideas of little known writers where I have found them relevant
and thought provoking. Obviously, in a work that examines ecocriticism, linguistic
theory, the history of environmentalism, environmental ethics, whales and whaling
throughout history, Melville's *Moby-Dick*, and more modern whale texts, there are many
writers whose work is relevant.

In the relatively new field of ecocriticism, Cheryl Glotfelty's and Harold
Fromm's, *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) gathers together many defining articles.\(^{14}\)
Equally seminal, Jim Cheney's article "Postmodern Environmental Ethics: Ethics as
Bioregional Narrative" suggests a way towards ecocritical theory within postmodern

\(^{13}\) Coles, R.: "Ecotones and Environmental Ethics," from Bennett, J. and Chaloupka, W., eds.: 1993, *In the
discourse.\textsuperscript{15} Alwin Fil's and Peter Mühlhäusler's \textit{The Eco-linguistic Reader} (2003), though published after my thesis was submitted, has been valuable in subsequent studies and confirmed much of my previous thought.\textsuperscript{16} Of the many books and collections on 'nature writing' that I have studied, by far the most beautifully written are Edward's Beston's \textit{The Outermost House} and Edward Abbey's \textit{Desert Solitaire}.\textsuperscript{17} Joyce Carol Oates writes that the nature writer's resistance to nature is partly because "it inspires a painfully limited set of responses …REVERENCE, AWE, PIETY, MYSTICAL ONENESS."\textsuperscript{18} I have not found this to be the case. Nature writers demonstrate many attitudes to the natural world, and to the human world.

Two ecocritical texts of particular importance are Leo Marx's \textit{The Machine in the Garden} (1964), which argues that the invasion of the machine into pastoral scenes is one of the overriding tropes of American literature, and Joseph Meeker's study of tragedy and comedy, \textit{The Comedy of Survival} (1972).\textsuperscript{19} Meeker contends that the comic offers an alternative to the dominant tradition of western thought, the tragedy. He suggests that the Greek tragic mode reflects belief in anthropocentric superiority and conflict with the environment and offers the comic mode as an ecological, more adaptable, evolutionary and humble alternative. I argue that Melville, through the character of Ishmael, does something similar.

\textsuperscript{16} Fill and Mühlhäusler, 2001, op. cit.
In linguistic theory, the ideas of M.A.K. Halliday, a seminal writer in eco-linguistics amongst other linguistic topics, have been most pertinent. Saroj Chawla's 1991 article, "Linguistic and Philosophical Roots of Our Environmental Crisis" is another to argue for ecolinguistic criticism. Willard van Orman Quine, though virtually unmentioned in literary theory, is one of last century's most influential philosophers, particularly in the field of the philosophy of language. His theories on the impossibility of synonymy suggest lexical meaning originates culturally. The work on metaphor by George Lakoff (and Mark Johnson) explicates the nature of such tropes in language. In *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) they catalogue an number of unquestioned metaphors that exist deep in language. The most relevant for a study of *Moby-Dick* is Melville's use of light/dark imagery. Stephen Pinker's book, *The Language Instinct* (1994), is a well argued case for language, or more correctly grammar, being evolutionarily innate in the human brain. Whilst less known, John McCrone's work, *The Ape that Spoke* (1991), succinctly explains several key concepts in cognition. No argument on the way in which language influences behaviour would be complete without a discussion of 'linguistic relativity', and this field's two most renowned writers, Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir. Whorf's writings offer what I feel is the best formulation to date of the way in which language influences behaviour. Dan Slobin's research, studying children's perception (from various language backgrounds) of causality and action in

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Amongst literary theorists on language, Mikhail Bakhtin is the most relevant to my arguments, particularly his theory of dialogism. Jacques Derrida's study of Husserl, *Speech and Phenomena* (1973) has been useful, although by arguing that there are influences on language outside of language I am at odds with his more postmodern positions. Derrida's ideas on the 'other', alongside those of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, lead from a view of alterity to obligation, and suggest one possible basis for environmental ethics. Though not well-known, Alex Comfort's *I and That* neatly adumbrates what he asserts is the artificial separation between self and other, incorporating Eastern thought, unlike writers on 'the Other' such as Derrida and Buber. In this, I found his work valuable in interpreting Schopenhauer as well as Melville, both of whom also incorporated Eastern thought into their writing.

The thesis uses a number of writers, predominantly, as a guide to the historical perception of nature. The first is Max Oelschlaeger, whose book *The Idea of Wilderness* (1991) covers an enormous amount of material, discussing the idea of wilderness from Palaeolithic times to the present. More recently, Oelschlaeger's article "Earth-Talk: Conservation and the Ecology of Language," in which he suggests there is an "ecology of language" in literature, has led me towards a more affirmative and optimistic way in which ecocriticism can help Western culture embrace a positive attitude to the

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environment. Roderick Nash's studies, *Wilderness and The American Mind* (1967) and *The Rights of Nature* (1990), are comprehensive histories of the idea of wilderness and of the 'rights' attributed to the natural world. The first is a little dated now, however, and they both suffer from the American-centrism of much of the 'wilderness' debate. Keith Thomas' *Man and the Natural World* is an exhaustive study of the way in which animals have been treated and conceived in the period between 1500 and 1800. Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* (1980) offers an equally exhaustive survey of historical literature, arguing that the suppression of nature has been concomitant with the subjugation of women because they have been metaphorically aligned. By far the most useful book in any study of historical attitudes to nature is Clarence Glacken's monumental work, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* (1967), to which I must acknowledge a huge debt. This is the definitive work on environmental thought from the first recorded instances to the eighteenth century. *Green Imperialism*, by Richard Grove, who also confesses his debt to Glacken, is admirable in its attempt to wrest the discourse of Western environmentalism's origins away from its Anglo-American-centrism. Such previously marginalized thinkers as Alexander von Humbolt and Pierre Poivre, and unheralded experiments in forest conservation in India and China, deserve recognition as important antecedents of the modern environmental movement. Henry Salt's *Animals'
Rights Considered in Relation to Social Progress (1892)\textsuperscript{33} also contains a survey of attitudes to animals as an appendix, prompting Peter Singer (in his Animal Liberation, which also surveys historical attitudes to animal cruelty) to say, "it had all been said before, but to no avail."\textsuperscript{34}

There are many works on contemporary environmental thought. Andrew Brennan's The Ethics of the Environment (1995) offers source articles on different aspects of environmental thought, which Brennan builds into his typology of the field.\textsuperscript{35} Similarly, Warwick Fox's Towards a Transpersonal Ecology (1995) offers different typologies of the field.\textsuperscript{36} Fox's explanation of Arne Naess's deep ecology is succinct and allows an understanding of Ishmael's 'self-realisation'. The work of Naess, and other deep ecology commentators such as George Sessions and Bill Devall offer, in my opinion, the necessary way of conceptualising nature, although they do not present many suggestions as to how this conceptualisation is possible, or how it can influence societal behaviour. The recent work by Peter Hay, Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought (2002), also offers a sound summation of environmental thought and a variety of typologies and explains diverse theories not considered in other work, such as the 'Geophysical philosophy' of Deleuze.\textsuperscript{37}

In the early section of Moby-Dick entitled "Extracts" Melville writes that:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Fox, 1995, op. cit.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
It will be seen that this mere painstaking burrower and grubworm of a poor devil of a Sub-
Sub appears to have gone through the long Vaticans and street-stalls of the earth, picking up
whatever random allusions to whales he could anyways find in any book whatsoever, sacred
or profane. (MDxlv)\textsuperscript{38}

Like Melville, I have examined as many of the historical sources and nineteenth-century
whale writers as possible. William Scoresby, Frederick Bennett, Francis Olmstead and
Thomas Beale all wrote remarkable accounts of whaling in that period.\textsuperscript{39} Frank Bullen's
work is more fictional than that of these writers but without literary qualities and the
same may be said of J. Ross Browne's \textit{Etchings of a Whaling Cruise} (1846).\textsuperscript{40} No work
on American whaling could afford to ignore Alexander Starbuck's \textit{History of the
American Whale Fishery} (1878).\textsuperscript{41} Recent writers, such as Nathaniel Philbrick, Granville
Mawer and Tim Severin, all draw on these older texts and offer different conclusions.

There is a whale-like corpus of writing on Melville and his works, including
large collections by Hershel Parker and Brian Higgins, Kevin Hayes, Robert Levine and
Richard Brodhead. Newton Arvin's and Tyrus Hillway's biographies offer a context for
Melville's work. The work on mythology by Bruce Franklin, \textit{The Wake of the Gods}
(1963), Lakshimi Mani, \textit{The Apocalyptic Vision in Nineteenth-century American Fiction

references denoted in parentheses (MD**) are from this edition.
\textsuperscript{39} Beale, T.: 1973, \textit{The Natural History of the Sperm Whale}. First published 1839. The Holland Press,
Arctic Regions with a History and Description of the Northern Whale Fishery}. 1969 First published in
\textsuperscript{40} Browne, J. R.: 1968, \textit{Etchings of a Whaling Cruise}. First published in 1846: (J. Seelye, ed.). The
the "Cachalot"}. John Murray, London.

The more I worked on this thesis, the more the philosophy of Schopenhauer became important to my argument. Schopenhauer was arrogant, misogynistic, and his theories have several glaring inconsistencies, but he has greatly influenced Western

intellectual culture. For periods of their life, Nietzsche, Wagner and Wittgenstein were all obsessed with his theories. He first gained recognition with *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, although his great work is *The World as Will and Representation*, and most of his other oeuvre consists of additions and explanations to the latter. Although writers have used Schopenhauer as a lens to study some of Melville's later work, such as *Bartleby* and *Billy Budd*, the conceptual affinities of the two writers are also evident in *Moby-Dick*. While later thinkers have returned to re-assess Spinoza as laying the foundation for environmental thought, I propose that Schopenhauer's conception of nature as indifferent allows a non-anthropocentric environmental ethic.

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48 For a discussion of the inconsistencies of Schopenhauer's theories, and biographical evidence for the claim that he was arrogant and misogynistic see Magee, B.: 1983, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Chapter 1: An argument for ecocritical theory

The human language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out a tune for a dancing bear, when we hope with our music to move the stars.

Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*¹

There is no doubt that the world is facing an environmental crisis. It is uncertain, however, as to what, if anything, can be done to stop the slide towards an apocalyptic outcome. It is equally uncertain what role the critical study of literature can take in a world faced with such calamity. In this century, everything will be reviewed with reference to environmental issues. Governments, communities, and individuals will have to understand the environment and manage their interactions with it so as not to exacerbate the situation. Study of the ways in which the environment is featured in human discourses will become increasingly important. The majority of the world's urban population is largely alienated from the natural, or unaware of their interactions with complex natural systems. Concurrent with studies in ideologies of gender, race, colonialism and class, there must be an awareness of what is being said and assumed about the natural world. It is important to recognise the ideologies at play before it is possible to influence discourse. Western culture needs a 'form of revealing' (in

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Heidegger's terms – from the Greek *alētheia*) to interrogate dominant attitudes to nature, to expose the ways in which language contains the ideology of human ascendance.2

A critique of culture based on human attitudes to the natural world may incorporate other critical theories. The way human beings treat each other is strongly connected to the way humans treat the natural world, and both of these require urgent attention. For Raymond Williams, "it is very significant that most of the terms we have used in this relationship – the conquest of nature, the domination of nature, the exploitation of nature – are derived from real human practices: relations between men and men."3 His insight is important, and yet the inverse is equally true. The way humans treat humans and the way humans treat nature are enantiomorphic. Both facets should be tackled simultaneously because as the human population of the planet expands greater stresses are placed on both the environment and on human morality.

In 1964 Wilson Clough claimed that anyone "who looks in a library for studies of nature will find little beyond a few old fashioned tracts written in the spirit of awe towards the works of the Creator, with illustrations from the minor poets, or incidental mention of nature in studies of the romantic movement in American literature."4 While I suspect Clough was ignoring a large trove of material, it is true that after this period writers began to show more interest in the relationships between nature and writing. In

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3 Williams, R.: 1984. "Ideas of Nature," from *Imagining Nature*. Deakin University, Geelong: 163. Throughout this thesis, I will leave the archaic use of pronouns and terms such as man and mankind within quotations. Although such usage deserves the notation [sic], I assume that it may be taken for granted. Often, I will use the term 'man' if it is keeping with the context of my discussion.

1978, William Rueckert coined the term 'ecocriticism' to describe his work.\textsuperscript{5} There are now many contributors to the burgeoning field of ecocriticism. Its defining moment was the release in 1996 of the book edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, \textit{The Ecocriticism Reader}. For the first time, there were collected together many of the seminal articles and work by influential ecocritics. Other writers were able to situate their thought relative to those that came before. The publication of this book also brought about some criticism of the field.

One of the characteristics of modern ecocritical thought is that it is primarily concerned with American literature and nature. The emphasis on nature reiterates the hierarchy of nature and culture, presupposing that nature is authentic, the scene of presence, a view that invites interrogation and deconstruction. Although temporally the natural world preceded the human, from the moment of human evolution, nature and culture have become intricately entangled.

Most of the studies on American nature are concerned with forests and rivers, wilderness and national parks, yet the majority of the world's environments do not fit into these parameters. By far the major general ecological category is the ocean, albeit one that is segregated into many sub-categories. The sheer size of the 'unfathomable' ocean makes thinking about cause and effect difficult. The oceans exacerbate the problem of the 'tragedy of the commons' because they are common to most countries. The animals of the ocean have been considered fair game for most of our history, an

\textsuperscript{5} Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996, op. cit.: xxviii. Credit for coining the term 'ecology' goes to German zoologist Ernst Haeckel in 1869, and since then the prefix eco- has become dislodged from its etymology (the Greek \textit{oikos} – house) and come to mean things 'natural'. William Howarth's later "long-winded gloss on ecocritic," derives the term from the Greek \textit{oikos} and \textit{kritis} to give "house-judge" and he defines this as "a person who judges the merits and faults of writings that depict the effects of culture upon nature." Howarth, W.: "Some Principles of Ecocriticism," from Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996, op. cit.: 69.
attitude that has endured much longer than for land animals. The idea of marine national parks is a recent conception compared to, for example, John Muir's vision for National Parks in America. Fish 'stocks', seal furs, molluscs and crustaceans have traditionally been seen in terms more analogous to forests and crops than to herds and wildlife. Discourse is framed in terms of 'harvesting', 'reaping', and 'farming' the ocean (it is only for big animals like whales and sharks that the term 'hunting' is deemed worthy). James Lovelock, who proposed the Gaia hypothesis, suggests that our attitudes to the ocean may have the greatest consequences:

The more we know, the better we shall understand how far we can safely go in availing ourselves of the sea's resources, and the consequences of abusing our present powers as a dominant species and recklessly plundering or exploiting its most fruitful regions. Less than a third of the Earth's surface is land. This may be why the biosphere has been able to contend with the radical transformations wrought by agriculture and animal husbandry, and will probably continue to strike a balance as our numbers grow and farming becomes ever more intensive. We should not, however, assume that the sea, and especially the arable regions of the continental shelves, can be farmed with the same impunity. Indeed, no one knows what risks are run when we disturb this key area of the biosphere.

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6 While throughout this thesis I will continue to use the term 'animal' in the sense of 'non-human animals', I will not always draw attention to this idea, although this in many ways contradicts the stance I am taking with respect to language. While humans are merely one type of animal, to preface every use of the word 'animal' with 'non-human' would likely irritate the reader. For a thorough treatment of the way in which 'animal' is defined see Ingold, T., ed.: 1994, *What is an Animal?* Routledge, London and New York.

As Lovelock realises, in the long term it will be our ability to understand and manage the environmental problems of the oceans that will have a profound influence upon our future, notably because some of the more pressing terrestrial environmental problems such as deforestation and pollution impact directly on the ocean, as does global warming. As Rueckert observes:

If we continue to teach, write, and write about poetry without acknowledging and trying to act upon the fact that, to cite a single example – all the oceans of our home are slowly being contaminated by all the pollutants disposed of in modern communities – even what we try to send up in smoke – then we will soon lose the environment in which we write and teach.  

He adds that, "where there is no ecological vision, the people will perish."  

It is the desire to prevent this perishing, and that of other species, that motivates ecocriticism. As Simon Estok notes, "most people in the field agree that ecocriticism must be motivated by desire to effect real change in the material world. Ecocriticism that is not motivated by such a desire quite simply isn't critical social theory."  

For Glotfelty, "consciousness raising results when stereotypes are identified – Eden, Arcadia, virgin land, miasmal swamp, savage wilderness – and when absences are noticed, where is the natural world in this text?"  

Like proselytising literary theories that examine post-colonial, Marxist or Feminist aspects of textual production, ecocritical

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9 ibid.
theory can promote 'consciousness raising' about the environment and press for cultural change.

Although writers have extended the ecocritical tradition back to early literate time, studies of American writers from the last few centuries predominate. The three most studied writers of environmental thought in America are Henry David Thoreau, John Muir and Aldo Leopold. Added to this list are the nature writers of the last sixty years, and Glotfelty's list is typical, citing Rachel Carson, Edward Abbey, Annie Dillard, Barry Lopez, and Terry Tempest Williams, amongst others. Glotfelty sees herself, and the other writers in her book, as performing the theoretical work of ecocriticism. In his 1998 review (which did not appear until 2000) Estok notes that ecocriticism is "a thing that was named before it was properly born." Also critical, Patrick Murphy claims that ecocriticism "remains theoretically unsophisticated," that the work of too many writers shows an "anti-theoretical, naïve, realist attitude."12 There is certainly a division within the field of ecocriticism, with some writers focusing merely on environmental concerns, rather than applying a critical theory to texts about these concerns. Nevertheless, I do not agree with Stephanie Sarver's position that, because the emerging body of work is united by its emphasis on the environment, the term 'ecocriticism' falsely suggests a new kind of critical theory.13 Furthermore, she claims that ecocritical work draws on a variety of theories, such as feminism and Marxism, and that this disqualifies it from being a new theory. Instead, one of the strengths of ecocriticism is that it does draw on other theories. For example, there are many ways in which postmodernism and ecocriticism share

12 Patrick Murphy, quoted by Estok, 2000, op. cit.: 3.
13 Estok, 2000, op. cit. Estok writes that part of the problem lies "in the choice of texts that have 'environmentally focussed perspectives.' Nature writing and ecocriticism are not the same thing." In fact, Estok notes, "one starts to wonder whether ecocriticism is useful to anything but nature writing" (496).
interests and critical tools. Fredric Jameson points out that "every position on postmodernism in culture – whether apologia or stigmatization – is also at one and the same time, and necessarily, an implicitly or explicitly political stance on the nature of multinational capitalism today." Similarly, ecocriticism is a criticism of Western capitalism. Thus, both postmodern and ecocritical theorists look at similar aspects of society. However, though ecocriticism may share interests in the environment, it necessarily includes an interventionist ethic, which means that, unlike postmodernism (and like Marxism), it is a theory of participation. Ecocritical theory should be a revolutionary theory, targeting the discourse of human authority.

Post-structuralist, postmodern theories and ecocriticism all assume Lyotard's definition of postmodernism as "incredulity towards meta-narratives" to be true, where the grand narratives of the Enlightenment are thought to have collapsed. Linda Hutcheon's proposal, that "truly postmodern texts also have the function of demasking cultural codes or ideological paradigms," applies equally to ecocritical texts. These theories are informed by the critical theories of the last two centuries: Marxism, Darwinian evolution, modern physics and ecological models. The totalizing discourse of modernism can be contrasted with postmodern and ecocritical theory. For example, in both ecocriticism and postmodern criticism there is a rejection of older ideas of self, and the subject has been interrogated and found to be lacking presupposed authority. In an ecocritical understanding of the world, the self is woven into a web of interactions and interdependencies. It is this

understanding of self, apparent in the main text of this thesis, *Moby-Dick*, which offers the most profound possibilities for restructuring human attitudes to the natural world.

As Suellen Campbell suggests, there are parallels between deep ecology, the least anthropocentric of modern environmental ethics, and post-structuralism; first, in that both are revolutionary in terms of where they stand in relation to tradition and authority, and second, in their approach to the concepts on which the old hierarchies are built:

Nature and culture, madness and reason, fact and fiction, human and animal, self and other, scientific and unscientific, civilized and primitive, even male and female, good and evil – all these oppositions come under scrutiny, are revealed as artificial, biased, and oversimple, and are somehow restructured.\(^\text{17}\)

The most important shared premise of post-structuralism and ecological theory is, as Campbell claims, that they "both criticize the traditional sense of a separate, independent, authoritative center of value or meaning; both substitute the idea of *networks*." The poststructuralist and deep ecology critiques of authority highlight the way abstractions can cause practical abuses. Campbell claims that, "for both post-structuralism and deep ecology, the assumptions underlying 'humanism' have become untenable; we need new ways, they agree, to understand our place in the world."\(^\text{18}\)

Jim Cheney, proposing a postmodern environmental ethic, asks: "Is there any setting, any landscape, in which contextualizing discourse is not constantly in danger of

\(^{18}\) ibid.
falling prey to the distortions of essentializing, totalizing discourse?"19 It is this that makes the ecocritical tendency to study only nature texts so strange; it is criticism of the converted. All texts are open to an ecocritical approach, whether nature writing, the cyberpunk novels of William Gibson, Don DeLillo's postmodern worlds, Don Quixote, Harry Potter, New Idea or the Channel Nine news. Indeed, those that least consider nature, those books Cynthia Deitering terms "postnatural novels," are perhaps most in need of an ecocritical reading.20 However, having said this, the ecocritical reading in this thesis focuses on books that concern the natural world of the ocean and the marine animal that in many ways symbolises human attitudes to the oceanic natural world, the whale.

Cheney suggests that, "a voice is privileged to the extent that it is constructed from a position that enables it to spot distortions, mystifications, and colonizing and totalizing tendencies within other discourse."21 While this describes the project of some postmodern theorists, it applies equally to the ecocritical project. Such a reading of text should look at the ways totalizing discourse (especially of the dominant Western tradition) is explicit or implicit within texts. The base level of entry into texts, in terms of understanding human attitudes to the environment, is through the various ways in which language creates the world. Michel Foucault, amongst others, has adumbrated the ways in which power and discourse are inextricably linked in human society, and yet the discourse of nature that implicitly condones human domination is rarely questioned. The

19 Cheney, 1989, op. cit.: 128
21 Cheney, 1989, op. cit.: 118
reason people are blind to power relationships in society, in that individuals are trapped within particular discursive practices, applies equally to discourse of the 'natural'. An ecocritical criticism attempts to step outside the discourse (while acknowledging that one can never be completely detached), to look at how humans relate to the natural world.

There are many conceptions of how ecocriticism should progress. One problem is the varied and sometimes contradictory attitudes to the natural world, of ecocritical writers. Many writers do indeed, as Oates noted, only work within a set of responses that involve reverence, awe, piety, and mystical oneness. There is evidence of all of these from Melville's characters in *Moby-Dick*. However, I suggest that an environmental ethic should be based on nature's indifference to humanity, a Schopenhaurean stance, and this too is evident within Melville's writing.

In recent years, the growing field of ecolinguistics offers new theoretical practices and critical tools with which to analyse texts. Ecolinguistic writers start from one of either two positions: that language is metaphorically ecological in form, or that, as Peter Mühlhäusler explains, "the notion that the endangerment of the biological environment is in part caused by language – either by particular anthropocentric language structures that predispose speakers to environmentally problematic perceptions and actions, or by particular discursive options selected by some members of their language community." The first part of this thesis will examine, at greater length, these anthropocentric language structures.

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23 Fill and Mühlhäusler, 2001, op. cit.: 5.
Chapter 2: Language and the environment

i. Presenting and representing the 'real' in literature: Is the mirror of nature cracked?

Every literary attempt to listen to voices in the landscape or to 'read the book of nature' is necessarily anthropocentric. It's our language, after all, that we're using, and we inevitably put our values into the representation.

Michael J. McDowell, "Bakhtinian Road to Ecological Insight"¹

Through naming comes knowing; we grasp an object, mentally, by giving it a name – hension, prehension, apprehension. And thus through language create a whole world, corresponding to the other world out there. Or we trust that it corresponds. Or perhaps, like a German poet, we cease to care, becoming more concerned with the naming than with the things named; the former becomes more real than the latter. And so in the end the world is lost again. No, the world remains – those unique, particular, incorrigibly individual junipers and sandstone monoliths – and it is we who are lost. Again. Round and round, through the endless labyrinth of thought – the maze.

Edward Abbey, Desert Solitaire²

The question of how language refers to (or creates) the world is as crucial to the understanding of literature as it is to philosophy. For poststructuralist and postmodern

theorists the once supposedly strong bond between the signifier and the signified has been increasingly questioned to the point that it is only the shimmering of Derridean différance that is manifest. Theorists such as Jean Baudrillard have shown that in the postmodern world it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between reality and the sign that supposedly represents the reality. In this thesis, the instability of the reflection of reality is linked to several more questions. Does language reflect our attitudes to nature and to the environment? Does language in turn affect our attitudes to the natural world? Is this reflection/refraction discernible in literature? This chapter looks at various aspects of language and at how they relate to reality. It examines: the relationship between 'reality' and language; the difficulty of the terms 'nature' and 'environment'; language as a social process; the evolution of language; the concept of constrained cognition; structures of belief and ideologies; oppositional aspects of language; and finally, 'linguistic determinism' and 'linguistic relativity'.

The relationship between the 'real' and language is heavily contested ground, territory over which many of the academic metaphysical battles of the last two thousand years have been fought. Our language is sufficient to allow us to interact with our environment, and to communicate to others, but whenever there is an attempt to crystallise reality fully, it eludes the grasp, mimesis fails; the real world is not absolutely translatable into language. Derrida claims that there is no pure Word that precedes presence, nor presence that precedes the Word: "There will be no unique name, not even the name of Being. It must be conceived without nostalgia; that is, it must be conceived outside the myth of the purely maternal or paternal language belonging to the lost

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fatherland of thought." I am suggesting that, in limited instances, there is a presence that is other than the word. There is a presence, a real world (whether noumenal or phenomenal) that preceded the existence of language (in that it preceded humans), and exists independent of language. Our perception is constrained by the physiological outcomes of evolutionary processes that have reacted to the world. I am suggesting there are the faintest traces of this evolutionary process in our language. Though this thesis argues that the overwhelming majority of influences on language are cultural, there remains the possibility of evolutionary effects. This thesis therefore examines the cultural and/or physiological factors that act on language, and influence linguistic choice.

The meaning of the terms 'Nature', 'natural' and accompanying ideas such as 'wild', 'wilderness' and 'the environment' are particularly contentious, with confusion between 'the nature of', meaning an inherent quality of, and 'nature', as in occurring 'naturally' in the world. Of course, 'natural' is primarily a problematic term if it is defined as being separate from humanity. William Cronon notes that when "people use the word 'nature' to refer to the whole of creation, they are echoing a long semantic history that tracks backward to the medieval church and even to classical antiquity, implying without much reflection that nature is One thing with One name." To force the world into even three divisions of culture, cultivated (or human affected) and wilderness,

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is yet again to ignore the holistic aspect of the world (and cosmos). The word 'nature' derives from Old French nature, and directly from the Latin nātūra (birth, character), from nascē to be born. The use of 'nature' to mean the natural world is only found after 1662, and as a contrast to the Latin technē. As Raymond Williams notes, rērum nātūra was used to describe the nature of the world.

For many, however, 'nature' is our most basic conception, importing such oppositions as authentic/inauthentic, object/subject, human/other and presence/supplement. The concept of nature/culture implies 'opposition' in the sense of confrontation and resistance, yet, like all 'violent hierarchies', it does not withstand examination. In my opinion, Bill McKibbin's argument that there is little on the planet that is unaffected by humans, while credible, does not lead to his conclusion that this implies the "death of nature." It suggests, erroneously in my view, that until recently nature was not culturally inscribed. The fact that humanity and the natural world are inextricably connected does not mean that the situation is 'good', in the same way that a virus is 'natural' but not 'good' for, or not 'in the best interests of', the host animal. As James Lovelock notes, as with any species on the planet, it is in our interests to modify

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7 For excellent discussions on the subject see Nash, 1967, op. cit., and Oelschlaeger, 1991, op. cit., amongst others.
9 Williams, 1984, op. cit.: 147. Henry Salt also notes the "legally recognized" distinction between 'domestic' and ferae naturae, or 'wild nature'. Salt, 1980, op. cit.: 34.
12 Alternatively, as David Johns notes: "We should not forget that while cancer is part of nature, it kills its host." Johns, D.: 1990, "The Relevance of deep ecology to the Third World: Some Preliminary Comments," Environmental Ethics 12, 2: 257. Johnson also suggests that: "Being natural does not imply being good, or even being morally acceptable." He also cites the example of cancer as a natural phenomenon. Johnson, 1991 op. cit.: 225.
our environment to maximise our reproductive capacity.\textsuperscript{13} In the long term, however, this may not be in our species' best interests. The same evolutionary drive that motivates such behaviour is indifferent to the outcome.

Theorists who point out that our conception of the natural is only culturally constructed\textsuperscript{14} ignore an aspect of the 'natural' that all humanity cannot yet escape, and it is this aspect that is at the base of all other fears and anxieties about nature; death. For all the arrogance of human exploitation and conquest, marvellous science and indifferent pollution, the 'natural' humans are slaves to is death, the end of natural life processes. We are all, as yet, trapped by our mortality into a natural cycle of birth and death. As writers such as Heidegger, Levinas and Derrida have explained, death and Being are inextricably linked. For Derrida, the "statement 'I am alive' is accompanied by my being dead, and its possibility requires the possibility that I be dead; and conversely."\textsuperscript{15} To claim that 'nature' is culturally constructed should not imply a right to 'construct' it in our minds and actions, nor should the claim that 'nature' is inescapably bound with culture legitimise human power over the natural world.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} "Each species to a greater or lesser degree modifies its environment to optimize its reproduction rate." Lovelock, 1987, op. cit.: 128.

\textsuperscript{14} For example, John Berger writes: "In the dialectic between nature and the socially constructed world the human organism itself is transformed. In this same dialectic man produces reality and thereby produces himself." Berger, P. L. and Luckman, T.: 1966, \textit{The Social Construction of Reality}. Penguin, London: 204.

\textsuperscript{15} Derrida, 1973, op. cit.: 96. Even such a basic opposition, life/death, is culturally constructed. David Abram (though perhaps generalising) suggests that for oral peoples, death "is not felt as the approach of nonbeing or nothingness. Rather the awesomeness of death is that of an astonishing metamorphosis, the immanence of one's reincorporation into the encompassing cosmos." Abram, D., "Out of the Map, into the Territory," from Rothenberg, D.,ed.: 1995, \textit{Wild Ideas}. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis: 98.

\textsuperscript{16} Of course, the concept of 'culture' is equally difficult and contested. While I will use it in the simple sense of the historically extended activities and productions of \textit{Homo Sapiens}, I recognise that many aspects of what are generally construed as 'culture' are not uniquely human. Any definition that attempts to pin culture down to some pure primary source, such as language, will likely fail.
The word 'environment' conveys an anthropocentric attitude, as many writers explain.\textsuperscript{17} The term suggests the area around a person or subject and is first traced to 1350 from the Old French \textit{environner}.\textsuperscript{18} As such, it is not the most appropriate word to use when discussing 'environmental ethics' or the 'natural environment'. For some it is too blatantly anthropocentric to be usable in discourse about the natural world. For example, Joy Williams calls it a "flat footed word with a shrunken heart."\textsuperscript{19} Peter Mühlhäusler, however, notes that the idea implicit in the term 'environment' is not widely found in the languages of the world.\textsuperscript{20} Michael Halliday agrees that the concept 'environment' is a social construct; however, he adds that we "are not prisoners of our cultural semiotic; we can learn to move outside it. But this requires a positive act of semiotic reconstruction."\textsuperscript{21} This 'reconstruction' involves denying Descartes' solipsism, and the realisation that even at an individual level, the centre cannot hold.

Many writers suggest that there is a danger in not making this act of "semiotic reconstruction." For example, Heidegger claims that, "the mode of enframing … is the supreme danger":

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\item \textsuperscript{17} "'Environment' means that which surrounds and encircles. To use it to describe the natural world is to skew our perception towards seeing nature as an arena for human activity." Simons, M. 1998, "Darker Shade of Green," \textit{The Australian Review of Books}, August 1998: 7-8. Glotfelty refers to the term environment as both anthropocentric and dualistic, "implying that we humans are at the center, surrounded by everything that is not us, the environment." Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996, op. cit.: xxi. See also David Mazel's discussion from "American Literary Environmentalism," from ibid: 138-9. See also Max Oelschlaeger's discussion, "Earth-Talk: Conservation and the Ecology of Language," from Rothenberg, 1995, op. cit.: 42-54.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Barnhart, 1998, op. cit.: 334. Williams notes also that 'country' is derived from the same source as 'contra' or against, "and has the original sense of land spread out over against the observer." It was not until the 13\textsuperscript{th} C that it acquired its present sense. Williams, R.: 1973, \textit{The Country and the City}. Oxford University Press, New York: 307.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Williams, J., "Save the Whales and Screw the Shrimps," from Anderson and Runciman, 1995, op. cit.: 582.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Mühlhäusler, P., "Babel Revisited," from Fill and Mühlhäusler, 2001, op. cit.: 163-4.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Halliday, M. A. K.: 1975, \textit{Learning How to Mean}. (P. Doughty and G. Thorton, eds.) Edward Arnold, Baltimore: 140.
\end{enumerate}
Meanwhile, man, precisely as the one so threatened, exalts himself and postures as lord of the earth. In this way the illusion comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise in turn to one final delusion: it seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself.\textsuperscript{22}

Heidegger is aware that there is a danger in this "final delusion," in considering that humanity is independent of, or exclusively constructs, nature. Conceptions of nature as object, as our language implies, are inadequate and falter under investigation because nature is not static but dynamic: nature as process. Whether life or entropy, the macro-processes of nature are not under human control, though the ability to cause changes leads many people to feel they are. How, and why, humanity affects the processes that are 'nature' needs to be considered carefully.

Language is how people describe the world and there is an unconscious (and naive) assumption that its function is to correspond to the world, as it is perceived, and to communicate this correspondence to other people.\textsuperscript{23} Language has become indistinguishable from thought, to the point that it is common to think of a 'voice' in our head, leading Derrida to claim (discussing Husserl): "There is an unfailing complicity here between idealization and speech (\textit{voix})."\textsuperscript{24} However, the language we use is susceptible to other effects.\textsuperscript{25} The American philosopher Willard van Orman Quine

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\textsuperscript{22} Heidegger, from Krell, 1993, op. cit.: 332.
\textsuperscript{23} I disagree with Derrida's suitably attention grabbing statement that there "never has been any perception." Derrida, 1973, op. cit.: xxiii-xxiv, 45. In contrast, Quine is right in my opinion, when he claims that conceptualising of what perception means is predominantly linguistic. There can be no linguistic appraisal of perception that is not already affected. Conceptualisation, he claims, "on any considerable scale is inseparable from language." Quine, W. V. O.: 1965, \textit{Word and Object}. First edition 1960. The M.I.T Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.: 3.
\textsuperscript{24} Derrida, 1973, op. cit.: 75.
\textsuperscript{25} As Umberto Eco suggests, the "world as we represent it to ourselves is an act of interpretation."
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claims that, "we are in a predicament if we try to answer the question [of realism]; for to answer the question we must talk about the world as well as about language, and to talk about the world we must already impose upon the world some conceptual scheme peculiar to our own special language."\(^{26}\)

However, human senses are not locked into the linguistic world. They perceive far more than we can describe. The things we perceive before we attempt to describe them, or those we cannot describe, can be considered under the rubric of several ideas: the noumenal, the aesthetic and the sublime. Herman Melville's Ishmael alludes to this extra-linguistic knowledge when he says, "whatever is truly wondrous and fearful in man, never yet was put into words or books" (MD487). Schopenhauer proposes that writers can draw upon the appeal of this extra-linguistic world by alluding to it with special poetic language. The baroque poetry of Melville's writing does not present the whale as mimesis, but systematically builds an impression of the whale in the reader's mind. It gives a glimpse of the animal in the water, a sense of the noumenal.

Admitting that there is pre-linguistic or extra-linguistic thinking does not refute Quine's claim that any serious conceptualising occurs in language, nor does it prove that language (or culture) does not affect this extra-linguistic thought.\(^{27}\) Although humans can perceive and react to the non-linguistic world without resorting to linguistic means,

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\(^{27}\) Quine, 1965, op. cit.: 3. See footnote 22 above. In discussing thought outside of language, Thomas Kuhn makes the perspicacious comment: "Surveying the rich experimental literature … makes one suspect that something like a paradigm is prerequisite to perception itself. What a man sees depends both upon what he looks at and also upon what his previous visual-conceptual experience has taught him to see. In the absence of such training there can only be, in William James's phrase, 'A bloomin’ buzzin' confusion.'" Kuhn, T.: 1962, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois: 113.
they cannot consider, discuss or describe this world without language. Moreover, language is instantly affected by cultural factors, personal memory and present conditions.

The confusion between language and reality continues to baffle philosophers. Nor is it a new revelation, for Gellius notes that Chrisippus (280 – 206 C.E.) said, "every word is ambiguous."28 Some, like Ludwig Wittgenstein, suggested many philosophical problems originated from this confusion, and claimed that what was outside language could not be sensibly talked about.29 The common approach to the conundrum of how language refers to the world, how it bridges the phenomenal and noumenal worlds, is to create a corresponding duality in language. Hence, Frege posits the duality of sense (sinn) and reference (bedeutung) and Husserl similarly uses expression (ausdruck) and indication (anzeichen). Though these terms vary in usage for different writers, there is a general promotion of meaning (is) over reference (that).30

Quine stresses that meaning should not be identified with naming, that terms can name the same thing but differ in meaning. He suggests that we question the lexicographer's traditional authority. For Quine, definition "hinges on prior relations of synonymy," adding, "the appeal to meanings gave way to an appeal to synonymy or definition. But definition turned out to be a will-o'-the-wisp, and synonymy turned out to be best understood only by dint of a prior appeal to analyticity itself. So we are back at

30 Derrida challenges this logocentrism, asserting that, "there can be no expression without indication, no signified without the signifier, no meaning without the factually constituted complex of signifiers." Allison, D. B.: from the "Translator's Introduction" to Derrida, 1973, op. cit.: xxxviii.
the problem of analyticity."31 He suggests, in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," that it is nonsense to talk about a factual component and a linguistic component in the truth of any individual statement and admits that science is dependent on both language and experience but that isolated statements cannot be analysed into these components.32 His argument to quash the analytic/synthetic distinction hinges on his disbelief in the concept of synonymy and in his book, *Word and Object*, he goes to great lengths to disprove the "argument by synonymy."33 If there is no synonymy, then why do people choose one word over another with very similar meaning? It is the ideological motivation for synonym choice that is of interest to this thesis. If it is not possible to look to analyticity for the truth of words, where do words derive their meaning? Why is a whale a 'monster', a 'leviathan', or a 'creature of the deep'? By what process of synonymy does 'animal population' become 'resource'?

One approach to answering this question is to say that if the meaning of terms does not reside in the terms themselves then it is most likely that meaning exists and operates at a social level. It is hardly necessary to argue for the social basis of language because it is self-evident. The purpose of language is communication, and this assumes other language users.34 For Quine, it is this that enables us to make sense of the chaos of lexicon:

31 Quine, 1980, op. cit.: 33.
32 ibid: 42.
33 In a much-cited example of a 'gavagai' (arguably a rabbit) Quine argues for the "indeterminacy of translation," and although he is referring to translation between languages, much of his argument holds for within language as well. Quine, 1965, op. cit.: 27.
34 Ingold, citing Chomsky (1980), claims, on the other hand, "there are strong arguments against the common presumption that the primary function of language is one of communication," that language is an "instrument of cognition" and does not "lie on the evolutionary continuum with non-verbal communication." Ingold, 1994, op. cit.: 7.
The uniformity that unites us in communication and belief is a uniformity of resultant patterns overlying a chaotic subjective diversity of connections between words and experience. Uniformity comes where it matters socially; hence rather in point of intersubjectively conspicuous circumstances of utterance than in point of privately conspicuous ones.35

Humanity lives in a web of language users and language. For Quine and others, language derives its meaning from social structures, from what is defined as 'culture': language is "a social art," "a socially inculcated set of dispositions … substantially uniform over the community."36

Mikhail Bakhtin was acutely aware of the importance of language's social and historical situation, arguing that language was meaningless without such understanding.37 In "Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art," he asserts that meaning is produced by the full social interaction of all participants in the creative event, "which does not for a single instant cease to be an event of living communication involving all."38 Bakhtin's answer to Marxist dialectic is a dialogic process whereby every utterance gains its meaning from a constant interaction or dialogue with utterances that have preceded and will follow. This process firmly entrenches utterance into a

35 Quine, 1965, op. cit.: 8.
36 ibid: ix, 45. Quine compares a person's linguistic knowledge to a bush: "Different persons growing up in the same language are like different bushes trimmed and trained to take the shape of identical elephants. The anatomical details of twigs and branches will fulfil the elephantine form differently from bush to bush, but the overall outward results are alike." Quine, 1965, op. cit.: 8. The majority of meaning comes from social consensus, however, if one is to agree with Stephen Pinker's hypothesis that grammar is innate or 'hard wired' into us (discussed later, page 49), then one must concede the possibility of some meaning coming from within.
37 I am well aware of the questions concerning Bakhtin's authorship of works that were originally credited to V. N. Voloshinov (1884/5-1936) and Pavel Medvedev (1891-1938). Throughout this thesis, I will refer only to Bakhtin but credit the other possible writers in the references (when known). See Morris, P.: 1994, The Bakhtin Reader. Arnold - Hodder Headline Group, London.
sociological and historical matrix of meaning. Unlike the Saussurean idea of *valeur*, where words derive meaning from simple bipolar oppositions, Bakhtin suggests a plurality of meanings that interact with each word/sentence/utterance:

Not a single instance of verbal utterance can be reckoned exclusively to its utterer's account. Every utterance is the product of the interaction between speakers and the product of the broader context of the whole complex social situation. Language and its forms are the products of prolonged social intercourse among members of a given speech community.39

He suggests further, that:

The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance, it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it – it does not approach the object from the sidelines.40

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism is useful in studying a text such as *Moby-Dick*, where meaning must be gleaned from a plurality of often conflicting voices. Although I would suggest that Bakhtin is correct in this theory, if language is built up by this dialogic process with "the whole complex social situation," and thus reflects society's general environmental ethics, and portrays a social ideology of human superiority and anthropocentrism, where is the source of this ideology? Can it be that a culture, via such

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dialogic processes, spontaneously acquires such an ideology? Many would argue that there are cultures that have not developed the exploitative attitudes of the Western world, and there are also many within Western countries who would deny they have such attitudes. The first site of cultural production to search for anthropocentric ideologies is language. I suggest that if Western culture is to determine the ethic that directs its treatment of the natural world, there is a need to study language in association with cultural production. There is a need to understand whether culture is constraining language or vice versa. There is also the possibility that some meaning (or more accurately thought) is external to this social language production. Before demonstrating the ways in which language betrays an anthropocentric bias, I will investigate the possibility of such influences on language.

ii. The evolution of language

The great beasts of both land and sea are images of power, of hostility, of beauty and use that lie deep and potent in the primordial memory of mankind: what wonder if the hugest of all animals, either extant or extinct, should come to loom in the mind of a young writer as an irrational but irresistible symbol, and draw him like a moving magnet in its pursuit.

Newton Arvin, *Herman Melville*41

The idea of an evolved and innate component of language in humans, which constrains behaviour, is a contentious issue. It is quite possible, however, that language is both a complex socially conditioned web of meaning and that it is filtered through a

screen of psychological processes. There are many, however, who find the mention of biological determinism unsettling. Yet, it would be negligent to advance this thesis without some consideration of the physiological processes at work in the human psychological constitution. To claim that some aspects of language have evolved and are innate in humans is not to maintain that humans are unable to affect that language. Though people may be predisposed to think in certain basic ways, such dispositions are not necessarily immutable. If any aspect of human attitudes to the environment is ingrained in psychological processes then, to be the 'free' and 'rational' animal humans are so widely proclaimed to be, it is perhaps necessary to compensate by altering the performance of the language. This thesis argues that Melville was able to achieve just such a 'compensation' in *Moby-Dick*.

As humans evolved, language may have been directly selected or secondarily selected (after other traits caused changes to the human body), but there is no doubt that it would have aided the survival chances of the earliest proto-humans. Darwin, in *The Descent of Man* (1859), writes of language as an evolved "half-art and half-instinct": "It certainly is not a true instinct, for every language has to be learnt. It differs, however, widely from all ordinary arts, for man has an instinctive tendency to speak, as we see in the babble of our young children; whilst no child has an instinctive tendency to brew,

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42 Tim Ingold makes a useful distinction between innate and experientially or symbolically learned, with the last being more a trait of human 'culture'. See Ingold, T.: "The Animal in the Study of Humanity," Ingold, 1994, op. cit.: 84-5.


44 Pinker notes that, "not every beneficial trait is an adaption to be explained by natural selection…. Sometimes a trait is not an adaption in itself but the consequence of something else that is an adaption." Pinker, 1994, op. cit.: 358.
bake or write."45 Darwin claimed, "language owes its origin to the imitation and modification of various natural sounds, the voices of other animals and man's instinctive cries, aided by signs and gestures." While he does not state explicitly that the capacity to use language has been selected, he does claim we do not need to look to "a special act of creation" for explanation, and that language cannot be used as evidence against evolution of humans. He suggests that social instincts, including a moral sense, were "no doubt primarily gained, as in the case of lower animals, through natural selection."46 He also notes that language would have aided the development of consciousness in humans: "But we may confidently believe that the continued use and advancement of this power [language] would have reacted on the mind itself, by enabling and encouraging it to carry on long trains of thought."47 Unlike many of his contemporaries, he does not state that animals are incapable of communicating, noting instead that dogs, monkeys, and parrots all exhibit language-like behaviours, but not to the extent of humans.48

In his book, *The Language Instinct*, Pinker argues that the ability to use language is an evolutionarily acquired 'instinct', claiming that in "Nature's talent show we are simply a species of primate with our own act, a knack for communicating information

46 ibid: 914.
47 ibid: 464. Darwin notes that a "complex train of thought can be no more carried on without the aid of words, whether spoken or silent, than a long calculation without figures or algebra." He is not saying that people cannot think without language, but that they cannot have complex thoughts. He is also not denying that these complex thoughts can be affected by extra-linguistic thinking.
about who did what to whom by modulating the sounds we make when we exhale." He suggests that a "common language connects the members of a community into an information sharing network with formidable collective powers," and claims it is these formidable powers that have given humanity an evolutionary edge. Pinker's argument is that language is not a cultural invention, but, instead, an 'instinct' acquired by evolutionary processes, and comprised of a 'discrete combinatorial system', combining an innate or 'hard wired' grammar into which words are plugged from an increasingly complex vocabulary (using 'hard wired' in the sense of learning that is not thought about, that is a priori). He offers linguist Noam Chomsky's idea of a universal grammar, and children's pre-learning use of grammar, as evidence for a language instinct. That knowledge is innate in the human body is by no means Pinker's conception, yet the claim remains reasonably controversial. Curiously, many people who would deny the existence of such 'wiring' claim that this is the only way 'lesser' animal forms operate. Pinker suggests that the processes that decide the human ability to derive meaning from grammar rest in the brain, whereas the meaning from lexicon comes to one from external sources. This division resembles the duality suggested by Saussure's langue and parole, and by Chomsky's 'competence' and 'performance'. John McCrone differs from Pinker in suggesting that grammar is not necessarily innate, but that the ability to learn grammar is innate: "it now seems more likely that all that is wired into humans is the ability to pick

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49 Pinker, 1994, op. cit.: 19.
50 ibid: 16.
51 ibid: 84-8. Pinker claims that language is "no more a cultural invention than is upright posture" (18).
52 ibid: 39-45. Pinker discusses Chomsky's "argument from the poverty of input," suggesting that it is "the primary justification for saying that the basic design of language is innate" (42). He also cites psycholinguists Stephen Crain's and Minehau Nakahama's experimental validation of Chomsky's idea, using three, four and five year olds as subjects. Pinker argues that this is evidence that there is some linguistic ability in children that is not from 'heard example' (42-3).
53 McCrone, for example, states that "worms and jellyfish do not really think. Their nervous systems simply react and adjust to the world in hard-wired fashion." McCrone, 1991, op. cit.: 99.
up swiftly the grammar of the cultures they are born into." McCrone does suggest, however, that the basic structure of grammar reflects a human-centred viewpoint.

The evolution of a trait in a species does not occur independent of other changes, but concurrently. Long before the evolutionary shrub began to produce early hominids, other lifeforms were reacting to gravity, light, others of their kind (both sexually and aggressively), and the need for water and food. If such reactions are innate in other animals (and plants) then it is reasonable to assert they are in humans also. The possibility that language evolved along with other functions in the brain that react to the body's external environment needs to be considered. Language, therefore, might intrinsically reflect basic communicative needs and encapsulate basic concepts. Pinker suggests that the way this occurs is through 'modules for learning' or 'families of instinct'. These are, he proposes, built-in aspects to our cognition and our language. He ventures a guess as to what these might eventually prove to be: intuitive mechanics, knowledge of the motions, forces, and deformations that objects undergo; intuitive biology, the understanding of how plants and animals work; number; danger, including the emotions of fear and caution, phobias for stimuli such as heights, confinement, risky social encounters, and venomous and predatory animals; food; and contamination, including the emotion of disgust. Although language need not have evolved in such a way to reflect all of Pinker's 'modules of learning', some basic oppositions, such as light/dark, hot/cold, wet/dry and us/them may have been the basic components. Michael Osborn finds evidence for something similar in literature, what he terms 'archetypal

55 Pinker, 1994, op. cit.: 420-3. Further to point 2, he adds that the "distinction between living and nonliving things is appreciated early, perhaps before the first birthday."
metaphors'. He suggests that, "the appeal of the archetypal metaphor is contingent upon its embodiment of basic human motivations." Similarly, the categories resemble the groupings of basic metaphors, as proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson.

There are many things about human cognitive abilities that appear to make sense only in the light of evolution. It is thus quite possible that the many common attitudes to the natural world, those of domination, suppression and conflict, are ingrained in our language because linguistic ability evolved as a response to, or alongside other responses to, this natural world. It may not be as fixed as this, however. Perhaps language merely reflects this evolutionary process, but is not immutable. If this is the case, then through the conscious scrutiny of linguistic processes these attitudes may be able to be altered. Obviously, if the perception of 'nature' as a dangerous and hostile 'other' preceded, or was concomitant with, the development of language, then to change human linguistic processes is an ambitious project. It is, however, one with a precedent. It is this program, of linguistic examination, that the feminist movement embarked on in the 1970s. As Sally McConnell-Ginet explains:

The major challenge that feminist scholarship poses is to explain how there could be any interaction at all between language and an individual's thought, on the one hand, and the social and cultural contexts in which language is used, on the other.

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57 Lakoff and Johnson refer to the base of metaphors as being "basic domains of experience," or natural "experiential gestalts." They suggest that basic concepts used to define other metaphors correspond to "natural kinds of experience" and include physical orientations, objects, substances, seeing, journeys, war, madness, food, buildings, and so forth. Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, op. cit.: 118.
58 I am not arguing that a male/female opposition is similarly engrained in language, but that there was an attempt to influence behaviour by an awareness and modification of language.
The successes of the Feminist movement in this regard are debatable. As one example, however, the word processor on which this thesis is written offers to check gender based language. Feminist claims that patriarchal language actually directs people's behaviour have been criticised for lacking empirical validation. To claim a similar correlation between language and behaviour clearly imposes a similar burden of proof on this aspect of this thesis. Why is it that different people can use the same terms and mean different things? One person can say 'forest' and mean a tranquil biodiverse ecosystem and another can use the same term and only consider the area as a harvestable resource. Is there an inculcated disposition for people to feel one way about terms, whether anthropocentric and/or patriarchal?

While the idea of an evolutionary engrained opposition in language is compelling, it is not necessary to explain the human antipathy to 'nature'. It is possible that such an opposition exists at a cultural level, deriving from the experience of early peoples. Certainly, in the last two thousand years of Western culture, the arrogance of humanity has been accentuated. The third chapter of this thesis examines more closely this period in the history of Western culture.

Given that meaning may exist at a cultural level, in what way are people constrained to think a certain way? The theories of Umberto Eco, McCrone, Eleanor Rosch and Lakoff combine to offer a model of the way in which the mind works and how it can be constrained. McCrone's suggestion for the way in which the human mind thinks and uses language helps to explain how some concepts appear to have authoritative meaning. He proposes that the brain consists of "nets of knowledge" that

are built up by "sensations which have splashed through consciousness, leaving a memory trace in their wake."60 He claims that naming something "makes it stand out more clearly from the surrounding background," and that we are "trained from childhood to link the sound of certain words with certain patches of memory."61 He argues that sensation awareness, leading to memory trace and "word-sharpened perception," leaves us with "nets of knowledge," which lie dormant in our minds until an instance of recognition recalls the buried information.62 These nets also have a depth: "The tip may be all that we are aware of at a given instant, but the pyramid of supporting evidence is what gives the process of thought its real weight." The supporting pyramid confers authority on meaning.63 Thus, there are few thoughts that are not instantly influenced by memory and culture.

Discussing the theories of C. S. Peirce, Eco writes that "primary indexicality" occurs when we decide of which "dynamical object" (from "the thick stuff of the sensations that bombard us") we will speak.64 In this selection process, the very "landscape of entities" is regimented by "the edifice of language." Eco suggests that "in the magma of the continuum there are lines of resistance and possibilities of flow, as in the grain of wood or marble, which make it easier to cut in one direction than in another."65 From this idea, it follows that our selections from reality, what we perceive and what we speak of, are not wholly free. We have a disposition to follow the 'grain'. Eco's conclusion is that if "the continuum has a grain, unexpected and mysterious as it

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61 ibid: 84-5.
62 ibid: 92.
64 Eco, 1999, op. cit.: 13-14.
65 ibid: 45, 53.
may be, then we cannot say all we want to say." It should be noted that Eco imagines this 'grain' to operate at a cultural level, not at the physiological level of Pinker's 'hard-wiring'. The question remains open, however, whether the 'grain' is a 'state of nature' or imposed by our minds/language/culture.

The psychologist Rosch noticed that people exhibit a form of perceptual salience, and more readily notice certain things, as well as better remembering these things, in preference to others. She initially suggested that people form and have 'prototypical' concepts of things, but decided later that this idea "undetermined mental representation." However, her 'prototype' theory has gone on to be extremely influential, particularly in the explanation of why 'folk' classifications tend to group things at a certain level. This partly explains the tendency for people to think of animals and objects in terms of stereotypes. The sort of 'thing' that returns the most connections, after the brain does a search through its memory resources (for several properties), is the stereotypical example. Faced with, for example, an unexplained animal, the brain looks for anything in the memory that corresponds to 'four legs', 'brown', 'duckbill', etcetera, and decides that you must have seen a platypus. Following on from Rosch's research, Lakoff proposed ICMs (Idealized Cognitive Models) to explain why people appear to group things cognitively together, as in 'folk' classification. He proposes that the mind works by the use of categories that are fuzzy and ill-defined at the edges, and he stresses the primacy of "thought as a process" over what he termed the "objectivist view" of meaning, in which symbols "correspond" to

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reality. Lakoff asserts, and it is also the contention of this thesis, that thought is *embodied* (growing from bodily experience), *imaginative* (leading to his theories of metaphor), has *gestalt properties* (not atomistic) and is *ecological* in nature. Lakoff notes that prototype effects are shown in linguistic categories, at all levels, as well as conceptual categories, and argues therefore that language makes use of such cognitive apparatus. If his theory is correct, then a limited number of prototypes (or oppositions) could be expanded into a much larger body of thought.

Thus, the combination of *nets of association* in the brain with *substantiating grain* within these nets and *reiterated folk concepts of reality*, can explain the human tendency to think in particular ways, whether they be along patriarchal and/or anthropocentric lines. In this way, linguistic devices can imbed covert meanings into language. Throughout this thesis the term 'ideology' is employed to encapsulate the various and different power structures that operate on and through society, a word that itself is influenced by the various structures it describes. Simpson proposes that it should be clarified with the term 'dominant ideologies' – those structures which are the "taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups" of a "particularly powerful social group." Anthropocentrism is one such 'dominant ideology'. It is an ideology that conforms to Terry Eagleton's definition, which limns ideology as "ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interests of the

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69 ibid: 67.
70 Of course there is still considerable debate about the term 'ideology' and its origins. For example, Simpson laments that there is "unfortunately, a proliferation of definitions available for the term ideology." Simpson, P.: 1993, *Language, Ideology and Point of View*. Routledge, London: 5. It is, however, a useful word to describe the power structure manifest in language. Berger and Luckman propose that ideologies act not only to interpret and reflect social reality, but also to construct a preferred vision of that reality. Berger and Luckman, 1966, op. cit.: 122-4.
ruling group or class specifically by distortion and dissimulation.” It is not in the interests of all people to subjugate the natural world; however, at this point in time, it is definitely in the interests of some, particularly from the capitalistic Western powers. It is humanity that has power in the relationship I am examining, and the ideology that permeates language as a result of the position of uncriticised power is arguably the meta-ideology of human culture. It could be thought of in terms of the Gramscian 'hegemony', or as the dominant amongst ideologies, a system of beliefs in which all other beliefs are situated. Implicit in ecocriticism is the belief that long after other ideologies have been interrogated and deconstructed, the idea of human domination of the natural world maintains its influence on human thought.

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress write that the "chain of translation from visual to linguistic entails a massive reinterpretation." It is during this act of reinterpretation that meanings are filtered through ideology to produce final, and necessarily always ideologically affected, meaning. This filtering process is the sociological/ historical/ economic/ political context acting on the utterance or event to produce meaning. There are complex associations of ideas – political, philosophical, ethical, spiritual, and mundane – that comprise culture, and simultaneously situate it in opposition to nature. Simpson writes, "[b]ecause language operates within this social dimension it must, of necessity reflect, and some would argue, construct ideology." Noting that the use of

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73 However, unlike in Gramsci's use of the word, there can be no implied consent. Honderich, 1995, op. cit.: 245, and Hoare and Smith, 1971, op. cit.
75 Simpson, 1993, op. cit.: 6. The social dimension Simpson refers to is explained by an earlier quotation: "A central component of the critical linguistic creed is the conviction that language reproduces ideology. As an integrated form of social behaviour, language will be inevitably and inextricably tied up with the socio-political context in which it functions." ibid.
ideology by dominant power groups is often deliberate, he comments, "language needs
to be targeted as a specific site of struggle." This is extremely important because
ideology in dialogue presents as contested territory, with the 'dialogic' voices involved,
to use Bakhtin's term, not always engaged in equal competition.  

The word is always in
dialogue with ideologies, at the same time as word users, history and culture. Of
course, the dialogic can be influenced by the voice of dominant ideology. Bakhtin
identifies "authoritative discourse," which may also be "internally persuasive," and
suggests that the "authoritative word" comes with "authority already fused to it."  

It is this authoritative word that has developed as the discourses of science, of religion, of
history. The supposed human/nature dichotomy has assumed such authority. However,
the philosophies of writers such as Derrida and Foucault invite us to question all voices,
in particular, those that come with such assumed authority. Through this questioning, we
can overcome cultural presuppositions that derive from more extreme forms of
anthropocentrism. Through questioning, Simpson argues, we can "demystify" and
"denaturalise" "pervasive" ideologies that have become ingrained in everyday discourse
(rationalized as "common-sense" assumptions about reality).  

One of the roles for
ecocriticism is to supply another pervasive and competing voice to the dialogic.

Importantly, Bakhtin maintains that 'literature' has a special place in discourse, as
it is one of the few places where ideology is open to contention:

76 Bakhtin uses the term 'dialogichekii', which is generally translated to mean 'dialogic'. Morris, 1994, op.
cit.: 247.
77 Bakhtin, from Morris, 1994, op. cit.: 76.
78 ibid: 78.
literature is one of the independent parts of the surrounding ideological reality, occupying a special place in it in the form of definite, organized philological works which have their own specific structures. The literary structure, like every ideological structure, refracts the generating socioeconomic reality, and does so in its own way. But, at the same time, in its 'content', literature reflects and refracts the reflections and refractions of other ideological spheres (ethics, epistemology, political doctrines, religion, etc.) That is, in its 'content' literature reflects the whole of the ideological horizon of which it is itself a part.  

Bakhtin's idea, that literature can be a place of ideological contestation, is important if the ecocritical project, or any belief that hopes to affect culture positively, is to succeed. Through the critical process, literature can be a place where the ideologies of anthropocentrism and capitalism can be scrutinised. It is with this in mind, that I examine Moby-Dick and a number of other texts.

As Bakhtin stresses, it "is impossible to understand the concrete utterance without accustoming oneself to its values, without understanding the orientation of its evaluations in the ideological environment." A text produced in the best spirit of ecological awareness is still subject to the ideological grain of the culture in which the readings are done. This is why, for much of its reading history, Moby-Dick had been considered a 'ripping yarn' of whale hunting. The older writings on whales suggest the belief that some aspects of the natural world are supernatural. Human dominion over whales was impossible, as the animals were most likely perceived as connected to the

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80 Bakhtin, M. M. and Medvedev, P. N.: 1985, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*. Trans. A. J. Wehrle. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: 16. Although he does not define what he means by literature, he uses the term conservatively as referring to 'high' literature, as opposed to a more modern idea of 'text'. It is the contention of this thesis that all 'texts', including historically considered 'high' literature, can be examined by ecocriticism.

gods, and therefore outside of human control. Likewise, Melville's association of Moby Dick with the Calvinist god is an important aspect of the novel. With the increasing influence of the Judaic Bible and its influence on thought, whales became subsumed under the general mandate humans were perceived to have over the natural world. It is this attitude that has largely been reflected ideologically, increasingly through the period of the Enlightenment. In modern times, different voices have clamoured to be heard, the loudest of which, and direct successor to religious ideology, is the voice of economics, which holds all things natural as 'resources' for human use. The next chapter of the thesis examines these larger cultural presuppositions in more depth; however, first I would like to return to the more specific linguistic devices which I suggest are encoded into language.

iii. Aspects of language: "between speech and writing and beyond tranquil familiarity"82

This thesis argues that the opposition to nature inherent in Western society is encoded into language at many levels. I have argued in the previous section that most meaning in language is conveyed at a cultural level. The larger cultural meanings can be discerned at even the most basic language levels. Whilst it is possible to approach a text like Moby-Dick and claim it symbolises the struggle between humanity and nature, examination of the novel's language may show the opposite. It is necessary to look at as many facets of the language of the novel as possible. The linguistic evidence for human

antagonism to the natural world can be found in many aspects of the English language: lexicon, grammar, metaphors (tropes), intonation, point of view, presuppositions, and conscious and unconscious omissions. All the categories invite investigation, requiring the sort of linguistic analysis that the Feminist movement has brought to the study of patriarchal linguistic structures and habits. Linguistic structures appear to betray a permeative ideology in which anthropocentrism is systematic and pervasive. This is particularly evident in the two basic and most apparent components of language, lexicon and grammar, and I examine these first.

**Lexicon**

According to Warren Sandmann, "the battle over the environment is first and foremost a battle for the power to name."\(^83\) J. Mey likewise notes, "once language is created, once the world has been worded, it influences our ways of looking at our environment."\(^84\) Lexicon is often thought to be the part of language where meaning is at its most basic. However, as Quine and Derrida have both demonstrated, it is best not to trust in synonymy. The English language can be argued to encapsulate a nature/culture antagonism in its lexicon in a number of ways: it has words that constrain us to think about concepts in certain ways (i.e. 'growth') and there are words missing from the lexicon that would allow us to think about concepts in alternative ways (which other languages may have). It is not just in recent decades that commentators have noticed the bias in use and meaning in the lexicon. Henry Salt wrote in 1892:


Something must be said on the important subject of nomenclature. It is to be feared that the ill-treatment of animals is largely due – or at any rate the difficulty of amending that treatment is largely increased – by the common use of such terms as 'brute beast,' 'livestock,' etc., which implicitly deny to the lower races that intelligent individuality which is most undoubtedly possessed by them. It was not long ago remarked by Bentham, in his 'Introduction to Principles of Morals and Legislation,' that, whereas human beings are styled persons, 'other animals, on account of their interests having been neglected by the insensibility of the ancient jurists, stand degraded into the class of things'; and Schopenhauer also has commented on the mischievous absurdity of the idiom which applies the neuter pronoun 'it' to such highly organized primates as the dog and the ape.

Salt goes on to criticise the use of the expression 'dumb animals', and says, "the term 'animals,' as applied to the lower races, is incorrect, and not wholly unobjectionable, since it ignores the fact that man is an animal not less than they."  

As stated previously, the relationship between 'reality' and language has always been debated. The Greek philosopher Sextus Empiricus in the early third-century B.C.E. writes: "The Stoics accepted the first opinion, asserting that there are three things joined together, the thing signified, the sign and the existing object." There is a complex arrangement by which a spoken or written lexical item 'traces', 'refers to' or 'signifies' some 'thing' that supposedly exists in reality. The question of the mechanism of this relationship is not what is important to this thesis. As Madelaine Mathiot states, the "question being asked of empirical semantics is what meanings are communicated

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85 Salt, 1980, op. cit.: 17. In using “lower races” here, Salt can clearly be accused also of anthropocentrism.
86 ibid: 18.
87 Throughout this thesis, I use B.C.E and C.E. for 'before common era' and 'common era'.
through language and how do these meanings reflect the way in which the speakers conceive of 'the world'. Similarly, McConnell-Ginet writes that, understood loosely, "the meaning of a linguistic item is the conventional or public communicative potential it has: the range of its actual and possible messages and the paradigmatic oppositions into which it enters." While such meaning can only be considered by exhaustively studying stimulus meaning, it is possible to gauge an asymptotic general meaning relatively quickly. It is this concordance that, as McConnell-Ginet explains, allows communication between people. It is the 'things' that don't display such agreement that are most interesting. It is possible to study the ideological meanings of linguistic items by scrutiny of the way in which they are used in discourse, and ascertain what covert and overt meanings, or paradigmatic associations and oppositions they exhibit.

Many words, no matter how deeply their etymology and usage is investigated, remain ideologically neutral; however, there are many words that do contain hidden ideological meanings and etymological associations. For example, when a person refers to an animal as a 'beast' some degree of lexical choice has already been made, drawing (in Midgley's words) "a hard, significant line across [the] continuum." With close synonymy, there may be two or more similar lexical terms that can be used to describe an object. The term 'animal', for example, has synonyms of 'creature', 'beast', and 'brute'; the last two of which have pejorative connotations. When the speaker/writer chooses

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92 animal: originally the neuter form of *animalis* having the breath of life, animate from *anima* breath of life – related to *animus* – mind, cognate with Greek *ánemos* wind, breath and the Sanskrit *ánitī* he breathes. Barnhart, 1998, op. cit. brute: derived from the Latin *brūtus*, meaning dull or stupid, and the Latin *brutus*, for animal. ibid: 122. Midgley notes that the Latin *animal* was a translation of the Greek *zōon* and was used in the human inclusive sense. It was not until the Middle Ages that it began to be used
one lexical item over another, the choice, arguably sometimes unconscious, is not necessarily un-motivated. To borrow Quine's term, a speaker has a 'disposition' to use a certain term. If a person can only conceive of the world in an anthropocentric way, reflecting the dominant paradigm of Western culture, then they only have anthropocentric terms to use in their utterances, and these will necessarily reflect this self-same bias. Obviously, there are many people in the countries of Western culture who do not conceive of the world in such anthropocentric ways.

The findings of 'priming technique' experiments are pertinent. Researchers performing word recognition tests have found that if a subject hears, for example, the word 'nurse', their recognition of the word 'doctor' will be faster than their recognition of a semantically unrelated word. Fromkin, Blair and Collins, who discuss these results, say this may be "due to the fact that semantically related words are located in the same part of the lexicon and once the 'path' to that section has been taken, it is easier to travel that way a second time." This pertains to McCrone's idea of 'nets of meaning'; however, it raises the question of how the decision of what is semantically similar is made in the brain. Rosch's idea of 'prototypes' offers one possibility.

In his discussion of 'folk' as opposed to scientific taxonomy, Stephen Clark notes that folk taxa ("the discrimination learnt with our mother-tongue") are not "foolish inventions: they are related to the uses humans would make of things" – they "embbody,
in somewhat distorted form, a variety of ancient philosophical opinions." Clark's argument is in danger of circularity. If, as I argue later (page 240), Plato and Melville both use the light/dark dichotomy to symbolise good/evil, it may be that this is one of the innate evolutionary engrained 'dispositions'. In which case, the 'folk taxa' may predate the 'philosophical opinions'.

In folk terminology, 'weed' is a classic example of a word that reflects purely anthropocentric attitudes. A 'weed' is a plant that is considered traditionally to have no 'value' (in itself, a human-centred word), and is a term that can only be understood in context. This reflects a general trend to name only things that are useful to humans. Another good example of a word that has an overt ideological meaning is the word 'timber'. Used as a synonym for the material 'wood', it is also a metonym for 'forest', and is used metaphorically as 'potential or suitable material'. This word was originally illustrative of a close association between 'wood' and building, in the same way that 'wood' suggests a connection between hard plant material and a forest. Many of the cognate terms, such as the Old High German *zimbar* (dwelling), the Latin *domus* (house) and Old Icelandic *timbra*, convey the same associations. This correspondence, between trees and the human habit of cutting them down to build houses, is firmly entrenched in the word's meaning and usage. In a forester's description of 'a fine stand of timber', this

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97 The term 'weed' is defined as "any plant that crowds out cultivated plants," though it has more specific scientific uses within botany and ecology. An advertisement running on Australian rural television (WIN) in 2004 proclaims that the product tackles "44 problem weeds."
sense of 'timber' as forest is still used, even in forests where it is hoped there will be no felling. It is almost impossible to use the word 'timber' for a tree without alluding to an environmental ethic that allows the utilitarian cutting down of trees for human use. Yet, in the same way supermarket meat is wrapped in plastic and divorced from the reality of the death of an animal, when someone says they have a 'timber' desk, or 'pass me that piece of timber', there is very little overt recognition that the 'wood' once was a living, breathing entity and often a complex ecology in its own right.99

The association between 'whale' and 'fish', I suggest, has also functioned to instil a classification into the mind, and to some extent, as this thesis demonstrates with respect to pro-whaling propaganda (see Chapter 5.3), still does. By terming whales 'fish', people have tended to conceive of the whales as fish, in their mind lowering them down the metaphorical ladder of animal hierarchy.100 This deprives the animal (in the mind of perceivers) of the sensation of pain (a fact compounded by their fish-like silence) and licences the use of 'fishing' metaphors. With the scientific advances of the sixteenth-century, however, these ideas became less common.

In the "Etymology" section at the beginning of Moby Dick, Melville lists thirteen languages' words for whale, and a couple of derivations: from the Swedish and Danish hval "named for roundness or rolling; for in Dan. hvalt is arched or vaulted," and from the Dutch and German Wallen, (Walw-ian), "to roll, to wallow" (MD42-3).101 The Webster Universal Dictionary, however, derives the word from the Old English hwael,

99 Certainly Australian hardware retail chains (Bunnings or Mitre10) try to keep such an association out of their respective 'timber yards'. They further obscure the origin of their 'timber' – Australian forest material is referred to by the sanitised code acronym KD, denoting kiln dried hardwood.
100 I am not suggesting that Western people still think of whales as fish. Nor am I arguing that there is an evolutionary hierarchy whereby if they were fish it would be all right to kill them. I am merely suggesting that these were both once common conceptions.
101 Both the derivation from roundness and rolling have disappeared from modern etymological dictionaries.
Old Norse *hvalr* and Old High German *wal*, all meaning whale. It further claims that these words are cognate with the Latin *squalous* 'large fish' and 'perhaps cognate' with the Greek *áspalos*, 'fish'. This derivation from fish is more prosaic than Melville's "vaulted." In the Penguin published *Roget's Thesaurus* from 1975 'marine animal', 'cetacean', 'whale', 'Leviathan', 'grampus', 'dolphin', 'porpoise', 'seal', 'sea-lion', 'walrus', 'starfish', 'sea-urchin', 'sea-horse', 'jelly-fish', 'cephalopod', 'octopus', 'cuttlefish', 'squid' and 'sepia' are all listed as synonyms for 'fish', along with the more scientific taxonomic 'fish' (though most 'real' fish, in the sense of the scientific classification, are included under the heading of 'table fish'). By 1984, however, the Roget's had moved many of these to the category of 'mammal', and others to 'marine life'. I extend this discussion under the heading on metaphor (see page 88).

There are other ways that lexical items betray extra meanings. For example, Dale Spender discusses Julia Stanley's (1977) "negative semantic space," in which there is recognition that language can be a disproportionately divided space – not only are there fewer nouns for females, but there are more words that denote lesser value. Other linguistic examples studied by Feminist scholars include the use of lexical gaps (thus there is 'hen-pecked' but not 'cock-pecked'), lexical asymmetries (such as mothering

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103 Daniel Hoffman relates William Simpson's theory (from *The Jonah Legend*) that the story of Jonah derives from an actual initiation ceremony in which the acolyte "undergoes a symbolic mock-death in the whale's belly (actually a vault below the floor of the temple)." Hoffman, D.: "*Moby-Dick: Jonah's Whale or Job's*," from Gilmore, M. T., ed.: 1977, *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Moby-Dick*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: 63. Hoffman claims that Melville was privy to this theory.
105 Spender, D.: 1987, *Man Made Language*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London: 20. "It is not just that the vocabulary is divided into two unequal portions with less nouns to refer to females, argues Stanley, but that this smaller number of words also encompasses that which is of lesser value."
versus fathering), nonparallel distribution of items that pattern similarly in some environments (from Robin Lakoff: cleaning lady/garbage gentleman), and euphemising.\textsuperscript{106} Finn Tshudi's research shows that traditional assumptions may be not just lexical but linked to linguistic structure, i.e. 'men take care of children just as well as women' registered with research subjects as more acceptable than 'women take care of children just as well as men'.\textsuperscript{107} An example of nonparallel distribution in human as opposed to animal terms is the number of words to describe animals used as carrying tools (carthorse, packhorse, draughthorse, pitpony, charger, mount, 'screw', 'nag', sledgedog, and so on – the Penguin 1975 thesaurus lists over fifty such terms for horse, donkey, ox and dog). There are many fewer corresponding terms for human carriers. These include 'coolie', 'red-cap', 'porter', 'bearer', and 'retainer', all denoting positions of subservience, often associated with colonial rule.\textsuperscript{108} Obviously, now that machines do most carrying, such language is dying out. However, there are still animal related terms such as 'donk' for engines, and of course 'horsepower'. Terms for humans who kill animals show lexical asymmetries also. Thus, humans are 'hunters' and animals are 'killers' (often 'savage'). These terms disguise assumptions of humans as rational beings pursuing an animal for utilitarian purposes while an animal is an instinctive predator. Even when the same word is used (arguably metaphorically), as in the frequent descriptions of sharks as 'hunters of the deep', there is still a semantic load on the term.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{107} ibid: 9.
\textsuperscript{108} Dutch, 1975, op. cit.: 274.
\textsuperscript{109} Thus, when a human 'hunter' is described there is a sense of rational thought, of outsmarting the prey, of providing for family and community, whereas when a shark is described as a 'hunter' it is with the assumption that they are unthinking, irrational, and rapacious, even deliberately evil.
There is certainly the conception amongst conservation groups that anthropocentric language must be turned to their advantage, to combat the routine resource metaphors in mainstream discourse. Such is the nature of paradigms that resource metaphors are accepted as being literal meanings, and those opposed to the resource view must either try to use the same metaphors to further their argument, or speak a different and probably uncommunicative language.

Mühlhäusler claims that the language available for talking about the environment (in English and other SAE languages) appears deficient in the areas of referential adequacy, systemic adequacy and social adequacy. Which is to say that English: lacks the capacity "to meet the needs of its users as an instrument of referential meaning;" is not structured to approach maximum economy and efficiency; does not cater for the maximum number of speakers in the community; and does not promote social unity. He notes that writers on environmental issues exhibit "uneasiness" about the language they are obliged to employ. Mühlhäusler classifies these criticisms under three headings: semantic vagueness, semantic underdifferentiation, and misleading encoding. He also notes a tendency to the "unconscious and sometimes deliberate adoption and creation of euphemisms." Beth Schultz lists the use of euphemism ("calling unpleasant things by pleasant names") as the second of what she considers are the "three main linguistic devices working in favour of the commercial use of the environment." The first is "apparently neutral words that have connotations complimentary to exploitation whereas the reality they represent is very different," (for example, 'resource') and the third is the "less common but equally powerful device of calling neutral or pleasant things by

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110 SAE is an abbreviation of Standard Average European [languages]. Coined by Benjamin Lee Whorf.
112 ibid: 33.
pejorative terms" (for example, the use of the word 'weed' to describe marri or redgum in West Australian forests to justify their 'harvesting'). The English language thus disposes people to talk about the environment in certain ways, and as this is reflected in their behaviour, negatively influences their treatment of the natural world.

Edmund Leach claims that "we are taught that the world consists of 'things' distinguished by names; therefore we have to train our perception to recognize a discontinuous environment." He suggests that language "does more than provide us with a classification of things … it actually molds our environment; it places each individual at the center of a social space which is ordered in a logical and reassuring way." The lexicon is at best a snapshot of meaning at a point in time. People are disposed to choose certain words over others, and disposed to interpret those words as meaning certain things only after they have been filtered through personal and cultural (not necessarily at variance) ideologies. The words people choose to use, or those they unconsciously use, are thus an indication of their ideology.

Clearly, the lexicon of a talented writer such as Melville is more contrived and controlled. For example, he uses the word 'beast' six times, and 'brute' nine times. The sense in which he uses these words varies, however. The character Starbuck uses 'brute' in the traditional sense of "dumb brute" (MD167), but Ishmael twice subverts this meaning, calling the whale "dumb" (MD363) because it can not speak, and noting that "even in a dumb brute, [there is] the instinct of the knowledge of the demonism in the

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world" (MD199). Melville uses 'beast' in similar ways, having Ishmael talk of "wild beasts" but, later noting "the folly of beasts" is outdone by humans (see page 289). Ishmael completely (and linguistically) turns the table on humanity when he talks of "young bucks" dining on calf's brains:

> every one knows that some young bucks among the epicures, by continually dining upon calves' brains, by and by get to have a little brains of their own, so as to be able to tell a calf's head from their own heads; which, indeed, requires uncommon discrimination. And that is the reason why a young buck with an intelligent looking calf's head before him, is somehow one of the saddest sights you can see. The head looks a sort of reproachfully at him, with an 'Et tu Brute!' expression. (MD308).

While alluding to Caesar's death, Ishmael suggests the calf is accusing the 'young bucks' of being equally an animal. Coming as it does, in the chapter where Stubb similarly dines on the whale, this short section allies Stubb with the "young bucks" and firmly establishes his animal-ness. As Chapter Four demonstrates, Melville evinces knowledge of the weighted way in which lexicon operates, and at times undermines this bias. As ecolinguistic writers such as Mühlhäusler contend, to be aware of the linguistically engrained dispositions, is the first step towards ameliorating language habits.

**Grammar**

If lexicon is the learned aspect of language, and grammar is innate, then the problem of lexical substitution would appear solvable by unlearning/relearning one's vocabulary, or altering the interpretation of lexical items. A change in attitude will most likely precipitate such a change in lexicon. There has been substantial work in eco-
linguistics to date that has involved the examination of which lexical items are inadequate to the task of describing the environment. It is more difficult to see how someone can alter their grammar. If, as Pinker has argued, grammar is innate, then it is possible that in the evolutionary instant there is little it is possible to do about its effect on language, except to be aware that it may be constraining linguistic choices into regular patterns and as a result affecting our attitudes. Halliday, however, suggests, "the potential of grammar can be taken up in consistently different ways by different groups of people, selecting with different probabilities in the same system and so in effect construing different forms of social relationships and different models of experience."116 This suggests a way of conceiving of grammar as innate potentiality, which though constraining is not completely deterministic.

Lexicon is, to some extent, constrained or 'motivated' by grammar. Once a paradigmatic choice has been made, the following syntagmatic choices are constrained. Saussure notes that the sign may be relatively motivated, exhibiting an associative relationship between it and another sign or concept.117 He makes the distinction between languages that are more motivated as being grammatical and those that are less motivated as lexicological.118

There is a variety of possible ways in which English grammar reflects a negative attitude to the environment, including the pervasive way in which verbs, often transitive,

117 de Saussure, F. d.: 1968, Course in General Linguistics. McGraw Hill Book Company, New York: 131. Saussure makes the distinction between a sign which is radically arbitrary or 'unmotivated' and the sign which is "only relatively arbitrary," or 'motivated'. An example of this would be Whorf's idea of the subcategorization of adjectives, i.e. one would more commonly say 'a new red car' not 'a red new car' because 'red' is more internal, in Whorf's terms, than 'new'. See Hodge and Kress, 1993, op. cit.: 7. Turner also discusses such categorised adjectives, ranking adjectives such that size is less important than colour, concluding, "the order of adjectives perhaps exerts a no less powerful influence on our thinking for being unexamined." Turner, G. W.: 1973, Stylistics. Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, U.K.: 82.  
118 Saussure, 1968, op. cit.: 133.
are used to allocate agency, and the use of pronouns to separate space and designate 'the other' (as opposed to 'I'). At a very basic level the separation of language into noun phrases and verb phrases, or object and subject, primarily enforces the objectification of reality. As Turner points out, "all relationships centre on the noun," and as the noun is given primacy, humans tend to think of the world in terms of 'things' rather than as process.119 There are strong arguments to show that ‘reality’ is more about process, both spatial and temporal, than any fixity of matter and time, and many writers prefer to ideate the world in this way. In one of the seminal articles in eco-linguistics, "Linguistic and Philosophical Roots of Our Environmental Crisis," Saroj Chawla concludes:

"[B]ecause the English language consistently (1) individualizes and specifies (and thereby separates) mass nouns, (2) counts spatial and metaphorical aggregates (real and imaginary nouns), (3) and perceives time as a three tense time scheme, it encourages a world view in which existence is perceived as fragmented rather than as holistically or relativistically interrelated. Such a world view predisposes the speakers of the language to make certain presuppositions about the world."120

It should be stressed that other cultures and languages may conceive of the world in different terms, and that even with English it is possible to conceive of process (as seen in the philosophy of Whitehead). A similar belief, of a "world in which selves and things-in-the-world are conceived as process," is at the core of Arne Naess' deep ecology

119 Although, nouns can name processes. The key word in this sentence is primacy. Turner, 1973, op. cit.: 84.
and Warwick Fox's "transpersonal ecology."121 That such thinkers can conceive of the world as process demonstrates the freedom to ideate the world in a different way within a constraining grammar. I am not suggesting that it is impossible to think of process in English, but that the structure of the grammar predisposes people to think in terms of 'things'. This in turn can lead to ideas such as 'possessions'.

**The 'other' and pronouns**

The concept of the 'other' (or Other) is a common theme in modern theoretical writing. Like 'ideology' and 'nature', the ambiguity of the term has led to some problems that seem to derive purely from semantics and supposed synonymity. The English word 'other' derives from Old English ōther, meaning second (before 899 C.E.), and from the Old High German andar, which derives ultimately from a number of cognate words that combine the Indo-European adverb an (there), on the other side, with the comparative suffix -teros. Thus, the word carries the semantic meanings of both a sense of alterity and of following, which in turn leads to an idea of lesser importance.122 What or who the 'other' is has been the subject of much discussion; however, both the above etymology and linguistic usage show a disposition to conceive of the 'other' as opposed and different. As Derrida rightly points out, in the sense that words are defined by their oppositions (as per Saussure), there cannot be an 'other' without implying there is a central not-'other' or subject, contributing to human logocentrism.123 The problem of how one can know that there are other minds has long been recognised; however, the

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121 Fox, 1995, op. cit.: 197.
same thought processes that can lead to the reasonable belief that there is an autonomous reality can also assure us that other humans (at least) have minds. For Bakhtin, the dialogic nature of the world presumes an 'other', "the very capacity to have consciousness is based on otherness." The 'self' is dialogic, a relation, a process. Reasonable beliefs that there are other minds, however, should not be confused with the linguistically inculcated habit of believing in the 'other' as a separation, difference or opposition.

Alex Comfort suggests an artificial separation between I and That, which comes from the central human experience, the *homuncular vision* or discursive awareness of "I" as an inner person, separate from "my body," and *a fortiori* from the extra-body environment: the "dwarf sitting in the middle," in the words of the *Katha Upanishad*. He contrasts this non-necessary state with "oceanic states," where there is a perception of totality, of not-otherness, and claims, "when we talk about 'I' we are combining two things – an experience and a hypothesis." The experience is ubiquitous so the convention is not questioned: "in fact, in addressing almost anything by way of language we have to adopt [this convention]." What Comfort is articulating is that the idea of an opposition between I and 'the other' is built into our brain. One can only gain an awareness of 'wholeness' during non-normal states, whether they are drug-induced, religious, or during focused contemplation. Melville, influenced by Eastern mythology, makes such states a crucial part of *Moby-Dick*, and as we shall see, Schopenhauer suggests they

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124 Holquist, 1990, op. cit.: 18. "It is the cardinal assumption of dialogism that every human subject is not only highly conscious, but that his or her cognitive space is coordinated by the same I/other distinctions that organize my own" (33).
125 ibid: 19.
126 Comfort, 1979, op. cit.: 12-19, 1.4. Comfort, although using as his example an essentialist view of Australian Aboriginal people, makes the important point that the perception of I-ness is also of now-ness. Derrida's considers the idea of I-ness in the chapter "The Voice that Keeps Silence" in Derrida, 1973, op. cit.
can come about during aesthetic contemplation. Comfort explains that 'I' can be in relation to the not-I of environment and other persons, Nature, the gods, 'reality', or simply 'That'.\textsuperscript{127} He also suggests that the perception of I-ness is inextricably combined with the realisation that I-ness is limited in time. This introduces 'the other' as death. Nature, which is referred to as 'it', is also perceived as 'other'.

From the idea of an opposition between I/other, it does not necessarily follow that there should be antagonism, though sadly this is often the case. It is from our relationship with the 'other' that Emmanuel Levinas derived a reason for morality. In this, he was influenced by another Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber (1878-1965), who made a radical distinction between two relations, I-thou and I-it, disputing Descartes' simple solipsistic position.\textsuperscript{128} Levinas saw that our awareness of 'the other' implied a responsibility and this ethical relationship was, as adumbrated by Brian Schroeder, "prior to thought, to language, [and] even to Being (Sein)."\textsuperscript{129} Reasonably, this ethical theory could equally extend moral consideration to nature. Levinas' proof for his belief in 'the other' was his reasoning that death was unknowable and thereby 'other'. He developed Heidegger's ideas of death as "an event of freedom" to give what he saw as an indication that we are in relation with an "absolutely other," concluding, "right away this means existence is pluralist." He proposes:

Death is the impossibility of having a project. This approach of death indicates that we are in relation with something that is absolutely other, something bearing alterity not as a

\textsuperscript{127} ibid: 19.
provisional determination we can assimilate through enjoyment, but as something whose
very existence is made of alterity. My solitude is not confirmed by death but altered by it.  

From this idea of at least one thing that proves alterity, he went on to expand the idea of 'the other' as the prime site for morality, claiming the justification of one's neighbour's pain is the source of all immorality. Levinas suggests we are "endlessly obligated to the Other." Both he and Buber were predated by Schopenhauer, who thought compassion (through identification) for 'the other' was the source of ethical behaviour. Schopenhauer was adamant that a morality could be based on his metaphysics. He proposed that there are three actions that the individual person can take; egoism, malice, and compassion. He wrote, "no genuine virtue can be brought about through morality and abstract knowledge in general, but that such virtue must spring from the intuitive knowledge that recognises in another's individuality the same inner nature as one's own." Turning to Eastern thought for support, he suggested this agreed with the Vedic principle *tat tvam asii* (this art thou). These many voices all suggest the same thing, that it is our realisation of another's individual nature, as being the same as ours, that offers a basis for morality. Melville suggests a similar morality with his belief in fraternity, Ishmael's symbolic embrace of Queequeg, and Ishmael's compassion for whales.

The concept of alterity is not only an inextricable part of the idea of self (not-self); it is deeply ingrained into the psyche and grammar of English (and other SAE

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130 Levinas, from Hand, 1989, op. cit.: 41-3.
131 ibid: 1, 82-3.
133 ibid: 374.
language) speaking people in the form of pronouns. The division between human and animal/nature is equally ingrained in English language pronoun use. As Mey writes, there "is a rule of English grammar that tells us to use the relative pronoun who when we are dealing with a noun which is human (and animate of course), whereas we use which for a non-animate (and usually also for non-human) referent." Much has been made of the gender division of personal, possessive and reflexive pronouns that is enshrined in our language. Equally, the use of he/she/it entrenches a concept of the 'other' and animal-ness into the English language. Surprisingly, death does not deprive a human of their he/she-ness, implying that there is more to human personality than 'life'. The great bulk of the natural world is dismissed with the simple deictic 'it'. The convention when describing animals appears to be to use the gender of the animal (always third person in text obviously) if known, and to refer to it as 'it' if the gender is not known. Of course, the accusations of personification and anthropomorphism always lurk if a writer uses 'he' and 'she' too often or familiarly. This applies also to nineteenth-century whale writers, who generally employed he/she when the gender of the animal was known but utilised 'it' when the gender was indeterminate. With the sperm whalers, the different appearance and size of male and female sperm whales meant they could usually tell the whale's gender before it was killed. Whalers often described right whales as 'male' when the

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134 Lakoff and Johnson discuss the 1975 observation by Cooper and Ross of a basic ME-FIRST orientation within culture that is discernible in metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, op. cit.: 132.
136 Though many people ignore the fact that 'he' as a general pronoun for 'he' and 'she' is only a recent convention (since eighteenth century). Fromkin, 1999, op. cit.: 432.
animal was resisting, 'female' if the gender was determined as such, and 'it' when the animal was butchered.137

Presuppositions

There are arguably implications or presuppositions in all the linguistic terms discussed. In a technical sense, the presupposition(s) of an utterance are "facts whose truth is required in order that the utterance be appropriate."138 For example, the statement the sperm whale is no longer endangered carries with it the presupposition that at some stage previously the sperm whale was endangered. Grice calls these presuppositions "conventional implicatures," listing the example 'poor but honest' where the 'but' implies the poor are not usually honest.139 Mey calls presuppositions "a problem in semantics," defining them as "assumptions underlying a statement, which remain in force even though the statement itself is denied."140 In many cases, the presuppositions are linked to the isolated lexical items but often they are not. Presuppositions operate at a discursive level in language, and often introduce a direct link between reader and writer, alluding to what Roland Barthes termed codes within language.141

Presuppositions can be 'facts', or associated ideological meanings and metaphorical implications. Some presuppositional metaphors, usually unquestioned,
have been in use for so long that they have become 'dead' and unexamined. As Teun van Dijk points out, presuppositions can include our entire worldview, with all its ideological connotations: "Hence the meaningfulness of discourse also depends on what we assume to be the normalcy of facts, episode, or situation described. In other words, understanding a discourse presupposes understanding the world." Presuppositions that humans bring to discourses concerning nature include those that are anthropocentric and atomistic. There are also age-old assumptions of a chain of hierarchy in nature from god down (the *scala naturae*), that animals are unthinking and unfeeling, and of a god-given mandate to use the world as humans see fit. The historical origin and textual indicators of these presuppositions are discussed in the next chapter.

**Intonation**

Intonation is one of the hardest aspects of a text to pin down, partly because it is a term that comes from phonology and the act of speaking language. It lies, as Bakhtin remarked, "on the border of the verbal and the nonverbal, the said and the unsaid." Though it is easier to analyse in spoken utterance, a written narrative also assumes a reader and thus contains intonation. G. Leech explains that the attitudinal function of intonation, often imparted in spoken utterance by non-verbal communication, through gestures and paralanguage, can also be discerned in the written utterance, through

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142 Searle claims, however, "they have become dead through continual use, but their continual use is a clue that they satisfy some semantic need." Searle, J. R.: "Metaphor," from Johnson, M., ed.: 1981, *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis: 255.
144 Bakhtin/Voloshinov, Morris, 1994, op. cit.: 165.
145 Holquist notes "intonation clearly registers the other's presence." Holquist, 1990, op. cit.: 61.
referential parameters such as personal pronouns and the tense of the verb.\textsuperscript{146} There are also certain literary techniques that can influence intonation, for example irony and sarcasm. The narrative text generally subscribes to conversational principles, such as H. P. Grice's 'Co-operative Principle' and the 'Politeness Principle', whereby it is assumed the author is acting 'in good faith'.\textsuperscript{147} The assumption of co-operation can be used to good effect by an author, through irony or mendacity. The spoken stress of the word 'scientific' in the statement 'we are only killing whales for scientific research' is obviously extremely important. Given the other knowledge used to interpret a statement like this, the speaker can be accused of stupidity, mischief or of being deliberately untruthful. In many of the 'realistic' whale books, the tone is relatively flat and assumes a pedagogic register. \textit{Moby-Dick} is a much more complex book, including this pedagogic register, but also more diverse intonations, varying between character and situation. For Lakshimi Mani, Melville's intonation was explicit: "Among the major sceptical writers of the nineteenth-century, Melville's voice is the loudest in saying 'No, in thunder!' to transcendentalist egocentricism, ebullient optimism, and the millennial self-delusion of his times."\textsuperscript{148} Melville largely achieves this exclamation through intonation. Although, at times Melville may seem to raise a case for one attitude, often his intonation, his use of irony, conveys an alternative meaning.\textsuperscript{149} His sympathy for whales is often realised through the use of such irony. For example, in the chapter "The Virgin" Ishmael

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{146} Leech, G. N.: "Introduction," from McKnight et al, 1994, op. cit.: 43.
\item \textsuperscript{147} ibid: 39.
\item \textsuperscript{148} Mani, 1981, op. cit.: 207. Mani is quoting Melville, who said that Nathaniel Hawthorn says "NO! in thunder, but the devil himself cannot make him say \textit{yes}." From a letter to Hawthorn, April 16\textsuperscript{th} 1851, Leyda, 1952, op. cit.: 452.
\item \textsuperscript{149} Lawrence Thompson has read \textit{Moby-Dick} through such irony, deriving a third level of meaning in which Melville's states his dissatisfaction with Calvinistic religious interpretation. Thompson, L.: 1952, \textit{Melville's Quarrel with God}. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
ironically notes that the death of a crippled whale is for the "merry-makings of men" (MD367).

**Omission**

As important as the manner in which language is uttered is what is not uttered; that which remains unsaid and unspoken for. What is omitted from a text can be as strong an indication of its conveyed ideology as that which is foregrounded. Omissions can include the information that is presupposed, conflicting Weltanschauung and ideologies, or simply things that can not be articulated – the inconceivable. In the context of ecocriticism, the aspects of the natural world that are excluded can be cogent. Often the greatest omission from a text is nature. As Christopher Manes explains, "Nature is silent in our culture (and in literate societies generally) in the sense that the status of the speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative."

He suggests that Western peoples need to "dismantle a particular historical use of reason, a use that has produced a certain kind of human subject that only speaks soliloquies in a world of irrational silences."\(^{150}\) While humans may be the only species to have such developed language skills, it is a mistake to think that nature is silent.\(^{151}\) For Manes, "it is as if we somehow compressed the entire buzzing, howling, gurgling, biosphere into the narrow vocabulary of epistemology."\(^{152}\) I would suggest that Manes is correct; there is need of language that decentres humanity, which emphasises an alternative ontology, that emphasises the natural.

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\(^{151}\) Michael J. McDowell suggests, "beginning with the idea that all entities in the great web of nature deserve recognition and a voice, an ecological literary criticism might explore how authors have represented the interaction of both the human and nonhuman voices in the landscape." McDowell, Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996, op. cit.: 372.
\(^{152}\) Manes, Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996, op. cit.: 15.
The mere appearance of the natural world in a text can reveal much of the text's underlying assumptions. The lack of the natural in a text can be indicative of what is considered important; another denigration and marginalisation of the natural world. Postcolonial writers, for example, have illuminated the backgrounded colonial contexts of English novels. An ecocritical reading of a text should also be aware of the exploitation of the natural world that is often decentered and obscured. Omission can also take the form of words that are absent from, though needed, in the English language. For example, Mühlhäusler notes the use in Tok Pisin (citing Heine, 1980) of the modifier *pinis*. Thus, the expression *bagarap* (damaged) is different in meaning to *bagarap pinis* (ruined beyond repair). Mühlhäusler notes the difference such a modifier would make to a description of Maralinga and toxic waste. He also cites Wurm's 1981 study of the Äiwo language from the Reef Islands (South Western Pacific). In Äiwo there is a prefix *si*- denoting things that are despised, unclean, not valuable, dangerous or unpleasant. "It is interesting," he notes, "to imagine the effects if such noun-classifiers were obligatory in English…. Advertising would find it much harder to foist undesirable products on an unsuspecting public and *si-garettes* would not even need a government health warning."¹⁵³

Language diversity, like bio-diversity, offers undreamed of potential for discovery of new concepts. Through studying the diverse languages of the world, there is the potential to discover concepts and ideas alien to (but perhaps needed by) Western culture. The diversity of the world's languages, like that of the natural world, is under severe threat from contemporary Western culture. Languages other than those of the West offer the potential to conceive of humanity's relationship with the natural world is

¹⁵³ Mühlhäusler from Fill and Mühlhäusler, 2001, op. cit.:36-7.
ways that are more harmonious and less antagonistic. An awareness of such languages and cultures can lead to the assimilation into English of new lexical items and metaphors.

**Metaphors**

Metaphor plays an extremely large, if not total, role in the way in which meaning is conveyed in language. Johnson poses the question of "whether metaphor is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a fundamental principle of thought and action." It definitely has a central role in the unconscious coding of ideology into utterances. Nietzsche considered metaphor and 'proper words' to be the same thing, and claimed that metaphor was essential to human knowledge. For Nietzsche, the 'fixed truths' of our culture are nothing but metaphorical understandings that have become conventionalized to the point where their metaphoricity is forgotten:

> What, then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms – in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn-out and without sensuous power …

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154 Strictly speaking, what I am referring to here is 'tropes', or general figures of speech: These include simile, metaphor, metonym and synecdoche. When people discuss metaphors they often subsume metonymy and similes under the rubric of metaphor and I will do the same.
155 Johnson, 1981, op. cit.: 43.
The literary critic I. A. Richards suggested that metaphor is "the omnipresent principle of language … our pretence to do without metaphor is never more than a bluff waiting to be called."\textsuperscript{157} Clearly, metaphors play a crucial role in the way language works.

When a metaphor is utilised, linguistic concepts are linked. It may be that there are no true synonyms, that no two words have exactly the same meaning; that is to say, two things can have the same extension but not the same intension – all synonymy works at a metaphorical level.\textsuperscript{158} By linking two \textit{assumed} concepts or lexical items, the attributes of one, not just the apparent lexical meaning, are transferred to the other. Clearly, lexical meaning within language is extended by the use of metaphor. In fact, without this linguistic phenomenon language would be very limited and translation almost impossible (if not communication). 'Metaphors' are the areas of significance that an author and reader have in their minds, through which they both search for congruence. As with all utterances, a metaphor derives its meaning from a dialogic relationship with context, history, and culture. This metaphorical process explains some aspects of language: how meaning can be created, why people can think about 'reality' in a variety of different possible ways, and what propels them to choose one way over another. Whorf's idea of how linguistic analogy works (discussed later on page 99) is very similar to the way in which metaphor functions. Instead of reducing 'linguistic meaning \textit{A}' to a common 'linguistic meaning \textit{X}' which then leads to 'linguistic meaning \textit{B}', the use of a metaphor allows a direct link between \textit{A} and \textit{B}, purely by the act of metaphorical pronouncement – \textit{A} is \textit{B}. However, the extraneous linguistic associations of \textit{A} are transferred, perhaps unconsciously, to \textit{B}. Even our most 'literal' expressions

\textsuperscript{158} Searle, however, claims that word meaning "is never metaphorical," implying that there are truth conditions encapsulated in terms. Searle, Johnson, 1981, op. cit.: 257.
may involve unnoticed 'conventional' metaphors'.\textsuperscript{159} For example, Lakoff and Johnson argue that the conceptual metaphor 'argument is war' is conventional and, like others, is a metaphor of which people are hardly ever conscious.\textsuperscript{160} Many such conventional metaphors are 'structural metaphors' including 'physical' and 'orientational' metaphors, which are, for Lakoff and Johnson, "basic to our everyday conceptualizing and functioning."\textsuperscript{161} These concepts may originate in the basic evolutionary categories discussed earlier.

Metaphor cannot be separated from lexicon because so many words bring with them hidden metaphorical meanings. There are some very old metaphors still unconsciously current in our language. For example, the idea of an earth-centred universe remains in such expressions as 'sun rise' and 'sun set'.\textsuperscript{162} Even though earth centred theories have been invalidated, the continued use of such expressions reflects the view that the world revolves around the beholder. Many of our words for measurement reflect a human centred etymology (though with the adoption of the metric system this is changing). Originally most measurements, including 'inch', 'span', 'fathom', 'cubit', 'mile' and 'foot', derived from the human body. Our sense of scale also reflects a human-centred approach.\textsuperscript{163} In the field of geography, anthropocentric terms are extremely common, establishing a metaphorical connection between the land and the body. Altman and Chemers write of metaphorical words from exploration and science that "typify

\textsuperscript{159} Johnson, 1981, op. cit.: 38.
\textsuperscript{160} Lakoff and Johnson, "Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language," from ibid: 288-9.
\textsuperscript{161} Noting that when they say, "a concept is structured by a metaphor, they mean that it is partially structured, and that it can be extended in some ways but not others." These metaphors include up-down, front-back, in-out, on-off, deep-shallow, and central-peripheral. ibid: 294-6.
\textsuperscript{162} Other examples include 'The sun is up', 'the moon is up', 'the sun is going down', and 'at the going down in the west'.
\textsuperscript{163} For etymology see Barnhart, 1998, op. cit. Often an expression, such as 'a small dog' or 'large whale' would appear to negate this statement but on further study one notices that the adjective is paired to the noun and the noun already has an implied size, generally in relation to a human subject.
Western views of nature as being subordinate to people." These include the 'conquest' of space and mountains, 'cracking' the genetic code, 'unlocking' nature's secrets, and 'harnessing' rivers, all metaphors that intimate that nature is either a secret being held from humans, or a force to be controlled.164

This thesis is concerned with the way in which metaphors are the unconscious vehicles for ideology. Metaphors work at the level of word, sentence, utterance and culture. As Whorf has written, they have a tendency to channel thought in certain directions. At a simple level, there are clichés, utterances that people choose before original thought. Speakers will more readily use a metaphor they have heard before than conceptualise their own. It is partly this metaphorical laziness that explains why metaphors are 'channelled' into common routes. Thus, whales become 'fish', 'monsters', and 'creatures of the deep' rather than 'gentle mothers' or 'peacefully swimming mammals'. In his introduction to metaphor, Johnson claims that:

In general, they [Black, Lowenburg, Ricoeur, Lakoff and himself] must hold that we encounter our world, not passively, but by means of projective acts influenced by our interests, purposes, values, beliefs, and language. Because our world is an imaginative, value-laden construction, metaphors that alter our conceptual structures (themselves carried by older metaphors) will also alter the way we experience things.165

165 Johnson, 1981, op. cit.: 41-2
This suggests that the world is seen from a certain perspective and that some metaphors can create such a perspective.

The way in which metaphor can enforce unjustified cultural assumptions about the natural world can be found in a couple of metaphors used by Johnson. He suggests that the metaphor "Richard is a Gorilla" is possibly interpreted as "Richard is fierce, nasty, prone to violence, and so forth," but, as he points out, "it is, in fact, false that gorillas have these characteristics." What extends these possible interpretations to the metaphor is not something about gorillas (maybe something about Richard) but cultural presuppositions about gorillas. Johnson also quotes the cliché "man is a wolf" to show the meanings one might take from this metaphor: that a wolf 'is a mammal', 'is fierce', 'travels in packs' and 'is a predator'. He claims these might be the "commonplaces" of 'wolf' involved in our comprehension of the metaphor, regardless of the fact that wolves may not actually be fierce in the way (or to the extent) that they are claimed to be. In Johnson's conception, "commonplaces" (derived from the theories of Black) are cultural beliefs that do not necessarily have any relationship to reality.

The simplest example of metaphorical understanding, with respect to the books on which I have focused, is at a lexical level. People can betray much in the metaphorical synonyms they use. I have already looked at the use of the word 'fish' to describe 'whales' under lexicon; however, it is at a metaphorical level that the link between a whale and a fish is made. Unfortunately, to refer to the whale as a fish associates the properties of cold-bloodedness, of a perceived lack of responsiveness to

166 ibid: 254.
167 ibid: 26-8. Note that L. David Mech claims not one case "of healthy wolves attacking people has been recorded in North America. Old accounts of marauding 'beasts' in Europe – probably embellished by legend – are now interpreted as attacks by rabid wolves or wolf-dog hybrids." Mech, L. D.: 1977, "Where Can the Wolf Survive?" National Geographic, October: 529.
pain, of a lack of intelligence, and of a lack of many 'human' qualities that are presumed to be missing in fish (such as loyalty, maternal love, and bravery). To refer to a whale thus is analogous to a soldier's use of terms to displace the enemy's humanity (making it psychologically easier to kill them). This habit was widespread until the end of the nineteenth-century, though in some instances it continued afterwards. Even writers who respected the fact that whales are warm-blooded animals were prone to use the whalers' word 'fish'. Thoreau, in his description of blackfish (a small whale or porpoise) hunting off Cape Cod, continually refers to the animals as 'fish', even after his research shows that it was correctly excluded from a Report on Fishes "since it is not a fish."168 In a section from J. Ross Browne's Etchings, the character Mack likewise concludes, "whales is fish."169 In Moby-Dick, Ishmael, claiming authority from his friends Simeon Macey and Charley Coffin, states: "I take the good old fashioned ground that the whale is a fish" (MD136). Though he quotes Linnaeus' System of Nature (1776 – that whales have "warm bilocular heart, their lungs, their movable eyelids, their hollow ears, 'penem intrantem feminam mammis lactantem,' and finally, 'ex lege naturae jure meritoque'"), he maintains that whales are fish. Ishmael concedes that whales have "lungs and warm blood; whereas, all other fish are lungless and cold blooded," yet concludes that a whale is "a spouting fish with a horizontal tail" (MD136). Tyrus Hillway suggests, "Melville, of course, had his eyes fully open and no doubt his tongue in his cheek when making this classification," as with his cetacean divisions.170 In Ishmael's claim, Melville was not only satirising scientific nomenclature, but also the attitude of some whalers.

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The whaling writer Frederick Bennett asserts that, "whales are not fish, but rank with a higher grade of the animal kingdom."\textsuperscript{171} He does mention a note to a translation of Cuvier: "The church of Rome regards coot as fish, and why should seal-oil not be the produce of fish in a legal view, since whale is classed with them?" As strange as this sounds, the Roman Catholic Church would appear still to have only a tenuous grasp on species nomenclature as it classifies the South American mammal the capybara as a fish. As a result, Catholics in South America who like to eat capybara on Fridays (as their fish meal) are severely depleting the numbers of this animal.\textsuperscript{172} Mühlhäusler writes of Catholic Bavaria, where beavers were classified as fish so they could be eaten during Lent and on Fridays.\textsuperscript{173} The last published recipe for Roasted Beaver was from 1904, almost a half-century after they were extinct in the region. Bennett notes that the English used to regard the flesh of the porpoise as fish, and it "was eaten by all ranks of society on fast days, and at the season of Lent."\textsuperscript{174} Roger Knightly points out that at some time the church has classified crocodiles, beavers, dolphins and whales as 'fish'.\textsuperscript{175}

There has been, as Eco points out, confusion between 'dictionary' and 'encyclopaedic' forms of knowledge. Therefore, the description of whales gives us a good chance to study the way in which language works. Eco makes a distinction between CT (cognitive type), NC (Nuclear Content) and MC (Meaning Content). His CT is a more folk-like classification, whereas the NC is the scientific classification.\textsuperscript{176}

\textsuperscript{171} Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 148-9.
\textsuperscript{172} Knightly, R.: 2000, 22 April, "The Easter Fish," The Australian Magazine: 44.
\textsuperscript{173} Mühlhäusler from Fill and Mühlhäusler, 2001, op. cit.: 42, Note 5.
\textsuperscript{174} Bennett, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 238.
\textsuperscript{175} Knightly, 2000, op. cit.: 44.
\textsuperscript{176} Eco, 1999, op. cit.: 130. "in a Kantian universe, we should say that this CT was the schema that allowed them to mediate between the concept and the manifold of the intuition."
The MC is the (hypothetical) 'real' thing. In folk classification *fish* is a more than adequate term for a whale, or anything else that is an animal, swims in water, and does not obviously have arms and legs. The expression *fish-like* accurately conveys the nature of folk classification, if not language in general (in that it highlights the metaphorical nature of language). Pinker writes that some taxonomists insist "there is no such thing as a fish; it is only a layperson's stereotype." However, he concedes (citing Lakoff) that the tendency to think in terms of 'prototype' categories is very natural. Eco also claims this:

"There was also truth in the schema that depicted the whale as a fish (ie, with the schematic traits proper to a fish). It was wrong (as we now say) from the taxonomic standpoint, but it was not (and still is not, even for us) from the standpoint of the construction of a stereotype."  

It is only after more investigation that whales are found to be warm blooded, viviparous, with lungs to breathe air. This extra information poses the problem of whether they should be classified as mammals, or fish (remembering that modern nomenclature has other requirements for inclusion in the category of fish). The problem is that the folk classification differs from the scientific classification, and as a result its metaphorical nature imparts onto the animal, the *fish*, qualities thought to belong to 'real' fish: of not feeling pain, and of existing for human use. The term 'fish' is both a folk artefact, like

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177 See ibid: 232. See also Gould's discussion reproduced in part in Lakoff, 1987, op. cit.: 85, 119.  
178 Eco claims, "perceptual consensus … always springs from a prior cultural agreement, no matter how folk or vague it might be." Eco, 1999, op. cit.: 195ff.  
180 Eco, 1999, op. cit.: 121.
'pet', and a word that has been appropriated by more formal taxonomies, leading to confusion and ambiguity.\textsuperscript{181} Despite Melville's parody of this notion, there are arguably valid reasons for terming the whale a 'fish'. While the most important reason for not terming them a 'fish' is to separate in people's minds cetaceans from the other 'fish'.\textsuperscript{182}

Modern Japanese pro-whaling texts continue to use the same metaphors in their vindication of the practice. A modern example of language open to metaphorical and ideological scrutiny can be found on the Internet at the 'scientific whaling research' site http://www.whalesci.org. Amongst the many articles on the site is one by Shigeko Misaki titled "Japanese World-View on Whales and Whaling" in which he ponders "why the minority in the [International Whaling Commission] are non-English speaking; perhaps the language is as much a form of reflection of the culture as its cause."\textsuperscript{183}

Shigeko Misaki's paper presents many reasons why the Japanese should be allowed to whale; however, his entire argument is in terms of the 'natural resource' metaphor.\textsuperscript{184} This metaphor can be explained as the view that the 'natural world' is a 'resource', in the

\textsuperscript{181} See Pinker, 1998, op. cit.: 311, for further discussion on the classification of 'fish'.

Henry Salt relates a story of Leigh Hunt:
The Dean once asked a scrub who was fishing, if he had ever caught a fish called the Scream. The man protested he had never heard of such a fish.

'What!' says the Dean, 'you an angler, and never heard of the fish that gives a shriek when coming out of the water? 'Tis the only fish that has a voice, and a sad, dismal sound it is.' The man asked who could be so barbarous as to angle for a creature that shrieked. 'That,' said the Dean, 'is another matter; but what do you think of fellows that I have seen, whose only reason for hooking and tearing all the fish they can get at, is that they do not scream?' Salt, 1980, op. cit.: 18-19.

\textsuperscript{182} Not that I am claiming whales should be treated kindly because they are mammals, whereas it is acceptable to be cruel to fish. Far from it.


\textsuperscript{184} Misaki justifies this stance by saying that it "is important to note that the ICRW recognizes whales as 'natural resources' and not as a symbol of the environment. The Japanese position in the IWC is in keeping with the objectives of the Convention, in that whales are resources and not a symbol so long as the Convention remains unrevised." ibid.
sense of "a source of economic wealth esp[ecially] of a country." The metaphor is evident in expressions such as "marine food resources," "utilisation of whales," "whale stocks," "very modest catches," "sustain harvesting," "abundance levels" and "restore marine mammal populations." Whales are described in the same way as an ore or crop would be. Shigeko Misaki compares the consumption in the U.S.A. and Japan of animal 'meat' and 'fish', covertly coupling 'whalemeat' with 'fish'. This is also achieved by defining them as 'marine food resources'. Western nations, of course, are quite content to harvest marine resources themselves.

Of course, the question remains whether or not the tendency to accept a metaphor precedes conception, or afterwards? If you believe that both whales and fish should be not be exploited or treated cruelly, is there any harm in linking the two? Inversely, if you believe they are both resources for human use, can they not be metaphorically associated? Does acceptance of a metaphor influence behaviour? The theorists of one branch of linguistics believe so.

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iv. Linguistic relativity or linguistic determinism?

It was found that the background linguistic system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade.

Benjamin Lee Whorf, "Science and Linguistics"187

If language reflects our attitude to nature (and I have tried to catalogue some evidence for this claim), does it, as Whorf claims in the above quotation, also affect our behaviour towards reality and the ecosphere? Does the unconscious interpretation of lexicon, grammar and intonation alter people's outward behaviour? 'Relativity' and 'determinism' are maligned doctrines in some sections of the intellectual world. Despite this uneasiness, Gumperz and Levinson suggest that every student of language or society should be familiar with the essential idea of linguistic relativity, the belief that language affects our behaviour.188 In its original conception, the hypothesis concerned possible cultural differences that were ingrained in different cultures' languages, and this is commonly referred to as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, named after two writers most influential in its development, Whorf and Edward Sapir.189 The latter insisted that

188 Gumperz and Levinson, 1996, op. cit.: 1.
language, *because of its active role in the interpretation of reality*, could affect this interpretation ("the tyrannical hold that linguistic form has upon our orientation in the world").\(^{190}\) He proposed that: "We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation."\(^{191}\) Crucial to his argument is the word 'predispose'. Sapir is not saying that behaviour is determined by language, but that its structure makes it *more likely* that some behaviour, based on linguistic choices we are 'predisposed' to make, will occur.

Sapir was to set the ground for an investigation of the possibility of linguistic relativity, a study furthered by Whorf. The latter's methodology involved the comparison of different languages, which he supplemented with examples drawn from his working experience in fire assessment.\(^{192}\) A key to Whorf's analysis is his use of 'overt' and 'covert' categories in language and his conception of 'cryptotypes' and 'phenotypes'. This first classification is reasonably easy to comprehend; however, his second is more difficult, particularly since he changed the way he referred to them over time.\(^{193}\) An overt category, as the name suggests, is one that is obviously stated in the grammar of a language. His example is gender in Latin. Whorf suggests that a covert category, "like English gender … has no overt mark actualized along with the words of the class but

\(^{190}\) Sapir, 1964, "Conceptual Categories in Primitive Languages," from Lucy, 1992, op. cit.: 20. Note that Sapir saw that these processes were mostly unconscious. His 1927 paper was called "The Unconscious Patterning of Behavior in Society." ibid: 22.


\(^{192}\) Lucy, ibid: 25. One of the main criticisms made against cultural relativists has been their translations of other languages. As Quine notes, "wanton translation can make natives sound as queer as one pleases." Quine, 1965, op. cit.: 58. The search for comparative cultural evidence for cultural relativity has perhaps confused the issue. There have been genuine concerns that linguistic determinism could lead to racist ideas of cultural hierarchy.

\(^{193}\) At first it appears that 'phenotype' and 'overt' and 'covert' and 'cryptotype' are interchangeable, but, as Lucy point out, "Whorf moved [in his later writing] towards using phenotype and cryptotype more exclusively for meaning as opposed to marking, but in a way that was inconsistent with his earlier uses." Lucy, 1992, op. cit.: 28-31.
…operates through an invisible 'central exchange' of linkage bonds in such a way as to determine certain other words which mark the class."\textsuperscript{194} Covert categories are marked in the language, but such marking is evident only in certain contexts of use. In his later writing Whorf preferred to use 'phenotype' and 'cryptotype' to refer to the grammatical meanings of overt and covert categories, respectively. He described them in an article, "Thinking in Primitive Communities," as "submerged, subtle and elusive meaning, corresponding to no actual word, yet shown by linguistic analysis to be functionally important in grammar."\textsuperscript{195} He writes that such a form of a word "may have no overt mark other than certain distinctive 'reactances' with certain overtly marked forms," referring to certain words that have subtle meanings apparent only from how they can or cannot be used.\textsuperscript{196} For Whorf, who argued, "linguistics is essentially the quest of meaning," it could be shown that, in some languages at least, "linguistic meaning results from the interplay of phenotypes and cryptotypes, not from phenotypes alone."\textsuperscript{197} This is an attractive idea, in that it takes the search for linguistic form and meaning to a deeper level. Whorf asserted that this interplay operated at an unconscious level, and that the overt simplicity of a linguistic item did not stop it from having complex covert

\textsuperscript{195} Whorf, "Thinking in Primitive Communities," from Carroll, 1991, op. cit.: 70-2.
\textsuperscript{196} Whorf offered a couple of examples, including the "transitive verbs of a covering, enclosing and surface-attaching meaning, the reactance of which is that UN-may be prefixed to denote the opposite." ibid: 71. Thus, Whorf noted that it is possible to have ‘unfasten’ but not ‘unbreak’.
\textsuperscript{197} ibid: 72-3.
meanings. It is the task of eco-linguists and ecocritics to tease out such covert meanings in the language of Western culture.198

In his capacity as assessor for a fire insurance company, Whorf ploughed through "many hundreds" of cases, and it became evident to him "that not only a physical situation *qua* physics, but the meaning of that situation to people, was sometimes a factor, through the behavior of people in the start of the fire."199 Whorf offered quite a few examples of this, from which he concluded that they showed:

how the cue to a certain line of behavior is often given by the analogies of the linguistic formula in which the situation is spoken of, and by which to some degree it is analyzed, classified, and allotted its place in that world which is 'to a large extent unconsciously built up out of the language habits of the group.' And we always assume that the linguistic analysis made by our group reflects reality better than it does.200

Whorf realised that the problem with proving or even investigating his hypothesis would be "the difficulty of standing aside from our own language, which is a habit and a

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Brackets denote redundant terms and dashes indicate empty categories. ibid:281. Note 7.


200 Whorf is quoting from Sapir here. Whorf's examples generally showed an original misreading of a situation because of ambiguous terms. In various cases 'empty drums' did in fact contain petrol fumes, inert 'limestone' was a flammable waste product, 'scrap lead' was interleaved with tarpaper, etcetera. ibid: 137.
cultural *non est disputandum*, and scrutinising it objectively."\(^{201}\) This must still be taken into account in the methodology of any studies on linguistic relativity. His questions were: "(1) Are our own concepts of 'time', 'space' and 'matter' given in substantially the same form by experience to all men, or are they in part conditioned by the structure of particular languages? [and] (2) Are there traceable affinities between (a) cultural and behavioral norms and (b) large-scale linguistic patterns?"\(^{202}\) Whorf's answer to these questions is exemplified by his statement: "Newtonian space, time, and matter are no intuitions. They are recepts from culture and language. That is where Newton got them."\(^{203}\)

Some writers (Glacken, 1967, Merchant, 1980, Oelschlaeger, 1991) have argued that the Western scientific heritage is responsible for our attitude to the environment. Whorf's theories offer some substantiation of this view. For example, he suggested, "much of [the SAE language's] metaphorical reference to the nonspatial by the spatial was already fixed in the ancient tongues, and more especially in Latin."\(^{204}\) Further to this, he added: "In the Middle Ages the patterns already formed in Latin began to interweave with the increased mechanical invention, industry, trade, and scholastic and scientific thought." In an article entitled "Linguistics As An Exact Science," he proposed that, "Science of course was not caused by this grammar; it was simply colored by it."\(^{205}\) Whorf suggests that our language is not constrained by our grammar, but is affected by it – relativity rather than determinism. In his article, "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language," he suggested it was not a chicken and egg

\(^{201}\) ibid.

\(^{202}\) ibid: 139.

\(^{203}\) ibid: 153.

\(^{204}\) ibid: 156.

\(^{205}\) Whorf, 1940, "Linguistics as an Exact Science," from Carroll, 1991, op. cit.: 221.
question as to the influence of language and culture on each other, but that instead, "they have grown up together, constantly influencing each other. But in this partnership the nature of language is the factor that limits free plasticity and rigidifies channels of development in the more autocratic way." Whorf claimed that this was so because, as per Sapir, language is a 'system'.

One of the ways in which Whorf argues that language can affect behaviour is by linguistic analogy, a process that influences the interpretation of, and behavioural response to, experienced reality. He suggested that:

> The world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds – and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it this way – an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language.

He proceeds to say that the "agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, BUT ITS TERMS ARE ABSOLUTELY OBLIGATORY; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees." Thus, Whorf posited that speakers readily reflect on lexical meanings, but are generally unaware of patterned grammatical imports that ultimately determine a lexical item.

Linguistic relativity continues to be a contested area; however, there are many writers who support the hypothesis. William Hanks, for example, claims, "routine

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207 Lucy, 1992, op. cit.: 46.
209 ibid: 214.
[deictic] frames, and the language forms that key into them, make certain ways of speaking highly probable, automatic, or virtually unavoidable.\textsuperscript{210} As he writes, the issue is "not whether language form and use determine what people CAN think or experience, \textit{but rather the extent to which they influence} what people DO think and experience" (italics added).\textsuperscript{211} Berlin's and Kay's (1969) investigation of the language-independence saliency of 'basic colours' was taken as a decisive anti-relativist finding; however, Kay's and Kempton's (1984) later research would appear to have overturned these findings, and "demonstrated that differential linguistic coding of colors [do] indeed affect perceptual judgements."\textsuperscript{212} Another piece of evidence for linguistic relativity is the fact that people (consciously or not) do use euphemisms and metaphor, often to affect (deliberately) other people's non-linguistic behaviour. Military euphemisms such as 'collateral damage' are used to influence perceived 'reality'. As Lucy remarks, such "an alienation from concrete realities can result in failed ethical engagement and moral action in the world." For Lucy, the crucial point "is that this mode of orientation to the world is now richly embodied in the lexical and grammatical structure of the language itself – especially in the standard language of the dominant class strata."\textsuperscript{213}

Another example is the continued metaphorical talk in the press of 'negative growth' in the economy. The metaphor of 'growth' obscures the true nature of the

\textsuperscript{210} Hanks, W., "Language Form and Communicative Practices", from Gumperz, J. J. and Levinson, S. C., eds.: 1996, \textit{Rethinking linguistic relativity}. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.: 238. The idea of 'routine' or 'habitual' behaviour (Lucy, 1992, op. cit.: 7.) is important because it takes the focus of relativity away from conscious deliberated action and places it in the everyday unconscious and repeated actions.

\textsuperscript{211} Hanks, Gumperz and Levinson, 1996, op. cit.: 234. Hanks writes later, "the issue is not whether grammar somehow constrains what people think or perceive. Rather, the central question becomes how language serves to sediment routine practices, both constraining and enabling what they habitually do think, perceive and enact." ibid: 237.

\textsuperscript{212} Gumperz and Levinson, 1996, op. cit.: 6, 14 (endnote 27). See also Lakoff, 1987, op. cit.: Chapter 18.

capitalist economy. Although it does grow, arguably it grows like bacteria in a Petri dish, using up all the available resources, not like a tree up towards the sun. A metaphor like 'the economy as fire' would alter, for many people, their conception of what is happening. Melville's ability to fashion such a metaphor, to align Ahab with scientific rationalism, is one of the strengths of *Moby-Dick*.

Dan Slobin's research, studying children's perception (from various language backgrounds) of what is happening in a children's picture book, offers good evidence for linguistic relativity. He changes the focus of the argument, replacing 'thought' and 'language' with 'thinking' and 'speaking' (conceiving in terms of process), and claims, "whatever else language may do in human thought and action, it surely directs us to attend – while speaking – to the dimensions of experience that are enshrined in grammatical categories." He claims that:

> with a single language, grammar provides a set of **options** for schematizing experience for the purposes of verbal expression. Any utterance is multiply determined by what I have seen or experienced, my communicative purpose in telling you about it, and the distinctions that are embodied in my grammar.\(^{214}\)

He concludes that the "language or languages that we learn in childhood are not neutral coding systems of an objective reality."\(^{215}\) Carroll and Casagrande (1958) offer an analogy for how the process works. Their central premise is that a continuous world of experience must be fitted into discrete linguistic categories – both lexical and

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\(^{214}\) Slobin, from Gumperz and Levinson, 1996, op. cit.: 71-8.

grammatical – for there to be efficient communication about it.²¹⁶ Yet, as Lucy notes, "although any concept can be expressed in each language, there will be differences in what concepts are obligatorily expressed."²¹⁷ To borrow from Roger Brown (via Bowermann), "the word serves as a 'lure to Cognition'," leading in turn to "highly probable, automatic, or virtually unavoidable" actions.²¹⁸ Thus, there are valid arguments that human behaviour towards the natural world is affected by language use, which in turn results from thousands of years of cultural interaction with nature. As Whorf, Lucy and Hoijer claim, it is 'routine' or 'habitual' behaviour that is affected. What occurs in language then, is linguistic relativity, not linguistic determinism. It is important to be clear, however, that language operates in parallel with other cultural forces to affect thought.

If the language of Western cultures (specifically English in this study) is affecting population behaviour, then the role of ecocriticism and ecolinguistics is to adumbrate and explain the mechanisms by which this occurs. Critical theory combines the sense of critic as judge (from the Greek *kritikós*) and the sense of critical, as relating to the crisis of disease (from the greek *krísis*). In turn, ecocriticism has the important function of criticising texts for what they say about the environment, and of education, of suggesting less harmful ways to envisage and describe the world. I am not suggesting that ecocriticism should replace other critical theory but, rather, that it act in unison with other necessary theories. As I have stated, it is not just texts on the natural world that need this examination, but also all cultural texts. It is for the purpose of this thesis that I

²¹⁷ Lucy, 1992, op. cit.: 194.
²¹⁸ Bowerman, Gumperz and Levinson, 1996, op. cit.: 208.
have chosen to look at texts about whales. However, before I examine *Moby-Dick* and modern texts about whales, I retrace the path that whales have swum throughout narrative history, and describe the way in which nature in general has been perceived.
Chapter 3: The historical perception and portrayal of nature and whales

i. 'Round out': the description of whales throughout history

In the Beginning …

Then neither Being nor Not-being was,
Nor atmosphere, nor firmament, nor what is beyond.
What did it encompass? Where? In whose protection?
What was water, the deep, unfathomable?

Hindu Scriptures

This thesis argues that all utterances are socially, ideologically and historically situated, and no attempt to study them, whether they are texts or speech, will be productive without some understanding of these factors. Thus, to examine books that deal with whales, I must, at the same time, investigate their historical context. Of particular interest is the way differing historical conceptions of nature have affected language and are thus discernible in modern language. There are many parallels between older theories of human relationships with nature and contemporary assumptions. This chapter examines the way in which 'nature' has been historically determined (focussing primarily on the Western world). In addition to considering the religious influence on human attitudes to nature, this chapter traces the origin of a number of conceptions of

the natural world and of animals that have developed through history. I also consider whether or not they have been evident in whale texts.

The idea of nature as antagonistic to culture has been dominant in Western cultures from earliest recorded times, although there is also evidence of an alternative (though subordinate) tradition of thought that conceives of nature as intertwined and interconnected with culture. Many of the predominant attitudes to nature, including teleological conceptions of the world, the idea of a 'Great Chain of Being' (*scala naturae*), the concept of senescence in nature, the belief in a designed earth and ideas of environmental effects on culture, date back to the Greek and Hebrew times. More recent, are changing conceptions of animal rights, and new ethical formulations such as Aldo Leopold's 'land ethic' and other ecocentric and biocentric ethics, such as deep ecology. Arguably though, even the biocentric view of deep ecology can be traced far into the past. Most of these conceptions are anthropocentric and can readily be found in language and texts. One function of ecocriticism is to examine texts for the way these conceptions of nature are reiterated and legitimised. In the last few centuries, many of the religious and metaphysical bases for what were considered proscribed moralities and beliefs have been questioned. Ecocriticism needs to continue this project, to question the validity and authority of conceptions of nature. Of course, not all of these attitudes to the environment are necessarily depicted in texts on whales and whaling. Melville's portrayal of the natural world incorporates older attitudes, but *Moby-Dick* is clearly at variance with the dominant ideologies of antebellum America, including its conception of the environment and I expand on this in Chapter Three.
Whales have been swimming in the oceans far longer than humans have walked the earth. Unlike other animals of the deep ocean, they are also animals of the surface, and they are large enough to be seen at considerable distance from the shore. When humans started sailing the world's oceans, the presence of whales and their size was psychologically intimidating to sailors and ships, even if they were not physically dangerous. The problem that people had in understanding whales was that they could only be studied in either of two different, reciprocally-invalidating forms. They were, and largely remain, a true example of the 'Schrödinger’s cat' thought experiment – either alive in the ocean, at a distance and mostly obscured by water, or alternatively, washed up dead on the beach. Even after whales began to be hunted mercilessly, extended autopsies did little to answer some of the more intriguing questions. For example, cetacean experts still do not know the function of the spermaceti in sperm whales, or what occurs when the sperm whales dive deep for squid.

Not only have whales embodied uncertainty but also they have been an enduring symbol of the unknown aspects of nature. As Jacques Cousteau points out, the whale was in earlier times "the embodiment of absolute monstrosity." Early human sightings of whales, and of the other huge and misunderstood deep-sea animal, the giant squid, are probably responsible for the myths of sea-monsters. By establishing these gentle animals as sea-monsters to be feared, people reinforced the idea that nature was something incomprehensible and dangerous, and that the proper response to this fear was subjugation or annihilation. This attitude is one that has existed since human language was first recorded and it probably dates from far earlier.

William Scoresby's classic volumes about whaling, on which Melville relied heavily, offer a conjectural account of how people came to hunt whales:

In the early ages of the world, when beasts of prey began to multiply and annoy the vocations of man, the personal danger to which he must have been occasionally exposed, would oblige him to contrive some means of defence. For this end he would naturally be induced, both to prepare weapons, and also to preconceive plans for resisting the disturbers of his peace. His subsequent encounters [sic] with beasts of prey would therefore be more frequently successful; not only in effectually repelling them when they should attack him, but also in some instances in accomplishing their destruction. By experience, he would gradually discover more safe and effectual methods of resisting and conquering his irrational enemies; his general success would beget confidence, and that confidence at length would lead him to pursue in his turn the former objects of his dread, and thus change his primitive defensive act of self-preservation into an offensive operation, forming a novel, interesting, and noble recreation. Hence we can readily and satisfactorily trace to the principle of necessity, the adroitness and courage evidenced by the unenlightened nations of the world, in their successful attacks on the most formidable of the brute creation; and hence we can conceive, that necessity may impel the indolent to activity, and the coward to actions which would not disgrace the brave.⁴

Scoresby sees nothing illogical in his claim that because humanity was beset by wild animals it entered the oceans to hunt a peaceful one. He does note, however, that whaling came about because Biscayans, in attempting to drive the "intruding monsters from their coasts," were "doubtless … surprised to find, that, instead of their being the ferocious, formidable, and dangerous animals they had conceived, they were timid and

inoffensive."\(^5\) This surprise led, according to Scoresby, to "additional confidence and courage" and thus to whaling.\(^6\) It should be remembered that these are the speculations of a whale hunter from the nineteenth century, writing within a culture that was keen to justify actions that were firmly entrenched in a nineteenth-century conception of resource use.

Despite Scoresby's imagined history, the evidence shows that preliterate people had a number of attitudes to whales. Although some cultures conceived of the whale as an animal to hunt, there were others that considered the whale a friend, and its dead body a gift from nature or the gods. Although the earliest known representations of whales and whaling are stone-age rock carvings from Meling, Norway (dating from 1800 B.C.E.) they feature in the creation stories, or other aspects of the mythology, of many cultures, including that of the West.\(^7\) The whale has fulfilled a number of purposes in mythology and stories about them have taken several generic forms, the whale appearing with different guises, dispositions and symbolic meanings. The whale has supported the world, created it, saved the creation gods and been their friend. Olaf Ruhen tells of a Tongan legend which has Kae (his spelling), the protagonist, betraying and butchering one of the whales that give him a lift home, for which he is captured and eaten by Samoans.\(^8\) Ruhen also tells of a Maori story of Tutara-Kauika, the king of all whales, who rescues a priest or tohunga. Tim Severin notes that the legend of how Kea

\(^5\) ibid: 4.
\(^6\) ibid.
\(^8\) Ruhen, O.: 1966, Harpoon in my Hand. Angus and Robertson, Sydney: 63-4. The two whales are Tonga and Tununga. The first survives the betrayal and becomes the progenitor of all sperm whales. Tununga, who is eaten and his teeth taken, is brought back to life (without teeth) and becomes the progenitor of humpbacks, with no teeth and sunken, banged in heads.
rode home on the back of the Big Whale is a pan-Pacific folk tale, familiar to Fijians, Maoris, Tongan school children and noted by anthropologists studying the Marquesans. There are stories from Inuit, Chinese people, the residents of the Missili region of Angola, Siberian Koryak people, Canadian Tlingit Indians and many others. The Nootka Indians of Vancouver Island consider the whale "the focal point of social, cultural, and religious life" and the beautiful Haida Indian carvings from the same area frequently represent orcas. In Iceland, according to Mathews, there were old beliefs that "good whales" helped fisherfolk by driving herring into shore. Islamic texts tell of a whale supporting the world, and Australian Aboriginal Dreamtime stories include one that explains the blowhole of the whales, caused by the spearing in the head of an anti-Promethean character named Kondole. Josephine Flood writes of engraved outlines in the Sydney region ranging from "whales to lyre birds, from dingoes to sailing ships, from emus to what appears to be a lady in a crinoline dress." In George Angas' *Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand* (1847) he reproduces some "Aboriginal carvings, or tracings, upon rocks and headlands in the vicinity of Port Jackson,"

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11 Cousteau, 1988, op. cit.: 246-8. "In Africa … the death of a whale was cause for sorrow. People in the Missili region of Angola believed whales were the ruling spirits of the sea."
12 Mathews, 1968, op. cit.: 19. He notes that when Sven Fyn started using his harpoon gun to catch rorquals in the late nineteenth century "the fishermen were very angry … as they considered it endangered their future livelihood."
13 Cousteau, 1988, op. cit.: 245-50. As can be expected from coastal dwellers, there are many Australian Aboriginal stories concerning whales. One such story from Encounter Bay tells how "a large strong man" Kondole was speared in the back of his skull for selfishly withholding fire from a group wanting light for an evening ceremony, after which Kondole became a whale, breathing through the spear hole. Mountford, C. P.: 1969, *The Dawn of Time – Australian Aboriginal Myths*. Paintings by Ainslie Roberts, Rigby, Adelaide: 40-1.
including a whale from Point Piper.\textsuperscript{15} It is most probable that for Palaeolithic societies the majority of interactions with whales would have been with dead or stranded whales, possibly perceived as a bounty supplied by nature. There is evidence in middens around the North Sea that pre-literate humanity made use of whale carcasses that were washed ashore.\textsuperscript{16} The circumstances that surrounded the spearing of Governor Phillip in the early days of colonial Australia show that Aboriginal people were keen to make use of a stranded whale.\textsuperscript{17} The great whales were most probably considered sacred by many peoples, due to their awesome and benign nature, and their dead body a gift.

Though there is limited archaeological evidence for whaling in ancient times, the techniques practised by many countries' indigenous races until quite recently give an indication of what was possible. In \textit{Moby-Dick}, Ishmael remarks, after killing an old deformed whale, that:

> But still more curious was the fact of a lance-head of stone being found in him, not far from the buried iron, the flesh perfectly firm about it. Who had darted that stone lance? And when? It might have been darted by some Nor' West Indian long before America was discovered (MD368).

There is certainly evidence to suggest Native American people used such stone lances to kill whales. They would lance the whale and then wait for it to die and wash ashore. In


1874, Charles Scammon described the whaling practices of Eskimos at that time, which involved harrying and lancing the whale until it was exhausted. Similar techniques of harassment were used in the Bay of Biscay in the first Millennium.\textsuperscript{18} To hasten the whale's death the lance heads were dipped in poison made from "roots of plants such asaconitum or anemone, or else from the juices of rotting meat."\textsuperscript{19} The Ainu of Hokkaido also used harpoons poisoned with aconite to hunt whales, and the Eskimos of Greenland reputedly hunted bowhead whales by attaching inflated sealskin bags as buoys to tire the animals and make them easier to find when dead. Lacepede (1804) also described Kamchatkan people as stabbing whales with poisoned spears.\textsuperscript{20} Shigeko Misaki claims that Japanese whaling traditions go back to prehistoric times with the use of stranded whales, and that based on finds "of hand harpoons and porpoise skulls in burial mounds, it would appear that active hunting of small cetaceans probably dates from the Jomon Period (10,000-300 B.C.)."\textsuperscript{21}

It is thought that around 12,000-9,000 B.C.E. there was a gradual change in which agriculture became the dominant human activity; this was the Neolithic revolution, and with it, supposedly, came a change in attitude to nature, from what writers such as Oelschlaeger claim was a more holistic inclusion to a more separate

\textsuperscript{18} Spence, 1980 op. cit.: 9. An anonymous woodcut from 1780 shows Africans from Madagascar killing whales by hammering wooden plugs into their blowholes. This "implausible technique" was likewise attributed to Indians off the coast of Florida. Cousteau, 1988, op. cit.: 14.

\textsuperscript{19} Cousteau quotes M. Sauer (1802) as saying this poison comes from the Eurasian herb monkshood (aconite) and "that the concoction further included rendered fat from human corpses." ibid: 14. The lasting experience of the Indian whaleers was well regarded and Spence writes, "Indians, highly thought of for their skills, formed part of the crew and were to do so throughout most days of American whaling." Spence, 1980, op. cit.:35. This is reflected in Melville's character Tashtego.


\textsuperscript{21} Misaki, 1993, op. cit.
Alfred W. Crosby suggests that the Old World Neolithic Revolution, for all its dazzling advances in metallurgy, the arts, writing, politics, and city life, was at its base a matter of the direct control and exploitation of many species for the sake of one: Homo sapiens. For Oelschlaeger:

the agriculturalists experienced an enormous quickening of the human potential to modify the naturally given. Rather than attempting to live in harmony with wild nature, as hunter-gatherers had done since time immemorial, farmers literally rose up and attempted to dominate the wilderness. Boundaries were drawn between the natural and the cultural, and conceptual restructuring was inevitable.

Many of the oldest oral narratives of culture (that were later recorded) date from this period, and it is in these accounts that it is possible to perceive evidence of a separation from the natural. The disjunction was not immediate and there lingered traces of the older cultures of the Mediterranean world with their veneration of Mother Earth, metaphorically linked to beliefs about fertility (reinforced through proximity to plants and animals in the agricultural life). If the antagonism of Western culture to the environment evident in the English language is a result of cultural ideologies and beliefs, then it is during this period that we begin to discern, in cultural accounts, its source.

On land, the human relationship with 'wild' nature was one that involved hunting, strongly associated with mythology. Stories of 'wildmen' appeared throughout European culture, particularly during later medieval times. Such 'wildmen' were representative of

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the darker, 'natural' side of human psychology. These stories have their root in some of the oldest recorded mythologies. The idea of a conflict with nature is evident in stories such as that of Beowulf the hunter slaying the 'monster' Grendel, and its parallel, Saint George and the dragon. Simon Schama claims, "it is not too much to say that classical civilization has always defined itself against the primeval woods." He cites as an early example the Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh, in which the hero travels to the centre of the Cedar forest and, at the urging of his friend Enkidu, kills the forest guardian, Humbaba, thus establishing his right to rule.25 Oelschlaeger sees this narrative as "symbolically representing the relentless Sumerian encroachment on the ancient forests and the triumph of civilisation over wilderness."26 The Sumerian mythologies did incorporate three fundamental ideas that would continue through human thought: of a designed earth, of environmental influence on man, and of the opposite, humanity's ability to modify its environment.27 Clarence Glacken relates how John Wilson called

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26 Oelschlaeger, 1991, op. cit.: 29, 39. He not only credits the Mesopotamians (or Sumerians) with the invention of writing (cuneiform), but with the first large scale case of "environmental ruin" as a result of their "historically unprecedented modification of nature … to irrigate croplands."

27 Glacken notes that these ideas "were, however, often modified, and enriched by other theories relating to cultural growth, and to the nature of the earth. The most important of them were the principle of plenitude, interpretations of cultural history, ideas regarding the effects of human institutions (such as religion and government), and the organic analogy applied to both the growth and decline of nations and peoples and to the earth itself." Glacken, 1967, op. cit.: 5. The idea of environmental influence is used here in the older sense, that of the climate of countries affecting the personality of their populations, thus those from hot climates were hot tempered and irrational, and those from a more even tempered climate, such as Greece, were cool-headed and rational. Ideas concerning the environment's effect on humans centred around the extremely influential Ionian belief, possibly adapted from earlier Egyptian ideas, and developed by the Sicilian Empedocles (c. 492 – 422 B.C.) that the four elements of matter, fire, water, earth and air, and the corresponding 'humours', had an analogous effect on humans, both in character and culture. ibid: 8-9. The concept of the humours had more of an influence on medicine, before in turn affecting beliefs about the environment. Glacken suggests its "historical importance is that it carried the environmental theory over from medicine to political and social thought, diffusing the self-flattering conclusion that the most advanced nations are in temperate climates." ibid: 81, 93. Such beliefs were still being used to justify racist theories about Africans and Australian Aboriginal people in the mid 1800s,
attention to an old Egyptian text that was "interesting and unusual in making the
purposes of creation the interests of humans; normally the myth recounts the steps of
creation without indication of purpose."28 Thus, the idea of a world made by gods for
humans is as old as writing, and it has been reiterated by the Western religious tradition.
The idea of environmental influence, as perceived in ancient times, is evident in the first
paragraph of *Moby-Dick*. Ishmael alludes to these older theories when he suggests that
the reason for going to sea is that it "is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and
regulating the circulation." He says that he realises the need whenever he finds himself
"growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul"
(MD1). The theory of humours had two components, physiological and geographical,
with the idea that the latter could influence the former. Ishmael is referring to black bile,
a humour that was once believed to be secreted by the kidneys or spleen and to cause
sadness and melancholy.29 The belief was that a change in place, to somewhere warmer,
could alleviate the symptoms.

Included in the attitudes of early "agriculturalists" are those belonging to a group
whose ways were to have a lasting influence on Western beliefs about the relationship
with the natural world. The Hebrew people, and their successors, Judeo-Christians, have
been blamed (to varying degrees) for Western culture's lack of respect for nature, by
writers including Oelschlaeger, Lynn White Junior, Merchant, Nash and Aldo Leopold.
The Judeo-Christian religion has been involved in a dialogic relationship with nature,
which includes the voices of its texts, older attitudes and mythic streams, human

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psychology and situational context; however, the overriding interpretation has been of a
divine mandate for human use. Of course, the *Bible* has been selectively and
ideologically used and interpreted.\(^{30}\) Passages that are often ignored, such as Ecclesiastes
3:19, would seem to give a clear indication that there is no reason for human arrogance:
"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth
them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man
hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity."\(^{31}\) As we shall see, writers
sympathetic to the natural world and animals, including Schopenhauer and Melville,
have focused on the message of Ecclesiastes.

John Passmore writes that the Hebrews were "puzzled and disturbed about their
relationship with nature," torn between their ability to domesticate animals and their
carnivorous nature. He notes that Empedocles (490-430 B.C.E.) attributed the fall of
'man' to the primal sin of the slaughter of animals.\(^{32}\) Passmore argues that the *Bible*
can also be read to endorse environmental sound practices, against the interpretation of
White who blames the Christian religion for contemporary ecological crisis.

White claims that it is the most anthropocentric religion the world has ever
seen.\(^{33}\) Oelschlaeger suggests, however, that criticisms have been aimed at the text of the

\(^{30}\) Thomas cites passages from Proverbs (xii, 10) and Hosea (ii, 18), which he suggests speak of the rights
of and duties towards animals, and yet have been largely ignored. Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 24.


conscious that the use of 'man' and masculine pronouns reinforces patriarchal language habits, I consider
that in the biblical conception of the world their use is justified, reflecting the prevalent attitudes.

however, claims White overrates the effect of religion on thought. Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 23: Grove is
dissmissive of claims that Judeo-Christian attitudes to the environment have been inherently destructive,
claiming "they should probably be seen as a consequence of a perceptual confusion between the
characteristically rapid ecological changes caused by the inherently transforming potential of colonising
capital and the consequences of culturally specific attitudes to the environment." His arguments against
such claims, however, are not conclusive. Grove, 1995, op. cit.: 4.
Bible and the Judeo-Christian religion rather than at the source, Yahwism. He does concede, though, "the Hebrews … were the first people to conceive of themselves as living a life whose meaning was defined apart from nature." In my opinion, Keith Thomas is perhaps closer to the truth, when he says that:

It could be argued that the Greek and Stoic influence distorted the Jewish legacy so as to make the religion of the New Testament much more man-centred than that of the Old; Christianity, it can be said, teaches, in a way that Judaism has never done, that the whole world is subordinate to man's purposes…. It is not necessary … to determine whether or not Christianity is in itself intrinsically anthropocentric. The point is that in the early modern period its leading English exponents, the preachers and commentators, undoubtedly were.

It is this anthropocentrism, in actions if not in philosophy, that has had a durable effect on Western culture.

ii. Classical attitudes: turning design into art

The single most important generalization to be made about the attitudes towards nature held by peoples of the classical world is that these varied greatly throughout the long span of ancient history.

Clarence Glacken, *Traces on A Rhodian Shore*  

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34 Oelschlaeger, 1991, op. cit.: 43.
The category of 'classical' is one that includes some disparate opinions and attitudes to nature.\textsuperscript{37} Outside of the antecedent areas of Western culture, attitudes to nature varied.\textsuperscript{38} The early Greek Pre-Socratic thinkers were concerned with the physical world, proposing a number of theories that would define later speculation, including ideas that anticipated process theories and deep ecology.\textsuperscript{39} When Greek philosophers talked of nature, mostly they were talking about a safe, rural, Mediterranean environment, not 'wilderness'. The rise of Hellenistic cities brought about alienation from the rural and subsequently from nature itself, an alienation that has steadily increased in proportion to the size of modern urban centres. Trotsky said that the history of capitalism was the history of the victory of the town over the country, and this contrast was first amplified with the Greek cities.\textsuperscript{40} Many of the attitudes to nature that Western culture now considers normative became firmly established in the Hellenistic age. For example, Glacken suggests a "philosophy of resource development seems to go hand in hand with the economic and political aspirations of Hellenistic monarchs."\textsuperscript{41}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{37} I am using 'classical world' here to describe a period extending from The Orientalizing Period (c. 730 B.C.) through to the Roman Empire in the West (c. 476 C.E.). This includes the Archaic Greek period (c. 625 B.C. – 479 B.C.), the Classical Greek period (5\textsuperscript{th} and 4\textsuperscript{th} centuries B.C.) and the Hellenistic Period (c. 336 B.C. – 215 B.C.). Boardman, J., Griffin, J. and Murray, O., eds.: 1995, \textit{The Oxford History of the Classical World}. Oxford University Press/Softback Preview, Oxford: 829-60.

\textsuperscript{38} It is fashionable now to credit Eastern religions and cultures with a 'better' relationship to nature, but there is little evidence of it in their modern behaviour. Of course, there are other issues involved here and, arguably, many of modern Eastern cultures' negative attitudes to the environment have come about as a result of an embrace of aspects of Western capitalism. The tradition of reverence for nature is noticeable in religions such as Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Nash notes that in the 5\textsuperscript{th} century B.C. Taoists thought there was an infinite and benign force in the natural world, and that Shintoism was a form of nature worship. Nash, 1967, op. cit.: 21.

\textsuperscript{39} Anaximander argued that the world was process, and evolving. Heraclitus (c. 535 – c. 475 B.C.) saw the world as "perceptual flux or sensorial manifold" – "life is a moving river into which we cannot step twice." Heraclitus quoted by Oelschlaeger, 1991, op. cit.: 55. George Sessions and Devall note that the process metaphysics of Pre-Socratic pantheist Heraclitus has been thought by some to be a possible basis for an environmental metaphysics. Sessions, G. and Devall, B.: 1985, \textit{deep ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered}. Peregrine Smith, Salt Lake City: 236.

\textsuperscript{40} Cited in Williams, 1973, op. cit.: 302.

\textsuperscript{41} Glacken, 1967, op. cit.: 711.
\end{footnotes}
Greek thinking adapted and refined older ideas of a designed earth, the influence of the environment on man, and of man as an agent of environmental change. Connected to these ideas were theories of the senescence of the earth since its creation, the idea of plenitude (whereby the world was bountiful as designed for humans), and the conception of linear history and cultural change.42

Plato proposed the idea of an artisan deity in *Timaeus*, compounding earlier metaphors for gods into one of a 'craftsman' for which the earth was the resulting 'handicraft' – reflecting the Greek respect for artisanship and their association of art with intelligence and culture.43 Melville alludes to the idea of an artisan creator when Ishmael declares, on proposing his cetology, that "I am the architect, not the builder" (MD135), yet parodies the notion when Ahab refers to the carpenter as "manmaker" (MD480). Ahab criticises the "indifferent architecture" of the original design of humans when he suggests making a man "fifty feet high" with "no heart at all, brass forehead, and about a quarter of an acre of fine brains; and let me see – shall I order eyes to see outwards? No, but put a sky-light on top of his head to illuminate inwards" (MD480). Ahab can see no reason to make humans who are not rational.

42 An important expansion of the idea of an organic growth to the world was the concept, found in Democritus and Lucretius, of the senescence of the earth, a theory that the Christian commentators of later periods took to rather ludicrous extremes. For them, the world had deteriorated since The Fall. Part of this theory was that the population of the earth was less than it had been; a thought that was anathema to the ideas of Malthus, and partly explained their hostile reception. ibid: 8-9.
43 Plato: 1965, *Timaeus*. J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd, London: 14 ff. See also Glacken, ibid: 44-6. The latter writes, "over two thousand years before Voltaire was making fun of Pope and Leibniz, Plato had declared that this was the best of all possible worlds, that the arrangements observable in the cosmos and on the earth itself were a result of the work of a generous and unstinting divine artisan, and that the fullness and variety of life was inherent in the very making of the cosmos as a living being. These ideas, together with those derived from Christian thought, go far to explaining attitudes towards the earth which persisted until the publication of the *Origin of Species*."
The idea of a created world pre-dates Plato's exposition. While the two major pre-Socratic Greek schools of thought, Epicureanism and Stoicism, both espoused a naturalistic view that human nature is illuminated by the study of external nature, their position on the Platonic idea of an artisan creator highlighted the contrast between them. The perception of order in the universe, as well as suggesting the idea of an artisan creator, also led to the idea (in Anaxagoras, Diogenes of Appollonia, Herodotus, Plato and Aristotle) of a purposeful teleological quality to the world. Aristotle's belief that all things in nature were for a purpose supported and derived from such a teleological view. He writes, "if nature makes nothing incomplete, and nothing in vain, the inference must be that she has made all animals for the sake of man." The idea of teleology in the world, of the gradual progression to some end, has been one of the most pervasive and tenacious ideas in the history of thought. This conception of the world extended to the belief that environmental change, at the hands of humans, was consistent with teleological purpose, and led in turn to the idea of people as caretakers or stewards. This teleological view is inherent in Aristotle's view of virtue ethics. Similarly, founding Stoic Zeno claimed the end to be "life in agreement with nature," which is the same as a

44 Glacken quotes from the hymn to Aten the sun god by Akh-en-Aton (1369-1353 B.C.), which "reveals the antiquity of the idea of the glory of the creator being manifested in his works." Williams, *The Hymn to Aten* (in D. Winton Thomas, ed., *Documents from Old Testament Times*, p. 150), from Glacken, 1967, op. cit.: 37.
45 ibid: 39. Writing about the Stoics, Diogenes Laertius described their concept of the world as "of God himself, who out of the whole reality in a specific way has quality; he is indestructible and ungenerated, being the creator of this orderly arrangement" and as "the orderly arrangement of the heavenly bodies in itself." From Saunders, 1966, op. cit.: 90.
46 One could argue that teleological views derive from the ingrained sense of time and causality.
47 Aristotle: 1905, *Aristotle's Politics*. Trans. B. Jowett. Clarendon Press, Oxford: 40. Aristotle has been criticised though, for not supplying adequate account of 'purpose' and avoiding what some see as a necessary connection between purpose and mind. Glacken, 1967, op. cit.: 46-51. Glacken notes that if "Aristotle's teleology of nature is unsatisfactory, if there is uncertainty regarding purpose and role of mind, these flaws did not affect its adoption with necessary changes by Christian thinkers whose Christian God could supply purpose and design in full measure." ibid: 49.
virtuous life, virtue being the goal towards which nature guides us." Virtue ethics, with more modern and different conceptions of 'virtues', offers one of the proposed bases for modern environmental ethics.

In arguing against creation by design, Lucretius would later point to the amount of the world taken up with wilderness, deserts, forests with wild beasts, and the ocean. By contrast, the teleologists saw the seas as "purposefully made highways for trade, navigation and intercourse amongst people." The idea of creation by design even applied to the domestication of animals. It was argued that the ox was made broad for ploughing, and that the dog was meant for hunting and protection. The Greeks, as would later Christians, saw proof of a skilled creator in the plenitude of the earth, the variety of animal life and their apparent uses, the intricacies of form in the human body (especially the hand and eye), and general nature. These themes have been expanded over the last two millennia yet fundamentally remain the same.

One of the leading Greek philosophers, Epicurus (c. 341-270 B.C.E.), sought to exclude the gods from nature, offering an anti-teleological alternative to the beliefs of the Stoics. His antecedent Democritus (c. 460 – 370 B.C.E.) had already argued that creation was the unintentional result of natural processes. In Epicurian philosophy, the world was a unity whose creator was not God but nature. One of Epicurus' followers,

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48 As quoted by Diogenes Laertius, Saunders, 1966, op. cit.: 111.
50 "Lucretius finds no place in the design argument for the beasts, for they are menaces to the human race." Glacken, 1967, op. cit.: 69.
51 ibid: 69.
52 ibid: 57-8.
53 Glacken notes that in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (c. 435-354 B.C.) three kinds of proofs are used in demonstrating the existence of a divine providence: "the proof of physiology, of the cosmic order, and of the earth as a fit environment." ibid: 42.
Gaius Velleius, who took pains to attack the Platonic idea of an artisan deity and Stoic teleology, claimed that there was not enough human intelligence and wisdom in the world to make the creation worthwhile, asking "how it can be that God created all these things? For the wise perhaps? In that case never was so much undertaken for so few."\(^{55}\)

By contrast, the Stoic Balbus could not conceive why a god would create a world for only un-reasoning plants and animals:

Someone may ask, 'But for whose sake has this mighty work of creation been undertaken?'

For the sake of trees and plants, for these without sensation have their sustenance from nature? But this would be absurd, for though they are sustained by nature they are devoid of sense or feeling. For the sake of the animals then? But it seems no more likely that the gods would have undertaken so great a labour for dumb creatures who have no understanding. For whom then shall we say the world was made? Surely for those living creatures who are endowed with reason. These are gods and mankind, who excel all other creatures. For reason is the highest attribute of all. We may therefore well believe that the world and everything in it has been created for the gods and for mankind.\(^{56}\)

Balbus subscribed to the idea of a mandated stewardship of the earth that is still common, that "the human race, who have been appointed, as it were, to be the gardeners of the earth … will not permit it to become a savage haunt of monstrous beasts or a wilderness of thorny scrub."\(^{57}\) Stoicism emphasised the interrelation of man and nature as part of design, the gods’ care for the world, and the participation of men in the divine.

One of the later Stoics, Panaetius (c. 185-110 B.C.E.), whose now lost works were to

\(^{55}\) As recorded by Cicero. ibid: Book I: 79.
^{56}\) Balbus the Stoic from Cicero, 1972, op. cit.: 177.
^{57}\) Balbus, ibid: Book II: 164.
influence Cicero and his *De Natura Deorum*, claimed that the earth was not created for humans alone but that it was up to them to use the resources that were given. By way of contrast, Aristotle's friend Theophrastus (c. 372-286 B.C.E.) was already writing about human caused climate change through land clearing and other processes. The Epicurean view, as held by Lucretius, was that humans only add, by their toil, to what already exists in nature.

Of the two attitudes, it would be the Stoic conception that would exert the most influence on later thinkers, and that Western culture adopted. The earth was thus seen as designed for humans, and humans designed to be the highest being on this earth. Humanity contributed to the design by adding to nature with agriculture, arts, irrigation, drainage and other endeavours. Inherent in the idea of design is a designer, and thus the idea of a designed earth became an important (if circular) proof for the existence of god(s).

The notion that humanity was 'rational' was crucial to Greek thought and is a belief that is still important to many writers' ethical division between humanity and other animals. With regard to whales, it is a modern version of this belief, that whales are rational like humans because of their large brains, that, in the minds of some people, legitimises the attitude that whales are worthy of ethical consideration although beef cattle are not. The belief that humans possessed divinely endowed intelligence was associated with the belief that this entitled them to contribute to the act of creation. Aristotle was explicit in his explanation of this idea, believing that the rational ruled

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59 Paul Taylor likewise notes that the "inherent superiority of humans over other species was implicit in the Greek definition of man as a rational animal." Taylor, P. W.: "The Ethics of Respect for Nature," from Brennan, 1995, op. cit.: 21
over the passionate part of the mind in the same way that the soul ruled over the body. This hierarchy was used as a metaphor for other divisions, and he argued in Politics, "[w]here there is such a difference as that between the soul and body, or between men and animals … the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master."\(^6^0\) This dogma, of superiority by way of rationality and intelligence, contributed to the idea of a hierarchy or 'great chain of being' in nature.\(^6^1\) Thus, plants were thought to exist for animals, animals for man, and man in order to contemplate god. This idea, with different adaptations, was applied to classification systems until Darwin and others introduced their non-teleological evolutionary theories. It continues in the persistent misconception of evolution as a ladder leading to humans. It is important to remember that the classical attitudes, in many cases, offer the first recorded instance of theories about nature that are still prevalent. They also offer a connection to a less recorded past where many of these attitudes may have originated.

Another pervasive idea that occurs in classical times is the concept of Arcadia or 'a golden age'. Of course, in Judeo-Christian theology it has its source in the idea of Eden or paradise.\(^6^2\) Raymond Williams' study, of the representation in literature of the

\(^6^0\) Aristotle, 1905, op. cit.: 34.


\(^6^2\) The concept of the Edenic is crucial to Richard Grove's study of the origins of environmentalism, Green Imperialism. He suggests the Renaissance obsession with Eden, paradise ("derived from Zorastrian notions of Pairidaeza … that had originated in Persia") and the dyadic 'other' existed "as a great project and partner of the more obviously economic projects of early capitalism." Grove, 1995, op. cit.: 4. "Paradoxically,' according to Grove, "the full flowering of what one might term the Edenic island discourse during the mid seventeenth century closely coincided with the realisation that the economic demands of colonial rule on previously uninhabited oceanic island colonies threatened their imminent and comprehensive degradation." ibid: 5.
town and country polarity, traces the idea of a Golden Age back in time from the modern period, past the Greeks and beyond. As he writes: "[w]e shall see the long influence of this myth of the Golden Age … for Hesiod, at the beginning of country literature … is already far in the past."\textsuperscript{63} Schama suggests that the "Arcadian idyll … seems just another pretty lie told by propertied aristocracies (from slave-owning Athens to slave-owning Virginia) to disguise the ecological consequences of their greed."\textsuperscript{64} The idea of Golden Age is linked to the Greek conception of linear time, which in turn (as per Christian mythology) situates the human 'now' as a period between a past Golden Age and a future paradise in heaven.

By constructing the pastoral myth as a connection between a past period and nature, a schism is forced between the present and nature. A similar separation between the present and the pastoral occurs in \textit{Moby-Dick}, exemplified in Ahab's musings in the "Symphony" and "The Chase – Third Day" chapters (see page 269). Ahab's rejection of the feminine and pastoral is established in the chapter entitled "The Dying Whale." Ahab reflects that though "hill and valley mothered" him, he was "yet suckled by the sea (MD505). As if reflecting on a Golden age, the dying whale turns to the sun and is mocked by Ahab, who aligns himself with the "dark Hindoo half of nature," with "a darker faith" (MD505). It is an obsession affirmed in Ahab's last speech, when he exclaims, "I turn my body from the sun" (MD581).

In Melville's "painstaking burrow[ings]" (the result of which is "Extracts"), he researched classical writers such as Pliny and Plutarch, for references to whales.

\textsuperscript{63} Williams, 1973, op. cit.: 14. Passmore notes that the idea of a Golden Age is not restricted to Western Culture, quoting the Taoist Cuang Tsu, fourth century B.C., deploring the passing of "the age of perfect virtue." Passmore, 1974, op. cit.: 7.

\textsuperscript{64} Schama, 1995, op. cit.: 12.
Classical writers were the first to write about whales, and again they set standards of
atitudes that were not overturned for a thousand years or more. Some of the first
recorded references to whales come from the *Historia Animalium*, a work written by the
person generally considered to be the world's first cetologist, Aristotle (384-322
B.C.E.). Our word for the general nomenclature of whales, 'cetaceans', comes from the
Latin *cetaceus*, derived from the Greek word *ketos*, for big fish. Aristotle noted that
whales were viviparous, that some whales have bristles (baleen) instead of teeth, that
female whales have breasts "in the neighbourhood of the genitals," that whales "come
side by side, male and female, and copulate, and the act extends over a time which is
neither short nor very long," and that dolphins' testicles are internal. He was well aware
that the dolphin has mammal-like bones, that it responds to sound even though it has "no
organ of hearing discernible," that the "dolphin, when taken out of the water, gives a
squeak and moans in the air," and that whales "sleep with the blow-hole over the surface
of the water." In keeping with Aristotle's view that there was a purposeful teleological
quality to the world he writes that:

As a general rule the larger fishes catch the smaller ones in their mouths whilst swimming
straight after them in the ordinary position; but the selachians, the dolphin, and all the
cetacea must first turn over on their backs, as their mouths are placed down below; this
allows a fair chance of escape to the smaller fishes, and, indeed, if it were not so, there

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65 Cousteau, 1988, op. cit.: 55.
would be very few of the little fishes left, for the speed and voracity of the dolphin is something marvellous.67

Such misconceptions about cetaceans would be repeated, on Aristotle's authority, a long time into the future.

It is also from this period that it is possible to begin to ascertain the first extensive attempts to record culture and discern the idea of an antagonistic relationship with nature in narratives. Writers, such as Cicero (c.106-43 B.C.E.) and Lucretius (c. 95-52 B.C.E.), expanded on previous themes, offering exegesis and technical amendments. It is also from this period that the Western view of an antagonistic relationship with nature becomes evident in the stories of whales as monsters. Cousteau cites Nearchus of Crete (chronicling Alexander's conquests in India) as producing the first " alarming" description of the whale, in which he wrote that the spouts of whales blew the sea "up into the air as if by the force of a whirlwind."68 Other commentators, including Melville, advance the whale as the basis of such fabled creatures as the sea-monster that threatened Andromeda and the monster that killed Hippolytus, Theseus' son. More influential on Western attitudes to the whale is the association between the whale, the animal that swallowed Jonah, and the leviathan of the Bible ("Job", "Psalms" and "Isaiah").

Pliny the Elder (23-79 C.E.) adapted both Stoic and Epicurean views, believing that earth was the most kind and benevolent of the four elements, hence the title Mother Earth. He was one of the first to write extensively on whales, including them in the large

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tome on natural history. When Pliny writes of whales, translated to mean 'monsters', he uses the word bèlua, or variations on this. This term translates as a beast distinguished for size or ferocity, a monster (such as an elephant, lion, wild boar or whale) and was used for describing animals. Our word 'monster' comes from a different Latin source, that of monstrum, a divine omen indicating misfortune, an evil omen or portent. The word monster, in this sense, was used to describe animals and people born with some abnormality. This form of 'monster' was seen as a portent, a meaning that is still visible (if unconscious) in modern usage of the word 'monster' and is evident in the signification of whales in such texts as Moby-Dick, Tim Winton's Shallows and Farley Mowatt's A Whale for the Killing. The belief that the whale is symbol (and metonym) of a larger natural world is strongly connected to this idea of the whale as portent – its existence reminds us of the possible repercussions of destroying both the animal and our natural environment.

One of Pliny's more fanciful claims is that "the largest number of [whales] and those of the largest size are in the Indian sea, among them whales covering three acres each sharks 100 ells long [roughly 50m]." Lobsters here apparently grew to six feet. Pliny's writings have been translated as describing "monsters forced up from the depths in such a multitude … that the fleet of Alexander the Great deployed its column in line of battle to encounter them, in the same way as if an enemy force were meeting it." His

description of sperm whales evokes images of ferocity and he describes orcas as "an enormous mass of flesh with savage teeth." 73 He describes one of the first recorded instances of a mass stranding, during the rule of Tiberius (14-37 C.E.) when, on an island off the coast of Lyons, "the receding ocean left more than three hundred monsters at the same time, of marvellous variety and size, and an equal number on the coast of Saintes." Here again, however, he cannot resist embellishing the truth, claiming that also washed up were "elephants, and rams with only a white streak to resemble horns, and also many Nereids [marine nymphs]." He then matter-of-factly describes the monster that Perseus slew as a whale, a claim repeated by Melville. On cetacean biology, however, Pliny is remarkably accurate. As well as recording strandings and migrations (of the right whales of Cadiz), he notes they must have a lung and breathe because they do not have gills. He was aware that whales and dolphins are viviparous, and that they "suckle their young … and even carry them about while weak from infancy." 74

Oppian, writing circa 177 – 180 C.E., as had Pliny before him, embellished the facts about whales and emphasised the marvellous: "Sea-monsters mighty of limb and huge, the wonders of the sea, heavy with strength invincible, a terror for the eyes to behold and ever armed with deadly rage." 75 In this, he includes sharks and whales, as well as other species. He depicted whales in a way that would be repeated for most of the succeeding years:

73 ibid: 171: "the sperm whale, which rears up like a vast pillar higher than the ship's rigging and belches out a sort of deluge." ibid: 169.
And they rave for food with increasing frenzy, being always anhungered and never abating the gluttony of their terrible maw: for what food shall be sufficient to fill the void of their belly or enough to satisfy and give respite to their insatiable jaws?76

Oppian describes how whales attack each other and "bring terror to ships when they meet them in the Iberian sea in the West, where chiefly, leaving the infinite water of the neighbouring Ocean, they roll upon their way, like unto ships of twenty oars." He also describes the treatment that whales generally received until the late twentieth century: "Often also they stray and come nigh the beach where the water is deep inshore: and there one may attack them." He recounts the killing of a whale (a "monster") by "fishers." The whale is "he," "a mighty beast," "the invincible Whale," "the dread monster (of Amphitrite)," and "the deadly beast." Despite such language, it is possible to read in Oppian a little sympathy for the whale, when, after a gory battle, it is finally landed:

But when, overcome by the pain of many gashes, fate brings him at last to the gates of dismal death, then they take him in tow and joyfully haul him to the land; and he is dragged all unwilling, pierced with many barbs as with nails and nodding as if heavy with wine in the issue of deadly doom. And the fishers, raising the loud paean of victory, while they speed the boat with their oars, make the sea resound … 77

Oppian's description of the whale being killed is tragic and familiar to any reader of whale texts. He sympathetically describes the agony of the whale, "drunk with pain and

76 ibid: 463. The spelling of anhungered is as printed.
77 ibid: 481.
his fierce heart [...] bent with weariness," and notes "his cruel wounds and pains made even more fierce by the cruel water." However, he repeatedly uses metaphors of war to describe the killing: "the toil of men in war," "such desire for battle," "this warfare of the sea," "the quenchless lust of war," "a battle at sea," "the victors" and "the vanquished."

The conception of nature as being in an antagonistic relationship with culture is evident in his accounts. For Oppian, the whale in death is still a monster: "he fills all the beach with his unapproachable limbs as they lie, and he is stretched out dead, terrible to behold." He is aware, however, of basic physiological differences between cetaceans and marine animals such as bony 'fish'. He writes that the whale has "hot panting breath" and notes that the dolphin, like "all the viviparous denizens of the sea love and cherish their young," adding, "god has given her milk and breasts of the like nature to those of women."78

Later, the Roman rhetorician Aelian wrote an extensive work on animals entitled De Natura Animalium, which includes stories on dolphins and whales despite Aelian having boasted that he "had never been outside Italy, had never been aboard a ship, and knew nothing of the sea."79 Clearly, the ancient Mediterranean world was well aware of cetaceans, and had a great deal of knowledge of their physiology, if some of their ideas were later shown to be wrong. The classical attitudes combined a little respect for the smaller species with fear and awe of, and antagonism towards, the larger species. A limited form of bay whaling was evidently occurring; however, the culture of the time did not have the need for the whale's products that would come with European industrialisation.

78 ibid.
The Romans certainly had, in the borrowed Greek idea of humans as artisans, a metaphor that envisaged and justified major environmental impacts. The growth of the cities, domestication of animals, the clearing of the Mediterranean forests, and mining all contributed to such impact. The act of land acquisition was associated with the act of creation, a belief that survived to (and past) the occupation of the Americas and Australia. Glacken sees the period as a consolidation of the myths of "man as a finisher of creation, of man bringing order into nature." These myths concerned humanity's role as modifier of nature and considered the human role in bringing about order, creating a 'cosmos' and having the power to maintain it. With the Christian theology that came to the fore in the earlier centuries of the first millennium there was increasing stress on the interpretation of biblical texts, although these interpretations tended to adhere to the Stoic philosophical tradition. The study of nature was frowned upon because it turned human minds away from the greater contemplation of God. Later, this belief would be reversed, and the study of nature would be thought to turn minds towards such contemplation, to the point that the most compelling reason proposed for the study of nature became that it led to a greater understanding of the Christian god. This belief would evolve into that of the Romantic tradition.

While Passmore notes that one should not speak of the Bible as one book, most commentators throughout history have focused on the opening texts of Genesis (1.26 and 1.28) at the expense of others. Passmore asserts that there are two possible

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80 Glacken, 1967, op. cit.: 117.
81 Passmore, 1974, op. cit.: 12. Richard Sylvan notes that an alternative interpretation of Genesis shows God seeing that the earth, plants and animals were all 'good' before even creating humans and that these things must have their own independent-of-human 'good'. Sylvan, R.: 1985, "A Critique of deep ecology," Discussion Papers in Environmental Philosophy, 12 Australian National University — Department of Philosophy, Canberra: 19. Merchant notes that there is some argument for two interpretations implicit in
interpretations of the Old Testament, that of 'man's' dominion and that of humanity as 'shepherd' or 'steward' of God's creation.\(^{82}\) He writes that the second has only recently come into favour, whereas the idea that "man is entitled to rule like an absolute despot" has been predominant.\(^{83}\) The belief in an artisan lovingly creating the world was replaced, in the Genesis account, by a god that brings the world into existence because he has the power to do so.

There are other aspects of Judeo-Christian theology that are also important, at least in terms of how they affect later attitudes to nature. Of course, retrospective Christian interpretations of the biblical texts differ from, while having their antecedents in, those of early Judaic beliefs. In later Judeo-Christian theology, god supposedly created all, is above all, separate from all, is inscrutable, and only 'he' is divine. In the chain of being beneath God, 'man', created in God's image, stands separate from all other animals and plants, and has the God-given right to utilise these as 'he' feels fit. Because Heaven is the reward offered to believers, there is the belief that Earth is only a temporary residence; and because all humans will die in a time of reckoning, there is a teleological sense of linear time, progressive towards this judgement day. The other significant aspect of later Judeo-Christian theology is the emphasis on the idea of 'The Fall', of banishment from 'the garden'. Time on earth is then a punishment for sins, and nature too is considered fallen and profane. As Oelschlaeger suggests, the idea of the Fall appropriated the older organic idea of senescence, attributing decline in nature to

\(^{82}\) Nash describes the stewardship argument as equally anthropocentric. Nash, 1967, op. cit.: 111.

\(^{83}\) Passmore, 1974, op. cit.: 9.
peoples' punishment for their sins.\textsuperscript{84} In a fallen world, environmental damage was insignificant, because humans were only passing through and thus the damage was merely another part of God's inscrutable plan. The concept of a designed world is pervasive today, implicit in the idea of 'resources', and as such it still removes the impetus from people's minds to influence environmental degradation. In the more secular parts of the West, the responsibility for design and 'resources' is slowly being arrogated by the scientific community.

iii. The lengthy birth of industrial whaling

Whaling has played a part in our history that, in certain respects, is second to no other human enterprise, and whale products have been and still are of very great importance to our economy … To follow the whale is to follow the whole course of one of the most significant aspects of our own history. It is virtually the story of the conquest of our planet.

Ivan Sanderson, \textit{Follow the Whale}.\textsuperscript{85}

The first 1500 years of the Christian era, though a long and varied period, show a remarkable consistency in belief amongst the Western European countries dominated by Christian theology. Throughout this period, certain writers' attitudes to the environment are notable, either because they encapsulated and reinforced the dominant paradigm, or because they stand out as heterodoxical. Amongst these are Origen (c. 185-c. 254), Saint Augustine (354-430), and the unorthodox Saint Francis of Assisi (c.1181-1226). The

\textsuperscript{84} Oelschlaeger, 1991, op. cit.: 66, 160.
Christian writers continued their interpretation of key texts, refuted 'the pagans' and maintained the tradition of environmental theories and geographical writing (reconciling the older arguments about design while largely ignoring the purpose for creation). The hexacameral writings of people such as Saint Basil and Saint Ambrose adumbrated the order of creation. The monastic orders established a belief in the godly aspect of the work of crafting a garden out of the 'wilderness' and their work contributed to an unprecedented amount of environmental change, alongside extensive forest clearing, charcoal making, and agricultural works including irrigation and land drainage.86 The dominant thought during this period was that humanity aided God in the improvement of the earthly environment, despite the belief that it was only an interim abode on the way to heaven (as outlined in Christian theology). Increasingly, though, the study of nature began to be perceived as not only the way to gain a greater understanding of God, but also as a subject worthy of appreciation in its own right. Although the Christian writers produced the main bodies of thought during this period, it should be stressed that they did not necessarily represent the thought of the less learned people within society. The continuing emphasis amongst scholars that 'man is evil' reflected a persistent 'paganism', a subscription within the lay community to older metaphors.87

In his Contra Celsum (Against Celsus), Origen proposes the view that as God could do no wrong (being divine), 'his' created nature was not evil; therefore only humanity could be evil (for a number of reasons, including upbringing, perversion and environment). He also suggested that, even if the earth was only a temporary residence,

86 “Cloistered societies were possibly the single largest agent of environmental change during the Middle Ages.” Oelschlaeger 1991, op. cit.:72.
87 As Bakhtin suggests, the old organic ideas about nature may have survived in the forms of the carnival. See Section 4, Morris, 1994, op. cit.
humans could not afford to be indifferent to it. Origen subscribed to the idea of a
designed earth, believing humans to be dominant because of their rationality.88 Saint
Augustine's theology is a mixture of Greek and Biblical traditions. He claimed that the
earth is an example of God's handiwork, as is heaven, and thus people should 'adore'
both.89 Augustine was contemptuous of 'pagans' who maintained a conception of earth as
mother, subscribing instead to an originally artisan God that was later a shepherd or
husbandman to people.90 Augustine thought dangerous plants and animals were put on
earth by God as punishment for mortal sin.91 He also suggested that 'man' was master of
all animals "by reason."92 Augustine's elaborations, on the theme that the world of nature
teaches humanity about the glory of God, led to a common notion in the later Middle
Ages that nature was God's second text of revelation, which could also be read and
interpreted – a view antecedent to the Romantic search for the transcendent in nature.93

The unorthodox Saint Francis of Assisi stands out amongst the canon of saints
because he took the worship and tolerance of nature to a degree previously unparalleled.
His behaviour towards animals, talking to them and instructing them in God's ways, was
the stuff of folklore, and his belief that nonhuman life has its own dignity and exists for
its own purposes was divergent from mainstream thought. This "spiritual egalitarianism"

91 ibid: 67.
92 ibid: 78-9, 112. He also interpreted the Genesis mandate to "have power" over animals as an allegorical allusion to controlling human passions, unless they make humans "like every kind of beast." See also Saint Augustine: 1957, The City of God Against the Pagans. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts: 93.
93 ibid: 108.
led White to refer to him as the greatest spiritual revolutionary in history, and resulted in
his selection, by the Vatican in 1980, as the patron saint of ecologists.94

It is in the Middle Ages that records of whaling begin to appear. One of the
earliest written historical references to whaling is from the ninth century C.E., from
King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon translation of the Norwegian Orosius' *Seven Books of
History against the Pagans*.95 It tells the incredible tale of Ohthere, a Norwegian
explorer, who personally killed "sixty whales in two days" in the White Sea.96 Spence
writes that the technique used by Ohthere to kill whales was to herd them into small
bays where they could be trapped easily.97 Henry David Thoreau quotes an Icelandic
text from a supposed 1007 expedition to Cape Cod: "Let us make a bird [ship] skillfull
to fly through the heaven of sand, to explore the broad track of ships; while warriors
who impel to the tempest of swords, who praise the land, inhabit Wonder Strands, and
cook whales."98 Basque whaling is first mentioned in the *Translation and Miracles of
Saint Waast* (875 C.E.) and was well established by the twelfth century.99 The prey was
the black, Atlantic or Biscay right whale (named after the Bay of Biscay). From the
fourteenth century, records of whale catches were kept, and many Basque coast towns

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95 Cousteau, 1988, op. cit.: 14. Although Cousteau notes the activity probably began in the Bronze Age.
96 ibid: 15. Marsh notes that the *Codex Oxoniensis* from the Norse narrative of Othter (introduced to
(as Modified by Human Action)*. Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, Ludgate Hill, U.K.: footnote p. 112.
Scoresby critically recounts Ohther's claims, and cites Turner's *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, in which part
of the original narrative is reproduced. Scoresby sees that there could be confusion between the Saxon
word of *syxa* (for sixty) and *fyxa* (meaning merely fish). Another possibility, as Scoresby concedes, is that
the whales were a smaller species and to kill sixty quite possible. Scoresby, 1820, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 8-10.
Melville also mentions Othter's [his spelling] claims in "Extracts" (MDxlv).
97 Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 10. A technique still used on smaller whales in Japan today. Thoreau also
describes the killing of blackfish in a similar fashion on Cape Cod. Thoreau, 1951, op. cit.: 142-5.
98 ibid: 183. Italics in original. Thoreau's translation from the Latin of the "antiquaries."
show whaling in their seals and arms. Describing Basque whaling in 1567, Ambroise Paré wrote that they used a system of lookouts along the coast and sent signals when a whale was sighted. William Scoresby claims that the Basque started whaling in the fourteenth century but agrees there is a lot of information to suggest far earlier origins, noting that the Danes were killing whales in the twelfth century. He cites one source (Langebek) as asserting that the fishery of the whale (hvalfangst) was practised in the most northern countries of Europe, in the ninth century. The Chinese, Koreans and Japanese were also whaling on the other side of the globe, and there is mention of whales in the oldest Japanese book, the Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matter - 712 C.E.).

Later, in the early seventeenth century, the Japanese introduced the capital expensive technique of catching whales with nets, which resulted in a lucrative whaling industry that survived for three hundred years. There is also a record of Indonesians trading "fish oil" from 1643, possibly that of sperm whales given their continued hunting in Lamalera. Cousteau claims, "religion accounts in part for the Japanese taste for whale meat: both Buddhism and Shintoism frown on the eating of meat, but whales were considered fish. Out of dietary convenience, they continued to be regarded as such long after Japanese naturalists had assigned them their correct zoological niche."

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101 ibid: 15.
103 Cousteau, 1988, op. cit.: 17.
106 This was as early as 1758. Cousteau, 1988, op. cit.: 19. The Japanese utilised the blubber primarily but developed uses for (nearly) the entire whale. An 1829 cookbook, Kujira Chomi Ho (How to Prepare Whale), has many recipes in it, including for the delicacies of the eyeballs and mammary glands.
During the Middle Ages, accelerating towards the modern era, humans began to make increasingly profound changes to their environment, backed by a theology that explained and justified such changes. Improving the world was seen as pious work, undertaken by the devout. From the middle of last millennium onwards a number of contiguous changes to European culture occurred: the Copernican revolution threw human anthropocentrism into question, wresting the earth away from the centre of God's universe; other thinkers increasingly added to new technology; science replaced religion as the dominant paradigm; capitalism gradually began to dominate the market and political philosophy; and the exploration of the world and discovery of new lands and different cultures reshaped old established theories of environmental determinism. The contemporary environment was vastly altered by the practices of the time: forest clearing, grazing animals and fires, quarrying and mining, town building, marsh drainage, irrigation, the extinction of predators, charcoal burning, canal building, and the building of dykes. The commodities that flourished as the market became dominant were no longer those of agriculture and other organic (renewable) resources but coal and metals. The increasing sophistication of technology meant that people were increasingly in a position to affect nature, though at the same time the philosophical underpinnings of such interference were re-examined. New technologies added further demands on the environment, with expanding shipbuilding industries in particular,

107 Marshes were drained for health reasons (linked to environmental influence theories), as much as for land reclamation. Merchant notes, "the draining of the English fens primarily benefited the landed and moneyed classes." Merchant, 1980, op. cit.: 61.

108 See Merchant, ibid: 51.
placing large demands on the forests.\textsuperscript{109} As more and more of the natural world was subdued or challenged, the feeling arose that it was possible to control it all.

By the sixteenth century, however, the demands of industry, and in particular shipbuilding, began to cause the rapid depletion of European forests and governments were prompted to take measures to restrict the decline. It is during this period that writers began to comment that, despite humanity's ability to change favourably their environment, there could be associated, unforeseen and unwanted deleterious effects on the natural environment. Accompanying claims of Enlightenment thinkers that humankind was capable of dominating nature was an increasing awareness that the negative outcomes of such a project were not worth the advantages and rewards.

Concurrently, more modern and extensive communication led to a greater awareness of the negative impacts of humans on the earth, with governments taking actions to relieve such problems.\textsuperscript{110} The Florentines passed (in 1420 and 1485) laws protecting fish from lime dumping, England enacted the Timber Preservation Act (1543) and in 1578 Queen Elizabeth requested Londoners not to use sea-coal in their industries.\textsuperscript{111} John Evelyn's \textit{Silva, A Discourse of Forest Trees and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesty's Dominions} (1664), is a seminal work on the destruction caused by wasteful land practices, and his \textit{Fumifugium} (1661) one of the earliest works on the topic of air pollution. Equally important and germinal, was the French Forest Ordinance (1669), which attempted to curb by legislation the degradation of European forests.

\textsuperscript{109} Merchant writes, "the disruption of the forest ecosystem by the rise of early modern industry, coupled with the careless use and mismanagement of resources, bears striking parallels to current environmental issues and is illustrative of the fact that today's environmental crisis is not new in kind, only in degree." ibid: 67.

\textsuperscript{110} Grove suggests the earliest conservation measures to be that of Artaxerxes attempts to restrict the cutting of cedars in Lebanon in 450 B.C. and "a little later", the highly organised system of forest reserves and elephant protection by the Mauryan kings of Northern India. Grove, 1995, op. cit.: 6.

\textsuperscript{111} Merchant, 1980, op. cit.: x.
Grove suggests that awareness of the ecological effects of deforestation and European plantation agriculture on the Canary Islands and Madeira after the 1300s led to an early technical response to stop desiccation, and notes that attempts were made to stop erosion caused by deforestation in the West Indies after 1560. He argues that these events, and particularly later awareness of ecological damage on the islands of Saint Helena and Mauritius, led to "a coherent and wide-ranging critique of environmental degradation."  

It is incorrect, however, to say that the dominant ideology ever went against the subjugation of nature. As now, the demands of industry were considered more important than the environmental concerns of intellectuals.  

Merchant asserts that it was in this period that the dominant metaphors changed: "Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the image of an organic cosmos with a living female earth at its center gave way to a mechanistic world view in which nature was reconstructed as dead and passive, to be dominated and controlled by humans."  

It is clear that new metaphors based on mechanical ideas from the contemporary technologies became more common. Theology readily adapted to these new mechanical metaphors, revising the idea of an artisan creator to that of a cosmic clockmaker. Unlike the idea of nature as God's ineffable handiwork, such a change in metaphor allowed the belief that, if nature was mechanical, it could be stripped to its components, understood and controlled. Melville alludes to this idea several times. In the chapter of *Moby-Dick* entitled "Dusk" Starbuck, in a symbolic lament against necessity (embodied by Ahab),

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113 As substantiation for this claim, I cite Australia's refusal to sign the Kyoto treaty because of coal industry concerns.  
114 Merchant, 1980, op. cit.: xvi. She notes that Medieval authors referred to the cosmos as *machina mundi*. ibid: 223.
compares the heaviness of his heart to a clock weight and exclaims that his "whole clock's run down" (MD173). And he notes to Stubb that, "the old man is hard bent after that White Whale, and the devil there is trying to come round him, and get him to swap away his silver watch, or his soul, or something of that sort" (MD334).

One rival to the mechanistic view was the idea of plastic nature developed by the Cambridge Platonists (including Henry More and especially Ralph Cudworth).115 The more holistic 'plastick nature' intervened between God and 'his' creation and acted on the world, not always directly as a result of God's purposeful interaction. The idea of plastic nature removed God from necessary intervention or responsibility. This concept explained the existence of things in nature (like monsters) that God had not intended. John Ray and William Derham, notable writers on nature, were sympathetic to these ideas, moving towards a more holistic view of the world (though still believing it to be designed) and their understanding of interconnectedness in nature presaged ideas of modern ecology.116 However, The Primitive Origination of Mankind by Sir Mathew Hale (1609-76) perhaps better represents contemporary attitudes with his language of domination, hierarchy and power:

In relation therefore to this inferior World of Brutes and Vegetables, the End of Man's Creation was, that he should be the Vice-Roy of the great God of Heaven and Earth in this inferior World; his Steward, Villicus, Bayliff or Farmer of this goodly Farm of the lower World, and reserved to himself the supreme Dominion, and the Tribute of Fidelity, Obedience, and Gratitude, as the greatest recognition or Rent for the same, make his

115 Merchant, 1980, op. cit.: 27.
Usufructuary of this inferior World to husband and order it, and enjoy the Fruits thereof with sobriety, moderation and thankfulness.

And hereby Man was invested with power, authority, right, dominion, trust, and care, to correct and abridge the excesses and cruelties of the fiercer Animals, to give protection and defence to the mansuete and useful, to preserve the Species of divers Vegetables, to improve them and others, to correct the redundance of unprofitable Vegetables, to preserve the face of the Earth in beauty, usefullness, and fruitfulness. And surely, as it was unbecoming the same Wisdom to ordain and constitute such a subordinate Superintendent over it, that might take an immediate care of it.117

As can be seen in this quotation from Hale, there was still a stress on the ideas of design and teleology that had 'man' as their final cause.

Such ideas are evident in the work of many writers from the period. Surprisingly, Descartes and Newton were opposed to such teleology, even though Newtonian mechanics reinforced the view that time was linear.118 It was the scientific philosophies of René Descartes (1596–1650) and Francis Bacon (1561-1626) that would be embraced most openly by the culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (or alternatively, described best what was happening). Descartes described the separation of humanity from nature with his dualistic theory that there was a division between the mind (res cogitans) and matter (res extensa). He was unwilling to grant a mind to any being other than man, however, and thus reinforced the idea of the natural world as a machine. Like his contemporary Bacon, he asserted that it was possible, through scientific reason, to

gain a greater understanding of this machine and control it. Through scientific method, he thought it possible to:

discover a practical, by means of which, knowing the force and action of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies that surround us, as distinctly as we know the various crafts of our artisans, we might also apply them in the same way to all the uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the lords and possessors of nature.119

Descartes proposed the view that as animals did not have reason they did not feel pain and only acted mechanically as if they did.120 He claimed that the reason for this difference was that humans have souls, the divine blessing, whereas animals are mere automata.121 As ridiculous as this assertion is, it was used for many years to justify vivisection and other cruelty to animals. Henry Salt writes, "[w]ell might Voltaire turn his humane ridicule against this most monstrous contention, and suggest, with scathing irony, that God 'had given the animals the organs of feeling, to the end that they might not feel!'"122 In 1722, William Wollaston contributed to Descartes' mechanical view of animals, claiming their suffering was not of the same kind as that of humans because animals had no conception of the future.123 This idea, that pain and death are worse for

120 ibid: Part V. Descartes' two tests to distinguish animals from machines (which they failed) was their lack of human voice and their lack of ability to do everything that humans do, i.e. the lack of language, adaptability and dexterity.
121 For Descartes, animals' mechanical nature exempted them from moral consideration. Of this idea, Johnson observes: "That a being lacks a soul seems like a poor reason for holding its suffering to be morally indifferent." Johnson, 1991, op. cit.: 51. In Descartes' defence, he would appear to have withdrawn from this extreme stand in later years. See Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 33. Also Singer, 1990, op. cit.: 302, n24.
123 Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 35.
humans than for animals, because animals lack apprehension, is still noticeable today and yet any one who has seen a farm dog cower or seen smoking-related death statistics would realise that animals do have a degree of apprehension and by contrast, many humans are not good at predicting outcomes. Perhaps the most accurate appraisal of Descartes' theories is that of Thomas:

the most powerful argument for the Cartesian position was that it was the best possible rationalization for the way man actually treated animals…. if animals really had an immortal element, the liberties men took with them would be impossible to justify; and to concede that animals had sensation was to make human behaviour seem intolerably cruel.

Descartes' views were to maintain a strong position in the ideology of the Western world and the resultant attitude to the natural world, of discovery and mastery, is still explicit in much of the current scientific project and in contemporary language.

The scientific revolution changed the way Western Europeans perceived the world. Thomas Aquinas had separated faith from reason, and the new quartet of beliefs (Galileo's new science, Bacon's new logic, Descartes' mechanistic reductionism and Newton's physics) completed the division, irreparably dividing science from the static beliefs of the church. Francis Bacon proposed that knowledge itself is power and envisaged a second world, mundus alter, which humankind could create through nature, by gaining mastery over nature. He thought that humans without or before science

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124 Singer sensibly points out that there are "three reasons for believing animals can feel pain: behaviour, the nature of the nervous system, and the evolutionary usefulness of pain." Singer, 1990, op. cit.: 235.
125 Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 34.
126 Bacon, from Urbach, P. and Gibson, J., eds.: 1994, Francis Bacon: Novum Organum. Open Court, Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: 43. Though Schopenhauer countered with "The Devil it is! One man can have a great deal of knowledge without it giving him the least power, while another possesses supreme
were barbarians and that 'man's' arts made 'him' civilised. Writing within the Judeo-Christian tradition, in many ways he distilled the anthropocentric division between science and nature that was to become dominant for the following four hundred years. His views still epitomise the arrogance of science, most recently best expressed by genetic engineers. It was his chief concern "that Nature should serve the affairs and convenience of man." His optimistic claim, "[I]et the human race only recover its God-given right over Nature, and be given the necessary power, then right reason and sound religion will govern the exercise of it," is not, in my opinion, supported by historical reflection.

Bacon divided culture into four "idols." These were: the "Idols of the Tribe," which lie in human nature and in the "very tribe or race of mankind"; the "Idols of the Cave" which are those specific to individuals; the "Idols of the Market Place" which come from the common understanding of language ("words plainly do violence to the understanding and throw everything into confusion"); and the "Idols of the Theatre," which creep into "human minds from the various dogmas of philosophies, and also from the faulty laws of demonstrations." These are what could be termed the evolutionary, psychological, social and linguistic influences on discourse. Of the third, Bacon writes that, "while men believe their reason governs words, in fact, words turn back and reflect their power upon the understanding, and so render philosophy and science sophistical authority but next to no knowledge." Schopenhauer, A.: 1970, *Essays and Aphorisms*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Penguin, London: 125.


128 Bacon, from Urbach and Gibson, 1994, op. cit.: 131, 199.
and inactive."129 Bacon was aware of the same processes this thesis describes, but was unwilling to acknowledge that he was equally subject to them.

The theories of Bacon and Descartes contributed to a number of assumptions that underlie modern attitudes to nature, and reinforce the disposition of those involved in technology, industry and government to talk and act in certain ways, licensing the human manipulation and control of nature. Although most of these assumptions have a much longer pedigree, it is since the seventeenth century that science has been widely considered to be objective, value-free, and context-free knowledge of the external world. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was a growing optimism that the scientific accumulation of knowledge was extending human control over nature.

Merchant notes an important change between 1500 and 1700, one that extended into metaphorical use and continues today: "Living animate nature died, while dead inanimate money was endowed with life."130 She is referring to Descartes' depiction of animals as machine-like and the idea of money as having its own organic vitality, leading to metaphors today of 'growth of the economy'.

The political philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) followed a tradition that extended from Thomas Aquinas and Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) to present a theory of natural rights of the individual.131 He set the basis for later utilitarian philosophies with his belief that people are motivated largely by pleasure and pain, though he did not rule out moral action and duty. Hobbes thought that humanity, the "rational and most excellent work of Nature," must turn its back on 'the state of nature', and enter and obey

129 ibid: 54-9.
131 Becker, L. C., et al., ed.: 1992, A History of Western Ethics. Garland Publishing, New York: 83. In Becker we read that Grotius was "was the first to hold that each person, simply as an individual, possesses rights which must be respected by any community into which the person enters."
the laws of a stable society. He suggested that people undertook a 'social contract' to live in a society but that they retained their pre-social (by divine mandate) rights to life and liberty.\textsuperscript{132} The political theorist John Locke (1632-1704) held similar views, suggesting that morality stemmed from the Law of Nature. He is largely responsible for the idea that humans have natural rights – rights to life, liberty, health, limb or goods.\textsuperscript{133} By defining animals and nature as property, humans have claimed rights over them similar to those they believe they have over manufactured objects: the right to buy and sell, to treat as they see fit, to partition, and to consume. Even now, arguments about the land in Western countries are framed in terms of who 'owns' the land.\textsuperscript{134}

The way in which whales were treated after they had been harpooned (and then lost) illustrates their normal ontological status as inert things: they were property and as such, there were certain property rights that pertained to them. In \textit{Moby-Dick}, Ishmael comments that there were no written laws on this subject apart from a Dutch law of 1695. The Americans depended on unwritten laws, as explained by the chapter "Fast-fish and Loose-fish":

I. A Fast-Fish belongs to the party fast to it. II. A Loose-Fish is fair game for anybody who can soonest catch it. But what plays the mischief with this masterly code is the admirable brevity of it, which necessitates a vast volume of commentaries to expound it. (MD405-6)


\textsuperscript{134} See Rodman, J.: 1977, "The Liberation of Nature" \textit{Inquiry} 20: 142, who notes that the unnatural European view of property led to the "tragic misunderstanding between European settlers, for whom land was potential property, and Native Americans ("Indians") who thought land ownership as unnatural a notion as owning one's mother."
As explained by Ishmael, the problem was not to whom the whale belonged, but its status, owned or free for all, and it was in determining this that courts sat. Melville was clearly aware that similar laws of property applied to slaves in antebellum America.

It was after the sixteenth century that the traditional dominance the Church had in matters of ethics was challenged by the more significant philosophers, including Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza (1632-77). While many writers were careful not to upset the religious establishment, some of their views offered a foundation for more atheistic perspectives. Often considered the most sympathetic of these to nature was the pantheistic doctrine of Spinoza. He suggested that the universe was made of only one substance and that this substance could be called by the names 'God' or 'nature'. Many commentators now see his beliefs as one basis for the modern ecological movement of deep ecology. Schopenhauer (1788-1860), following on from Kant, thought the world divided into noumenal and phenomenal realms, with the former composed of a transcendental, vast, cosmic 'will', and the latter, the natural world, the appearance of this one 'will' to itself. He proposed that nature had a mysterious power, *qualitas occulta*, which allowed it to be alive, organic, subjective and striving. He was well aware that the anthropocentric view, the assumption that humans were so much better than and different from animals, was arrogance:

you may come to the opinion that man can be called a *thinking being* only in a very broad sense of that term and no longer feel very much surprise at any thoughtlessness or silliness whatever, but will realize, rather, that while the intellectual horizon of the normal man is

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wider than that of the animal – whose whole existence is, as it were, one continual present, with no consciousness of past or future – it is not so immeasurably wider as is generally supposed.136

It was through his observations on the way humanity treated both others and animals that he was convinced of the "misery of human existence," that the 'Will' was evil and the only redemption for humanity lay in resistance.137 Schopenhauer was the exception rather than the rule, however.

It is understandable that animals did not have individual rights at this period of history, in that humans were only just gaining theirs (and then only some classes). The concept of the autonomous individual came to fruition during the seventeenth century and Enlightenment, an idea that is crucial to the theories of Hobbes and his contemporaries, and in explaining current human attitudes to the environment. Raymond Williams notes that the concept of the 'individual' allowed thinkers to remove the person from the relationships in which they are inextricably entwined. On one hand this allowed philosophers to talk of 'community' and 'state'; however, by removing the 'individual' from society they also succeeded in removing the individual from a relationship with nature.138 Modern cultural studies have tried to show how inseparable individuals are from culture but there has not been a parallel push to show their interdependence with nature. Belief in the individual is inextricably linked to the dogma of human rights and is

136 Schopenhauer, 1970, op. cit.: 94.
137 ibid: 22-3, 139-40.
138 Williams, 1961, op. cit.: 73, 76, and 93. He dates the origin of the concept 'individual' – "as a kind of absolute, without immediate reference, by the very structure of the term, to the group of which he is a member" – as appearing after the medieval period: "Thus we can trace our concept of 'the individual' to that complex of change which we analyse in its separable aspects to the Renaissance, the Reformation, the beginnings of the capitalist economy." Johnson points out that what we "must not do is fall into the trap of thinking that we must choose between accepting individual values or accepting holistic values. Not only can we have it both ways, we must have it both ways." Johnson, 1991, op. cit.: 178.
an implicit presupposition in modern discourse. Animals are largely not considered to have individual identities and as a result are not presumed to have similar rights.\textsuperscript{139}

Whaling and the resultant writing about whales increased after the sixteenth century. Not counting whaling practised by indigenous groups throughout history, there have been four main periods of humanity's hunting of the whale: the Basque beginnings, the Greenland 'fishery', Pacific whaling (of which Melville wrote) and the more modern Antarctic whaling. In these phases, the whalers predominantly hunted different types of whales, the Biscayan (right whale), northern right whale or bowhead, sperm whale, and the blue and other rorquals respectively. As each species became severely depleted in number that phase would end, the next ushered in by new techniques or newly discovered areas to exploit. Ishmael suggests whales will be safe because they can always retreat "to their Polar citadels, and diving under the ultimate glassy barriers and walls there, come up among icy fields and floes; and in a charmed circle of everlasting December, bid defiance to all pursuit from man" (MD472). Sadly, he was wrong. The later Antarctic period presented the last possible place to hunt whales in an unsustainable manner, but it was the Basque and subsequent Greenland whaling that showed just how devastating humans could be to whale populations. During the Renaissance, Europe began to send out explorers, and where the explorers went, whalers were not far behind (and often before). The knowledge gained by exploration fed back into European society and intellectual life and partly contributed to the Enlightenment. Eventually, as with all whaling to date, the number of whales readily available in the whaling areas off Spain decreased and the Basque were forced further afield, deep into the Atlantic. The Basque whaling fleet turned to Newfoundland almost at the same time as explorers were

\textsuperscript{139} Of course, pets, zoo animals and favoured domestic animals are given identities.
claiming its existence. There was a sizeable Basque presence seasonally on Newfoundland and along the Labrador coast of Canada (from about 1540 to 1610), as marine archaeology studies in Red Bay have shown. This was before the use of try-pots on ships (to render the whale) and whaling was shore-based, the whalers venturing out in fragile 'chalupas' manned by six oarsmen. These boats were too light to withstand the wild ride of a harpooned whale and instead they attached a drogue (a funnel shaped sea anchor), then followed the whale until it tired and could be lanced. The oil that was produced by the try-works was stored in barrels and then shipped back to Europe.

Why would Basque sailors brave the 3200 kilometre journey across the treacherous North Atlantic to whale beside a land that explorer Jacques Cartier pronounced "la terre que Dieu donna à Cayn" (the land God gave to Cain)? To sixteenth-century Europe, whale-oil was a vital substance, not only as a prime source of light but also as an all-purpose lubricant, an additive to drugs, and as a major ingredient in a score of products such as soap and pitch. It was crucial to the technologies of the period and was the era's equivalent of modern petroleum. However, in the familiar story of whaling, the whales stopped frequenting the Newfoundland and Labrador waters.

140 Robert Laxalt writes that one "tradition has it that Columbus first learned of land to the west from a Basque whaler." There were also Basque sailors with Columbus. Laxalt, R.: 1985, "The Indomitable Basques" National Geographic 168, 1, July: 70. Cousteau agrees, claiming that the Basques arrived in Newfoundland by 1372: "Thus, although the Vikings preceded them, the Basques set foot on American soil more than a century before Columbus did." 1988, op. cit.: 16. Spence also cites the date for Basque arrival in Newfoundland as 1372. 1980, op. cit.: 16. Mathews claims the first Spaniard to visit the banks of Newfoundland was the sailor of Zurauz, Matias de Echeveste, who made twenty-eight voyages between 1545 and 1599. 1968, op. cit.: 96.

141 Curtsinger, B.: 1985, "Discovery in Labrador: A sixteenth-Century Basque Whaling Port and its sunken Fleet." National Geographic 168, 1, July: 40-67. Mathews writes: "In 1578 Anthony Parkhurst of Bristol said that he had made four voyages to Newfoundland, where he generally found 150 sail of French and Bretons fishing for cod, fifty English and fifty Portuguese, but 100 sail of Spaniards taking cod, and thirty to forty more killing whales." 1968, op. cit.: 96.

142 Curtsinger, 1985, op. cit.: 44.

143 ibid: 55-62. Navigation at this time was not particularly refined. One sailing direction to reach Canada or Terranova advised "Keep the North Star on your right."
Curtzinger estimates that the Basques killed 15,000 or more whales in the area: "a feat that may well have contributed to the endangered status of the northern right whale in the North Atlantic today."\textsuperscript{144} The death knell for Basque whaling in North America was the ill-fated Spanish Armada attack on England in 1588 in which many Basque whalers were killed and galleons (used to transport the oil) were sunk. Destruction of the Basque port of St-Jean-de-Luz during the Thirty Years War was also a crippling blow to the industry. The Basque experience in whaling was not wasted, however, since many Basque sailors later joined the whaling crews on the ships of other nations.

Cousteau suggests that with the Renaissance and the resurgence of written works, including those on the natural world, "cetology burst forth like the mighty blow of a rorqual coming up for air."\textsuperscript{145} The whale or balena was mentioned in Libellus De Nature Animalium, a fifteenth-century Bestiary and in the works of Albertus Magnus from the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{146} Writers such as Pierre Belon and Guillaume Rondelet incorporated whales into their histories, as did other Renaissance writers such as Conrad Gesner (Historiae animalium, Zurich, 1551-87).

It is in the sense of 'monster' as a portent that Ambroise Paré wrote about whales and his Des Monstres Tant Terresres Que Marins (or Des Monstres et Prodiges -1573), included whales amongst the list of monsters and marvels. Paré was a doctor whose great discoveries were the negative effect of boiling oil on gunshot wounds and the use of ligation to replace cauterisation in amputation. He scandalised the sixteenth-century

\textsuperscript{144} ibid: 67. Cousteau also lays blame for the endangerment of the Biscayan of northern right whale with the Basque. Cousteau, 1988, op. cit.: 16.
\textsuperscript{145} ibid: 55.
medical fraternity by publishing a medical book in French rather than Latin. Writing of Des Monstres et Prodiges, Céard claimed it could be considered "the most sustained attempt (during the sixteenth century) to 'naturalize' monsters."\footnote{From the introduction to Paré, A.: 1982, On Monsters and Marvels – Des Monstres et Prodiges. Trans. J. L. Pallister. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.} Paré writes that monsters, meaning deformed children or animals, and mythical beasts, "are things that appear outside the course of Nature (and are usually signs of some forthcoming misfortune)." He lists the thirteen main causes for such monsters and defines marvels as "things which happen that are completely against Nature," though he concedes that he is "stretching the word Monster somewhat for the greater enrichment of this treatise" (including whales in his books as marvels, rather than as monsters).\footnote{Paré, 1982, ibid: 3-4.} However, the few pages in Des Monstres et Prodiges committed to whales describe them and their behaviour reasonably accurately.\footnote{Paré also describes whaling practices in Bayonne, France and notes, "the females are easier to catch than the males, because they are concerned with saving their young, and spend effort only in hiding them, and not in escaping." This was a fact used often to advantage by later whalers. ibid: 133-4.}

With the discovery of new lands, new scientific methods, and a belief that God could be contemplated by studying nature, the naturalists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries set about meticulously cataloguing, and thereby defining, the natural world. The older reality, of portents, omens and the medieval bestiaries that had included centaurs, basilisks and other bizarre creatures, could not compete with the new worlds being opened up by ship and microscope. Yet, this older reality remained evident in the language. In the eighteenth century, it is possible to ascertain serious attempts to classify and understand the biology of whales, though the scientists brought their own cultural assumptions to their classifications. Carolus Linnaeus and Count Georges-Louis
Buffon dominated Enlightenment natural history. Buffon considered the influence of humanity on the earth, including themes of a necessary primordial balance in nature, the effect of clearing on climate and of drainage on health, and the cultural aspects of forest protection and torrent control. He wrote a volume on whales for his *Histoire Naturelle*, part of a growing trend for writers to include whales in their natural histories. The great nomenclaturist Linnaeus grouped whales initially as part of the fish group, *Pisces*, as distinct from his classification of mammal species *Quadrupedia*. However, he later recognised that whales were warm-blooded. Ishmael quotes Linnaeus as declaring, "I hereby separate the whales from the fish" (MD136).

In the early 1800s, as the activity of whaling increased, the work of scientists and naturalists like the Cuviers, Lacepede and others was supplemented, and their authority challenged, by the work of writers who were engaged in whaling. Whaling writer Thomas Beale notes that Brisson, Linnaeus, Bonnaterre, Lacepede and Desmarest wrote on sperm whales but not without mistakes. He quotes Baron Cuvier as an example: "the terrible arms, the powerful and numerous teeth with which nature has provided the cachalot, render it a terrific adversary to all the inhabitants of the deep, even to those which are most dangerous to others; such as the phocæ, the balænopteræ, the dolphin,

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150 Glacken, op. cit.: 657-66.
151 Linnaeus reportedly believed, "God himself … permitted him to have a look into His secret council chamber." He also believed that the discovery of procreation in plants was his most important contribution to botany as it revealed "the very footprints of the Creator." Linnaeus, C.: 1964, *Systema Naturae*. This is a facsimile of the first edition (1735). Trans. M. S. J. Engel-Ledeboer and H. Engel. Nieuwkoop and B. De Graaf, Amsterdam: 7.
152 Umberto Eco writes that in 1758 in his *Systema Naturae* Linnaeus had classified Cetaceans as part of Mammalia. Eco, 1999, op. cit.: 232.
153 Beale writes of the Cuviers, that they "delighted in mixing fiction with truth, and wonders of all kinds might appears to have been their constant companions." Beale, 1973, op. cit.: 21. See also Cousteau, 1988, op. cit.: 57.
and the shark.\textsuperscript{155} Beale noted "the impossibility of any of these great men making continuous observations upon this interesting animal, [and thus] the subject was still doomed to remain an apparently impenetrable mystery."\textsuperscript{156} As Ishmael observes:

there is no earthly way of finding out precisely what the whale really looks like. And the only mode in which you can derive even a tolerable idea of his living contour, is by going a whaling yourself; but by so doing, you run no small risk of being eternally stove and sunk by him. Wherefore, it seems to me you had best not be too fastidious in your curiosity touching this Leviathan. (MD274-5)

Yet, despite this pragmatic approach to whales, the alien nature of the animals and the conditions under which they were studied (while under attack or dead) meant that whaler-naturalists' conclusions were often equally erroneous.

The late eighteenth century was an 'age of reason', when many of what are now considered to be the Western world's greatest philosophers tried to make sense of the world. An important change in attitudes to animals and the natural world came with the adoption of utilitarianism as the ethical system of the scientific and capitalist world, despite it being cut from, in Callicott's words, "threadbare metaphysical cloth."\textsuperscript{157} A significant factor in the success of utilitarianism was that it explained why people acted the way they did (in their own interests), rather than determining how they should act. Many have used the idea of utility to justify their treatment of animals; however, one of its original proponents, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), was astute enough to realise that

\textsuperscript{155} ibid: 5.
\textsuperscript{156} ibid: 9.
\textsuperscript{157} Callicott, J. B.: "The Case Against Moral Pluralism," from Brennan, 1995, op. cit.: 542. As with all consequentialist ethics the actual consequences are impossible to predict accurately and are usually determined and predicted by those with a voice of authority. Such a voice imports its own ideological significances, generally to its benefit.
animals felt pain and pleasure and should be included in the moral circle: "the question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?" The sceptical philosopher David Hume (1711-76) succeeded in subverting many moral codes with his attack on causality, and what has come to be considered, wrongly, his 'naturalistic fallacy', the separation of is/ought – the impossibility of deriving a moral statement (ought) from a fact (is) through logical argument (this will be discussed further in the conclusion, page 411). Hume based his morality on sympathy and intuition, and he extended this moral consideration to animals, which he considered "endowed with thought and reason as well as men." Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) argued that, "so far as animals are concerned, people have no direct duties. Animals are not self-conscious, and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man." However, Kant neatly debunked artisan analogies and machine metaphors for nature, noting that machines cannot replicate themselves: "An organized being, is, therefore not a mere machine." Both writers were important in questioning teleological explanations for both nature and humanity, concepts that, in many people's minds, were severely negated by the Lisbon

159 Callicott notes that G. E. Moore termed the fallacy 'naturalistic' when it in fact should be termed the 'putative fallacy'. Callicott, J. B.: 1982, "Hume's Is/Ought Dichotomy and the Relation of Ecology to Leopold's Land Ethic" Environmental Ethics 4: 166. See also Fox, 1995, op. cit.: 188-94.
earthquake that killed sixty thousand people and rocked Western Europeans to their anthropocentric heart.

Secular theories to explain the world came to the fore at this time, with Charles Darwin's (and Wallace's) evolutionary theory playing a pivotal part. Darwin (1809-82) developed the view that the natural world was not a ladder with humans on top but more like a bush with the human species only the end of one branch, not the top of the tree. Significantly, Thomas Malthus (1766-1834) determined that population growth follows an ominous geometric progression and suggested there were limits to the carrying capacity of the earth. He realised that the natural checks of war and disease were not enough to overcome the fecundity of humanity. This contradicted the classical conception of plenitude linked to senescence, the theory that there were fewer people on the earth than in biblical times. The degree to which people accept Darwin and Malthus' concepts still tends to define their environmental outlook.163

With the Romanticism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries came an increasing appreciation of wild places. The wilderness was changing from a Hebraically imagined place where the individual was outcast from God (or the Christian idea of 'wilderness' as an opposition to 'paradise'), to a place to where people would go to see God. Although, as I have explained, this concept has earlier antecedents. The Romantics explored the dynamic between humanity and nature, trying to discern God in nature, or nature "as the fingerprint of God's creation."164 Originating in an incipient misanthropy aimed at contemporary attitudes, this movement actively sought the

strange, remote, solitary, and mysterious. Byron's 'manifesto' established the theme, tradition and vocabulary for many later European and American writers, including William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper and Ralph Waldo Emerson.\textsuperscript{165} As this thesis shows in the following chapter, there is much of the Romantic tradition in \textit{Moby-Dick}. The Romantics were also inspired by Jean Jacques Rousseau's primitivism, an essentialist view of the moral superiority of 'man' in 'his' wild state – the 'noble savage'.\textsuperscript{166} This idea contrasted greatly with the image of the 'Wild Man' previously portrayed as inhabiting the forests of medieval (and earlier) Europe.\textsuperscript{167} Rousseau's theories, that modern humanity should revitalise their civilised life by incorporating presumed 'primitive' or authentic qualities, influenced an increasing number of thinkers and individuals, who looked to wild nature for inspiration or escape from contemporary 'decadent' society. The two most famous American nature writers, John Muir and Thoreau, were partly acting in this tradition. In the case of Muir, the 'primitive' aspect of his project was far less important than the more common Romantic belief that being in Nature could lead a person to a greater understanding of God: "In God's wildness lies the


\textsuperscript{167} Nash described the wild man as "THE most important imaginary denizen of the wildernesses of medieval Europe." Nash, 1967, op. cit.: 12. "For much of the Middle Ages, hairy, cannibalistic, sexually omnivorous wildmen and women had represented the antithesis of the civilized Christian. But beginning in the later part of the fifteenth century ... wild men were made over into exemplars of the virtuous and natural life." Schama, 1995, op. cit.: 97.
hope of the world – the great fresh, unblighted, unredeemed wilderness. The galling harness of civilization drops off, and the wounds here ere we are aware."

Thomas notes that even as old concepts of a designed earth were eroded, they: "began to creep back in the form of pathetic fallacy of the Romantic poets and travellers, for whom nature served as a mirror to their own moods and emotions. To understand that the natural world was autonomous, only to be understood in non-human terms, was still an almost impossible lesson to grasp."

The separation Thomas outlines is that between Ahab, who sees the world as being in opposition to him, and Ishmael, who, in moments of insight, realises that nature can be indifferent to humanity. The eighteenth century's advances and triumphs in science achieved two things. For some, they reinforced the view that God was evident in nature and an increasing number of naturalists thought that the scientific study of nature led to a greater understanding of God's creation. However, scientific discoveries, including geological, brought into question the history of the world as explained by Christian theology and this doubt entered the area of meta-ethics and traditional moral codes became subject to increasing suspicion and debate. Increasingly, the direction in which so-called 'progress' was taking culture was becoming questioned, as were anthropocentric attitudes.

It is wrong to say that all people were acting in environmentally destructive ways. There has been a tendency for writers of environmental histories to focus on the American tradition and the battle over wilderness. However, before the Anglo-

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169 Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 91.

170 The contemporary concept of 'wilderness' is a much-contested ground and many argue that it is largely an American concept resulting from the perception that the country was empty when Europeans arrived. Australians hold a similar idea of wilderness. This is despite many writers pointing out that neither
American stream of environmental consciousness, there were other parallel awakenings.

Richard Grove's 1990 article entitled "The Origins of Environmentalism" approaches history from a different angle, looking at the dialogic relationship in the colonial situation:

As colonial expansion proceeded, the environmental experiences of Europeans and indigenous peoples living at the colonial periphery played a steadily more dynamic part in new European evaluations of nature and in the growing awareness of the destructive impact of European economic activity on the newly 'discovered' and colonized lands.\textsuperscript{171}

However, Grove writes that despite the experience of those at the colonial edges: "it was not until the mid-seventeenth century that awareness of the ecological price of capitalism started to grow into a fully fledged theory about the limits of the natural resources of the Earth and the need for conservation."\textsuperscript{172} Between 1768 and 1810, Mauritius was the site of some of the earliest experiments in systematic forestry conservation, pollution control and fisheries protection. Grove asserts the tropical environmental changes and such extinctions as the dodo from Mauritius raised a "shocking psychological development" (the "spectre of human extinction") that America nor Australia was empty when the respective waves of white invaders arrived. For example, Langton writes, "[t]he popular definition of 'wilderness' excludes all human interaction within the allegedly pristine areas, even though they are and have been inhabited and used by indigenous people for thousands of years." Langton, M.: 1996, "What do We Mean by Wilderness? Wilderness and Terra Nullius in Australian Art," \textit{The Sydney Papers} 8, 1: 10-31: 20. Writing of the Western District, Jan Critchett noted: "The area was not, as Major Mitchell described it, 'a fair blank sheet'. All of it was intimately known and named: each marsh, waterhole, hill, mountain, lake and fall had a name." Critchett, J.: 1990, \textit{A 'Distant Field of Murder'}. Brown, Prior Anderson P/L for Melbourne University Press, Melbourne: 47.

\textsuperscript{171} Grove, R. 1990, "The Origins of Environmentalism." \textit{Nature}, 3, May: 11. He cites as examples "descriptions of the damaging effects of deforestation" in the Canary Islands and Madeira from the 1300s and in the West Indies from 1560.

\textsuperscript{172} ibid: 12.
influenced the Romantic scientists and "pioneers of modern environmentalism," Pierre Poivre, Philibert Commerson and Bernardin de St. Pierre.\textsuperscript{173} Thus, Grove argues, the question of climate change was international in scope by the mid-1860s. As he observes, however, the single most important historical lesson from the East India Company's experience on Mauritius was that "states can be persuaded to act to prevent environmental degradation only when their economic interests are shown to be directly threatened."\textsuperscript{174}

The doyen of the American environmental historians is George Perkins Marsh who, in 1864, published his \textit{Man and Nature or Physical Geography (As Modified by Human Action)}, a comprehensive description of the ecologically destructive impact of human civilization on the environment. Marsh's historical appraisal of the environment in both America and Europe, though still anthropocentric and utilitarian, states the need for stewardship (citing biblical commands) and action, noting "the necessity of restoring the disturbed harmonies of nature". He notes the need for "repaying our great mother the debt which the prodigality and the thriftlessness of former generations have imposed upon their successors."\textsuperscript{175} His early statement on forest clearing should be heeded in today's arguments: "thus the clearing of a great country may react on the climates of regions more or less remote from it."\textsuperscript{176} He asserts that, "[man should] become a co-worker with nature in the reconstruction of the damaged fabric which the negligence or

\textsuperscript{173} ibid: 12.
\textsuperscript{174} ibid: 14.
\textsuperscript{175} Marsh, 1864, op. cit.: 8.
\textsuperscript{176} ibid: 160-1. He quotes Becquerel's \textit{Des Climats}: "We should be inclined to believe a priori … that the clearing of the woods, by raising the temperature and increasing the dryness of the air, ought to react on climate." He also notes that it is "evidently a matter of the utmost importance that the public, and especially landowners, be roused to a sense of the dangers to which the indiscriminate clearing of the woods may expose not only future generations, but the very soil itself" (234).
the wantonness of former lodgers has rendered untenable." He also shows sympathy for non-human life, writing, "[t]he indiscriminate hostility of man to inferior forms of animated life is little creditable to modern civilization, and it is painful to reflect that it becomes keener and more unsparing in proportion to the refinement of the race."\textsuperscript{177} Marsh investigated many aspects of the natural world and made some predictions concerning whales on the evidence he had collected. He observed that, "[t]he inhabitants of the waters seem comparatively secure from human pursuit or interference by the inaccessibility of their retreats, and by our ignorance of their habits – a natural result of the difficulty of observing the ways of creatures living in a medium in which we cannot exist."\textsuperscript{178} However, he noted, "five hundred years ago, whales abounded in every sea. They long since became so rare in the Mediterranean as not to afford encouragement for the fishery as a regular occupation."\textsuperscript{179} Thus, Marsh suggested:

It does seem probable that man, with all his rapacity and all his engineering, will succeed in totally extirpating any salt-water fish, but he has already exterminated at least one marine warm-blooded animal – Stellar's sea cow – and the walrus, the sea lion, and the other large amphibia, as well as the principal fishing quadrupeds, are in imminent danger of extinction.\textsuperscript{180}

Thus, he was more pessimistic than Ishmael who declared, "the eternal whale will still survive" (MD473).
Despite Marsh's pessimism, there was little chance that whaling would cease. Whales were animals whose by-products were crucial to the new technologies of the Industrial age. The great whaling literature of the world was not produced until the early nineteenth century and writers would lament English (and then American) late involvement in this lucrative 'industry'. According to William Scoresby, the first British attempt at whaling happened in 1594 when several ships were fitted out to whale at Cape Breton. Scoresby says of the lower Atlantic 'stocks' of whales, that they "became disturbed and became less abundant."181 The next phase of whaling history involved whaling in arctic waters around the lonely land of Spitzbergen (currently Svalbard under Norwegian rule), a large fjord-lined group of islands north of Scandinavia and east of Greenland.182 The Atlantic right whale was replaced as the target by the Greenland right whale or bowhead, a whale species that has not recovered from this onslaught. Scoresby writes that, "whatever importance is attached to the discovery of these barren lands, the value of the discovery is eclipsed by that of the whale-fishery in the prolific seas adjacent; as it in a short time proved the most lucrative, and most important branch of national commerce, which had ever been offered to the industry of man."183 The method of whaling used at Spitzbergen is termed shore-whaling. The whales were killed in the bays of the archipelago and then taken to the base for trying (rendering) into oil. Shore whaling has the effect of quickly reducing local whale numbers and by 1645 Smeerenberg ('Blubbertown', the town at Spitzbergen) was deserted and shore-whaling

182 The dispute over who actually discovered Spitzbergen (and thus had whaling rights) would lead to violent conflicts between the Dutch and English. These conflicts were a forerunner of the twentieth century's petroleum wars. See Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 27, and Scoresby, 1820b, op. cit.: 18-19. Also the "Extracts", (MDliii).
in the arctic was virtually ceased. Whalers still sailed the Arctic waters and looked for
whales; however, by 1750, the whale stocks, once thought inexhaustible around
Spitzbergen and other Arctic islands, were soon hunted out. In 1626, two whalers
from Zaandam had killed a whale on the open sea and this started a trend towards
pelagic whaling, which involved the use of stronger and heavier whaleboats sent out
from a ship. It is this sort of whaling that fits the popular image of film and literature,
although the great work of whaling literature, Moby-Dick, would not be published for
two hundred years. It would be another hundred years before the sympathy that Ishmael
extends to whales would become the common attitude of the population in Western
countries. In the intervening years attitudes to domestic animals would change
considerably.

iv. Human versus animals: a relationship of unequal power and its reflection in
language.

Attitudes to animals throughout history are manifest in the language used to
describe them, both in explicit statements about the inferiority and utility of animals and
in the covert ways this thesis describes. The history of Western thought (at least) has
subsumed animals and nature, with animals being considered part of a designed world
and thus intended for human use. Older attitudes can still be discerned in the linguistic
structures of cultural narratives. There are two major classes of animal involved,

184 Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 34.
186 Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 34.
'domesticated' animals and 'wild' animals, though there are overlapping sub-divisions into edible and inedible, useful and useless.\textsuperscript{187} Often writers who have argued for greater sympathy for animals have had only domesticated animals and pets in mind.\textsuperscript{188} The continued antipathy towards the more ferocious wild animals, those that actively kill humans, has been justified on various grounds. It is a justification still used to defend the killing of 'rogue' sharks and crocodiles, as in the unsuccessful hunt to find the shark 'responsible' for the death of Ken Crew in Perth in November 2000,\textsuperscript{189} and the cull of dingoes on Fraser Island in 2001.\textsuperscript{190} The least popular of interactions with animals has always been with predatory animals, for which reason humanity has done its best to exterminate the more dangerous wild animals. When animals are the prey the attitude is completely different, and its advocates have often described hunting in rapturous language. This double standard led George Bernard Shaw to comment: "When a man wants to murder a tiger, he calls it sport, when a tiger wants to murder him he calls it ferocity."\textsuperscript{191} 

It was (and remains, apparently) important to separate humans from other animals, which is reflected linguistically. There have been a number of criteria propounded that supposedly separate humans from animals (and further from plants).

\textsuperscript{187} Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 53. He also writes: "The beast had been divided into the wild, to be tamed or eliminated, the domestic, to be exploited for useful purposes, and the pet, to be cherished for emotional satisfaction" (192). It is interesting to see how Leach relates these divisions to taboo. See Lenneberg, 1964, op. cit. Rooney notes that in the hunting literature of the middle ages there was a threefold division of animals into venery, chase and vermin. This reflected the strict social divisions within society. Rooney, A.: 1993, \textit{Hunting in Middle English Literature}. D.S. Brewer, Cambridge, U.K.: 15.

\textsuperscript{188} Attitudes to animals now are probably more complex, and although there are those who campaign for endangered species who are opposed to domestic animals, it would be wrong to say opinions have been completely reversed. Most Western countries still have a large percentage of pet owners, and this still informs many people's attitudes to animals in general. For example, see Barbara Smutt's "Reflection" in Coetzee, J. M.: 1999, \textit{The Lives of Animals}. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

\textsuperscript{189} Keenan, A.: 8 November, "Prayer for a Mate on Beach He Loved: City Divided Over the Fate of Man-Eating Shark," \textit{The Australian}, Sydney: 5.


The three most common, are reason, speech (dating back to the Greek philosophers), and moral responsibility. The last leads to 'the posthumous extinction' of animals, there being no place reserved in heaven for them (from early Christian theology – a most circular argument at best). At various times throughout history, reasons for separation have included the human attributes of manual dexterity, toolmaking, cooking, property, politics, laughter, religion and, in Victorian times, physical modesty. Theologians have looked to supposed differences for evidence (often metaphorical) of their beliefs. For example, humanity's upright posture was perceived to be a divinely granted ability to contemplate heaven. Similarly, the Great Chain of Being was believed to take the form of a succession descending from God, through angels, humanity and animals. To emphasise the separation of the animal world from the supernal, in the Middle Ages the Christian symbol of the antichrist was the beast, the devil was regularly portrayed as a hybrid of man and animal, and evil spirits and demons were depicted as taking animal form. The existence of 'monsters' in the form of deformed babies (both human and animal), such as those explained by Paré in the middle of the sixteenth century, horrified people because it was thought they crossed the firm dividing line between men and animals.

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193 See Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 31-7. Both Martin Luther (1530) and Pope Leo XIII (1891) thought possession of private property to be the essential difference. However, if the Lockean idea of owning the fruits of labour were applied then bird nests and most animal homes would fulfil the requirement. Thomas tells how New England clergyman Cotton Mather was horrified to realise he pissed, ('emptying the cistern of nature') just like a dog, writing: "How much do our natural necessities abase us, and place us … on the same level with the very dogs!" ibid: 38.
194 Glacken notes that, for Hale, and many seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers, "man's control over nature is based on his position in the scale of being." Glacken, 1967, op. cit.: 481-2. See also 599-600. For a more modern justification of this sequence see Martin Heidegger's ideas, as explained by Krell, D. F.: 1992, Daimon Life (Heidegger and Life-Philosophy). Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis.
One way in which animals have been consigned to an inferior position is by the ubiquity of hunting narratives that establish in myth and reality a relationship between humans and animals that involves the action of a hunter (human) on prey (animal). The hunt myth is still one of the more common structures for narratives, from *Moby-Dick* to the latest crop of action thrillers such as the *Lethal Weapon* series. A notable feature of films in the modern action genre is the way in which the 'enemy' is symbolically dehumanised in the early parts of the film, allowing the audience psychologically to define them as 'animals'. As previously noted (page 108) pre-European contact stories of the Pacific Islands often speak of whales as friends – not surprisingly as prior to the arrival of whalers the islanders had little technology for killing whales, and the animals were not under any threat from them.\(^{195}\) This also reflects the older conception of the hunter/animal relationship (still common in the whalers of Lamalera and other indigenous hunters around the world) in which the co-operation of the animal/spirit was sought so that the hunter and their family should not go hungry. The hunt is a significant mythical force within Western culture, one that spills readily into metaphor, even today when the population is mostly urbanised and few people 'hunt'. Instead, there are people who 'hunt' for jobs, single men 'out on the prowl', 'sexual predators'\(^{196}\), and journalists 'hunting down a lead'.

Paralleling changing attitudes to the environment in general, attitudes to animals changed gradually from the 1500s on, though Thomas notes that in the Tudor and Stuart age, the characteristic position was one of "exaltation in hard-won human dominance": "Farm animals were a sort of inferior class, reassuring the humblest rural worker that he

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196 This metaphor allies these people with animals, and as a result is a pejorative term.
was not at the absolute bottom of the social scale, a consolation which his industrial
successor was to lack."\textsuperscript{197} Early recognition of basic animals' 'rights' is found in a 1596
ordinance in Chester (U.K.) that banned bear-baiting – cock-fighting was regulated in
the seventeenth century. In 1641, the Massachusetts Bay Colony adopted Nathaniel
Ward's \textit{Body of Liberties} which, as the ninety-second item on "rites" (rights), said that,
"no man shall exercise any Tirranny or Crueltie towards any brutite Creature which are
usuallie kept for man's use."\textsuperscript{198} As Nash notes, this was largely a utilitarian protection of
domestic animals. A similar protection of deer in England (from 1598) was purely to
protect aristocratic rights, with the penalty for illegally killing a deer being the removal
of both sets of soft organs: eyes and testicles.\textsuperscript{199} Although there were cases such as the
Tyburn woman who was hanged beside her dog for bestiality, England did not have
cases (such as those in Europe) where animals were tried in court and executed for their
homicidal behaviour.\textsuperscript{200}

The softening in attitude to animals was applied first to domestic animals, and
particularly the pets, including the horse, dog and cat; nevertheless, in the mid-
eighteenth century one writer commented that the word 'dog' was an insult "in all
countries and languages."\textsuperscript{201} Many of those who wrote in sympathy of animals
(Bentham, Alexander Pope and William Cowper included) were pet owners. One of the

\textsuperscript{197} Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 28-9, 50. Thomas quotes Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792 as saying that the
treatment of animals by the lower classes was "to revenge the insults that they are obliged to bear from
their superiors."

\textsuperscript{198} Nash, 1990, op. cit.: 18.


\textsuperscript{200} Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 97-8. Although Thomas notes this, he also mentions several cases where
animals were baited to death for crimes.

\textsuperscript{201} Thomas notes that three particular features distinguished the pet from other animals. It was allowed in
the house (including church!), was given an individual name and was never eaten. ibid: 112-15. The use of
dogs as draught animals was prohibited in London in 1839 and in the rest of the United Kingdom in 1854.
Salt, 1980, op. cit.: 41. For the treatment of cats, see Thomas, 1983, op. cit.: 100-5.
pivotal points in the history of human treatment of animals is the 1822 *Ill Treatment of Cattle* (or *Martin's Act* – after Richard 'Humanity Dick' Martin, an Irish gentleman-landowner) that made it an offence to mistreat 'wantonly' certain domestic animals, horses and asses.\textsuperscript{202} Though this was not the first case of legislation to protect the 'rights' of animals, it was remarkable in that it was arguably for the benefit of the animal and not the owner.

In the late eighteenth century, there was an attempt to delight in the world's diversity and see it not just by human standards, the romantic *point de vue spectaculaire* evident in the remarkable natural science writing of Gilbert White of Selbourne, amongst others. Animal-sympathetic publications from the period include Dr Humphrey Primatt's *A Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy and Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals* (1776), and John Lawrence's *A Philosophical Treatise on Horses and on the Moral Duties of Man towards the Brute Creation* (1796).\textsuperscript{203} This trend reached its high water mark in the nineteenth century with Salt's *Animals' Rights Considered in Relation to Social Progress* (1892). Salt writes, "[i]f 'rights' exist at all – and both feeling and usage indubitably prove that they do exist – they cannot be consistently awarded to men and denied to animals, since the same sense of justice and compassion apply in both cases."\textsuperscript{204} However, despite writers such as Bentham and Salt, the change in social attitudes to animals was slow.

\textsuperscript{202} Singer, 1990, op. cit.: 204, and Nash, 1990, op. cit.: 25. When he had proposed it a year earlier there were "howls of laughter" in the Parliament of Galway – "Another member said Martin would be legislating for dogs next, which caused further mirth, and a cry 'And cats!' sent the House into convulsions." E. S. Turner, quoted in Singer, 1990, op. cit.: 204. Nash notes his sarcastic and derogatory nickname. Nash, 1990, op. cit.: 25. Martin went on to help found the RSPCA.

\textsuperscript{203} ibid: 22, 24. See Salt, 1980, op. cit. for an excellent appraisal of similar works from this period.

\textsuperscript{204} Salt, 1980, op. cit.: 24.
For most of history, animals were outside the terms of moral reference. Many modern writers, however, have argued for the extension of moral consideration to animals in the same way as it has been extended to other groups. Bentham, Darwin, and Salt proposed ethical consideration for non-human life. Albert Schweitzer argued for "reverence for life" in 1915, after a revelation in Africa. The idea of rights for animals was gradually extended to include biocentric outlooks, including those of Leopold and more recent commentators (discussed page 192). In the last four decades there have been many voices proclaiming sympathies for animals, not that the media always offers them much coverage, or the public much credence. Singer, one of the more vocal modern animal rights advocates, says, "it is not that animals are capable of acting morally, but that the moral principle of equal consideration of interests applies to them as it applies to humans." Though he has been criticised for being a utilitarian, Singer has offered one of the most clear and insightful approaches to animal rights in his

205 Leopold compares the status of animals to that of the slaves of Odysseus. Leopold, A.: 1987, A Sand County Almanac. Oxford University Press, New York: 201 Nash, amongst others, makes the point that including the animal world is merely a step in an evolution of ethics, from a focus on the self in the pre-ethical past, through family, tribe, region, nation, race, and humans. The next stages after animals, he posits, would be plants, life, rocks, ecosystems, the planet, and finally, the universe. He claims that the argument against 'speciesism' or 'human chauvinism' is "the next logical stage in moral extension" (but "revolutionary"), and "the most dramatic expansion of morality in the course of human thought." Nash, 1990, op. cit.: 5-6. The term speciesism was coined by Richard Ryder in 1972 and Richard and Val Routley used the term 'human chauvinism' in their 1980 article contribution to Mannison et. al. Environmental Philosophy. ibid: 217.

206 Salt is an important precursor for the world of environmental ethics. His 1892 book Animals' Rights – Considered in Relation to Social Progress is a classic. Salt's A Plea for Vegetarianism (1886) inspired Gandhi to become a vegetarian, Salt, 1980, op. cit.: 227. Salt's 1889 publishing in England of Thoreau's works brought that writer to the attention of the English.

207 "Late on the third day, at the very moment when, at sunset, we were making our way through a herd of hippopotamuses, there flashed upon my mind, unforeseen and unsought, the phrase, "Reverence for Life." Schweitzer, A.: 1949, Out of My Life and Thought (Aus Meinem Leben und Denken): An Autobiography. Trans. C. T. Campion. Henry Holt and Co., New York: 156.

208 Singer, 1990, op. cit.: 225.
book of that name, *Animal Rights*. Singer claims: "The English language, like other languages, reflects the prejudices of its users. So authors who wish to challenge the prejudices are in a well-known type of bind: either they use language that reinforces the very prejudices they wish to challenge, or else they fail to communicate with their audience." As with feminist writers who try to step out of the totalizing discourse, writers who are sympathetic to the natural world and animals' 'rights' need to extricate themselves (as much as possible) from the dominant metaphors of modern language.

Whales were far from consideration during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century, fascination with animals culminated in the establishment of the first zoological parks. Schama writes (of Victorian zoos) that the "social treatment of the animals was also Victorian paternalism at its most unctuous." There were sixteen "valiant and historic but abortive" attempts to introduce a cetacean into Regent's Park zoo. These attempts were abortive because, despite pouring rum down their throats, they all died. Unfortunately, many of the dolphins that were captured by fishermen had, in what was the custom of some parts of England, been blinded. This prompted 'the Sturgeon' (Thackeray) to write in *Punch*:

> Dead, is he? Yes, and wasn't I glad when they carried away his corpus?

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209 Singer asserts that the modern era is merely an era of excuses for our treatment of animals: "Most human being are specieists…. ordinary human beings – not a few exceptionally cruel or heartless humans, but the overwhelming majority of humans – take an active part in, acquiesce in, and allow their taxes to pay for practices that require the sacrifice of the most important interests of members of other species in order to promote the most trivial interests of our own species." ibid: 9.

210 ibid: vi.


212 Leading to the facetious notice at Portsmouth:

*NOTICE TO SICK PORPOISES* – If visiting this beach their carriage to London will be paid. A DOCTOR will be in attendance, and MEDICINE in the shape of *No end of Grog*, will be found. Please land early." Blunt, W.: 1976, *The Ark in the Park*. Hamish Hamilton in association with the Tryon Gallery, London: 149. Americans apparently managed to keep a beluga whale captive for two years in the 1860s.
A great, black, oily, wallowing, wallopping, plunging, ponderous porpus.

What call had Mr Buckland, while I don't deny his kindness,

To take and shove into my basin a porpoise troubled with blindness?

I think it was like his impudence, and praps a little beyond,

To poke a blundering brute like that in a gentlefish's private pond.²¹³

Jeremy Cherfas observes that, "people have a powerful urge to get close to wild animals, to be near them and to feel them. The reasons for this are many and complex, and probably involve evolutionary memories of hunting and a sense of power over nature."²¹⁴ Because the animals are contained, people's desire to experience nature, in places such as zoos and marine parks (such as Seaworld - where dolphins, orcas and other cetaceans are kept to perform tricks for a willing public) may result in a sense of mastery.²¹⁵ However, in my opinion, this does not explain the attraction for seeing a large whale in its natural environment. Whale watching at sea perhaps exploits semi-religious feelings of awe and the sublime that are lacking in the modern secular world. Three hundred years ago, these secular feelings of awe were commonly described by writers experiencing the American wilderness for the first time. It was from within this landscape that writers began to derive contemporary environmental thought.

²¹³ ibid: 150.
v. New frontiers of the land, sea and mind

The frontiers are not east or west, north or south; but wherever a man fronts a fact, though
the fact may be his neighbour, there is unsettled wilderness between him and Canada,
between him and the setting sun, or, farther still, between him and it.

Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*216

There can be no doubt that expansion into the Americas greatly affected
ideologies of wilderness, nature and the environment. Coming from a Europe that was
beginning to show effects of bad environmental practices, the colonisers were given
(they thought) a blank slate on which to start again. At the simplest level, the way in
which the American continent was conceptualised is evident in the idea of 'Old' and
'New' worlds, an old world that was aged, tired, its plenitude exhausted, and a new world
that was fresh and full of resources. While the dominant and certainly paradigmatic
ideologies of the day were in favour of utilisation and domination of the American
landscape, there were dissenting voices, such as those of Thoreau and Muir. These
voices were, and continue to be, the minority, with the bulk of the population content to
enjoy the affluent lifestyle that the American situation has allowed. There are three
reasons why America has been slow to come to a concept of the rights of nature: the
inexhaustibility of resources that was the dominant American myth for a century after
independence; the concern of intellectuals and reformers with the rights of people; and

the fact that the defence of nature was channelled into the utilitarian and anthropocentric National Park ideal.

While environmentalism in America advanced only slowly, several of what are now dominant ideologies gained a firm hold because of the American situation: the belief that nature is purely a resource, conservation, democracy and, of course, Western capitalism. With the perceived 'dangerous' nature of the American continent, in that it was thought a wilderness full of 'savages' and 'wild animals', old ideas of humanity's antagonistic relationship with the environment were revitalised. New beliefs in a conflict with the natural revitalised the linguistic subjugation of nature, and this was evident in new metaphors, and in the increased potency of old ones. Two complementary beliefs contributed to the pioneer's bias against the wilderness: the notion that the wilderness constituted a formidable threat to survival, and the associated tenet, that to subdue this 'wilderness' was part of God's design. This instilled a preoccupation with turning America into a monumental Eden, to hew out a garden from the wilderness. As Nash notes: "In the morality play of westward expansion, wilderness was the villain, and the pioneer, as hero, relished its destruction."217 Puritan writers were prone to use the metaphor of 'man's' struggle against the evil forces of wilderness, frequently with light-dark imagery as its accompaniment.218 The work of turning wilderness to garden corresponded to the 'Protestant work ethic', which resulted from the Calvinist doctrine of

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election.\textsuperscript{219} With ideas of the devil inherent in wilderness transplanted from European
mythology, the subjugation of the natural world at the frontier was seen as a righteous
battle between good and evil, a theme that was readily utilised by writers, and survives
in the cinematic genre of the 'Western'. Reflecting a Romantic tradition that also derived
from Europe, the more spiritually inclined looked to nature not to find the devil but to
find God.\textsuperscript{220} This contradiction, of both the devil and a god in wild nature, creates a
tension, which Melville uses to good advantage in \textit{Moby-Dick}. The whale, a symbol of
nature at times, is described in both diabolical ("the gliding great demon of the seas of
life" MD191) and divine terms ("as he so divinely swam" MD554).

One of the particular aspects of nature in America was that the 'landscape' was so
large that it forced its way into consideration, permeating not only painting and literature
but also political and religious thought and ideology. As Leo Marx notes, "landscape …
thus becomes the symbolic repository of value of all kinds – economic, political,
aesthetic, [and] religious."\textsuperscript{221} As Americans began to believe that their country had
unmatched physical grandeur and landforms, a national pride arose that was to become
all-pervasive.\textsuperscript{222} The size of the American wilderness was interpreted as allowing
Americans a greater opportunity to commune with nature, and thus their God, than had
their European counterparts. By extension, they saw themselves as holier, gaining, as

Classics P. F. Collier and Son, Corporation, New York: 400. In one passage, however, Thoreau turned this
idea of God in culture, the devil in nature, upside down, describing a surveyor as the Prince of Darkness
because he was engaged in the deformation of the landscape. This was written with a little self-
deprecating irony, as he was a surveyor. Howarth, W.: 1981, "Thoreau, Following the Tracks of a
Different Man." \textit{National Geographic} 159, 3, March: 352.
\textsuperscript{221} Marx, 1964, op. cit.: 228.
\textsuperscript{222} There are numerous works that make the connection between physical grandeur and national pride. For
and Hughes, 1997, op. cit.
Williams notes, "a distinct moral advantage over Europe, where centuries of civilisation had deposited a layer of artificiality over His works."223 It is no coincidence that the New England Transcendentalist movement gained a certain importance in middle of the 1800s, a local adaptation of European Romanticism. Robert Hughes notes that the "ability to experience, in solitude, what the novelist Cooper called 'the holy calm of nature' was a duty that became a right."224

Increasingly the metaphors of machinery, and their associated ideas of ineluctable progress through linear time, became common. The pioneers also relied on military metaphors transplanted from Europe, some of which are still used today: of wilderness as 'enemy' to be 'conquered', 'subdued' and 'vanquished' by a 'pioneer army', and of a 'struggle with nature'. Armed with these tropes, America was settled with a utilitarian fervour. Great ancient trees were logged, animals trapped and skinned, 'savages' killed or converted, rivers dammed, fields ploughed. However, in 1890, the 'frontier' was declared closed and America had to look within to define itself, or else look back to Europe.

Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis uses an idealised concept of both the 'pioneer' and 'frontier' but clearly this myth contributed to American nationalism, and the "organized forces of exploitation" turned the landscape (which Turner called "the richest free gift that was ever spread out before civilised man") into material wealth.225 America was a large arena in which the culture of capitalism could bloom and thrive. American capitalism was fed by seemingly limitless resources, the increasingly separate individual, a belief in freedom of opportunity, and a freedom from the restraints of an

223 Williams, 1973, op. cit.: 69.
224 Hughes, 1997, op. cit.: 8.
older social order or overly restrictive administration. Turner writes that the first ideal of the pioneer was that of conquest.226 His language, while a critique of many American writers from the period, is similarly jingoistic and nationalistic, full of fervent pride in what he imagines Americans have become through their dialectic encounter with the frontier:

It was his task to fight with nature for the chance to exist. Not as in older countries did this contest take place in mythical past, told in folk lore and epic. It has been continuous to our own day. Facing every generation of pioneers was the unmastered continent. Vast forests blocked the way; mountainous ramparts interposed; desolate, grass clad prairies, barren oceans of rolling plains, arid deserts, and a fierce race of savages, all had to be met and defeated. The rifle and the ax are the symbols of the backwoods pioneer. They meant a training in aggressive courage, in domination, in directness of action, in destructiveness … Thus, fired with the ideal of subduing the wilderness, the destroying pioneer fought his way across the continent, masterful and wasteful, preparing the way by seeking the immediate thing, rejoicing in rude strength and wilful achievement.227

He proposed that the "growth of nationalism and the evolution of American political institutions were dependent on the advance of the frontier."228 Edmund Fussell regarded Turner's thesis as a trope that was "the leading formal principle of early American literature."229 His study looks at the way in which the frontier metaphor operates in the works of Cooper, Thoreau, and, of course, Melville.

226 ibid: 152, 261, 213.
227 ibid: 269-70.
228 ibid.
The whaling enterprise became synonymous with industry, and contiguous with American nationalism. The origin of sperm whale hunting is attributed to a Nantucket whaler, Christopher Hussey (c.1712), who was blown out to sea in his ship, where he sighted and attacked a sperm whale. This inspired his fellow Nantucket inhabitants to build and equip ships suitable for pelagic whaling. It was an industry that would produce huge economic rewards for participant countries such as America, England and Australia. The spermaceti in the head of the sperm whale produced the finest oil and thus was highly in demand. It could be a profitable endeavour for the boat owner, but rarely the crew. It was hard and dangerous work (though perhaps no worse than in many factories on land), and even those who survived a four-year cruise generally came back in debt and had to ship out again immediately. The men who wrote most of the books on whaling, particularly the more scholarly accounts, did not always suffer its full hardship. Often they shipped as doctors. Melville and Frank Bullen, author of *Cruise of the 'Cachalot*, did ship as sailors. Regardless, most of the writers saw whaling as a mythic battle between man and nature, and they eagerly contributed to such a mythopoeisis, though perhaps none as unashamedly as Melville. As Ishmael noted:

> all this was thrilling. Not the raw recruit, marching from the bosom of his wife into the fever heat of his first battle; not the dead man's ghost encountering the first unknown phantom in

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230 Like much of whaling lore this 'fact' is open to dispute. Spence writes that whaling most likely started on Long Island c. 1645, on Martha's Vineyard c. 1652 and on Cape Cod before 1670. Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 36. Mawer writes that Hussey was only 6 years old in 1712. He notes that Nantucket had six pelagic sperm whalers operating by 1715: "so the date of the exploit is not as unlikely as the attribution." Mawer, 1999, op. cit.: 6. Mawer points out that in 1471 George Ripley's Compound of Alchemy spoke of the benefits of sperm whale products so there was obviously already a market for sperm whale products when whaling commenced. He cites Paul Dudley's 1725 *Essay upon the Natural History of Whales* as recognising the claim of Atkins as one of the first to fish for sperm whales (c. 1720). ibid: 6. See also Dakin, W. J.: 1938, *Whaleman Adventurers*. Angus and Robertson, Sydney: Introduction, and Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 43.
the other world; – neither of these can feel stranger and stronger emotions than that man
does, who for the first time finds himself pulling into the charmed, churned circle of the
hunted Sperm Whale. (MD229-30)

The Australian writer W.J. Dakin, writing in 1933, posited his theory for the allure of
whaling and thus whaling literature:

the whale hunt 'from the time the distant spoutings were observed up to the time of the
whale's death flurry and the crew's cry of victory 'Fin out' was one of the greatest sports
known to man.' What trade or profession provides anything like the excitement and danger
to-day, apart from war or deep-sea fishing in winter with drifter or trawler? It is an
interesting biological question whether the healthy human being doesn't lack that something
exciting in his life to-day. His movies and talkies, his detective stories, his hosts of
diversions, from sailing dinghy races and wild-game shooting down to the feeblest of all
sports – watching other people play the game: are they not all part of the industrialized
being's unconscious effort to grasp something which for thousands of years was part of
man's everyday existence?231

In a later book on whale hunting in the Antarctic Ocean, R. B. Robertson's *Of Whales
and Men*, there is another theory regarding the glamour of whaling and its
representation:

'But always remember,' Mark warned me as we talked on the bridge one day, 'when you're
seeking information about the dangers of whaling, new or old, remember that whalemen are
and always have been mighty fine liars. Since the first Phoenician threw the first harpoon,
every whaleman has considered it his right and one of the prerogatives of his trade to tell the

landsman, or even other seamen, the biggest whoppers he could get them to believe. Read any whaling yarn written in the English language, or listen to the whalingmen, old or new, talking, and you can safely discount all but about ten percent of what you hear.\textsuperscript{232}

It is no coincidence that the term 'yarn' derived from the practise of spinning rope on board ship.\textsuperscript{233}

Open boat sperm whaling was a dangerous occupation, as evidenced in the saying attributed to whalers, "there are two sorts of whales … One of 'em is the sperm whale; the rest of 'em is the other."\textsuperscript{234} The sperm whales were more prone to react violently to being harpooned than the more placid populations of right whales that had previously been hunted. Sperm whales attacked whaleboats with tails and teeth and in several cases sank whaleships. Scoresby, like most of the whaling writers from this period, made much of the dangers of the 'fishery':

The wounded whale, in the surprise and agony of the moment, makes a convulsive effort to escape. Then is the moment of danger. The boat is subjected to the most violent blows from its head, or its fins, but particularly from its ponderous tail, which sometimes sweeps the air with such tremendous fury, that both boat and men are exposed to one common destruction.\textsuperscript{235}

This gave rise to the whaler's cry of "a dead whale or a stove boat."\textsuperscript{236} Whalers, like the participants in other dangerous activities such as mountaineering, ocean sailing and war,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{233} Barnhart, 1998, op. cit.: 1251.
\item \textsuperscript{234} Verney, 1979, op. cit.: 26.
\item \textsuperscript{235} Scoresby, 1820, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 242.
\item \textsuperscript{236} Verney, 1979, op. cit.: 27.
\end{itemize}
have felt the need to understand, to relate and to explain their endeavours. Add to this
the 'enhancements of the truth' virtually all whale writers remark on, and an author is
provided with fertile ground for literature. Newton Arvin agrees that Melville fell under
the mythic spell of whaling and was inspired to contribute to it, leading to a book that
has the qualities of heroic sagas: "If any aspect of this world, and specifically that of
whale-hunting, was to be embodied in a mighty book that would really render its
essential character, such a book would inevitably take on some of the qualities of epic
poetry."237 Melville was clearly inspired by the Homeric epics and filled his ship with an
equally character rich crew of heroes. In many ways, the story of Moby-Dick reflects the
trials of Odysseus on his maritime journey. There are other Homeric touches in the
novel, as I suggest later (page 205). These include the attention to detail of the "craft",
and Melville's ekphrastic description of the doubloon (see page 211). For Arvin:

European migrants, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century had much in common with
an archaic, a 'heroic' age. Here they reappeared, as in the Bronze Age and the Age of
Vikings, a population of brawlers, boasters, and bullies, as well as of proud, touchy, self-
reliant, heroic individuals; and among them there had reappeared a habit of story-telling, of
recitation and legendary reminiscence, shot through with a love of the grandiose and never
wholly free from an undercurrent of superstitious fear – fear of the hostile and mysterious
powers in savage nature, in forests and seas, in wild animals. The life of trappers, hunters,
and frontiersmen was that sort, and the life of whalers equally so.238

237 Arvin, 1961, op. cit.: 156.
238 ibid: 156.
Despite the dangers, or perhaps, as some writers have argued, because of them, whaling began to play a very large part in the American economy and psychology.\textsuperscript{239} By 1726, there were twenty-five ships whaling out of Nantucket and by 1774, there were three hundred and sixty ships. In 1755, Joseph Russel started whaling out of New Bedford.\textsuperscript{240} Some of the American ships still whaled the colder northern ocean (where the Dutch and English were still active), but generally the American whaleman preferred the less risky, more temperate seas inhabited by the sperm whale, which provided a more valuable cargo. As was so often the case, whales became scarce due to hunting and the whalers were forced to search out further. Despite the adventurousness of the New England whalers it was the English whale ship the \textit{Emilia} (though manned of course by Nantucket whalers), which in 1789 rounded Cape Horn and found huge populations of right whales and sperm whales in the Pacific.\textsuperscript{241} It was not long before the entire New England whale fleet was following the lead with ships cruising all over the Pacific in search of oil.\textsuperscript{242} Whale cruises lengthened, lasting up to four years, and though it is not

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[239] One theory for the acceptance of whaling by Americans, or more specifically by the people of Nantucket, was the supposedly democratic nature of the rewards. European whaling was "conducted on a 'master-servant' principle whereby the employee was paid for his services while the employer took the remaining profit." Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 37. It was obvious what the whaling companies got out of the arrangement but less obvious why ordinary sailors would risk their lives. American whale ships paid on a 'lay' system whereby the crew was paid a proportion of the profit. Although this early profit sharing system sounded fine in theory it was in fact heavily abused by the owners and shortly became little better than the European system. Mawer, 1999, op. cit.: 105-12. Druett writes, "that system which had sounded so democratic and fair at the start of the voyage proved to be nothing more than blatant callous exploitation." Druett, J.: 1991, \textit{Petticoat Whalers (Whaling Wives at Sea)}. Collins Publishers Pty Ltd, Auckland: 3.
\item[240] Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 43, 53.
\item[241] Melville called this ship the \textit{Amelia} (MD453-4). Mathews claims that in 1789 "four British whalers first sailed round Cape Horn and fished along the west coast of South America. In 1791 six whalers from Nantucket and New Bedford took part in the fishery off the Chile coast." Mathews, 1968, op. cit.: 126. Spence is in agreement, and writes that the first whale to be taken by the \textit{Emilia} was by the first mate, Archelus Hammond (of Nantucket) and that was on March 5\textsuperscript{th}, 1789. Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 63. Also Philbrick, N.: 2000a, \textit{In the Heart of the Sea}. Harper Collins, London: 251, and Verney, 1979, op. cit.: 27.
\item[242] According to Starbuck, the \textit{Beaver} out of Nantucket, was the first American whaler in the Pacific (1791). Starbuck, 1989, op. cit.: 187.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
emphasised in the whaling literature, the hardships of warm waters were considerably less than those in the icy seas. There was still the possibility of being killed by a sperm whale or falling from the yard, however, many of the dangers of the Arctic fishery were gone. These included the possibility of the ship being 'nipped' by ice, or of dying of hypothermia. Over the period from 1789 to the First World War, sperm whalers ranged far and wide over the oceans of the world in pursuit of whales.

Though at sea the whalers were aware of increasing difficulties of finding whales, there is little evidence it led to any thoughts of management. On the land, at least some people were beginning to suspect that America had been a little untrammelled in its spread into the North American continent. Of the three American environmentalist icons, none is more respected than Thoreau (1817-62). His tradition of nature writing was introspective and traced a lineage from the naturalist writings of Gilbert White. The majority of the natural world he studied was the relatively tame area around his home of Concord in Massachusetts, and in particular, Walden Pond, where he spent a little time (a year) living alone in a hut he built himself, and about which he wrote his most famous work. Thoreau's writing is in the antinomian tradition of the Massachusetts' Bay colony's "sainted" Anne Hutchinson, a tradition that continues strong in Melville, that of strong individualism.243 Thoreau's writing discloses a sense of wonderment at the general lack of imagination in his fellow people. He claimed the "mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation," that people "are a race of tit-men, and soar but little higher in our

intellectual flights than the columns of the daily paper." Thoreau was definitely radical, at odds with the mainstream of Concord society: a humanist, visionary, transcendentalist and naturalist. Thoreau was also a fervent believer in democracy and the advantages of society. His writing shows he was intensely conscious of the sense of loneliness that comes through humanity's self-imposed alienation from nature, and suggested the way to overcome this alienation was to realise that you were part of nature:

I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness, as contrasted with freedom and culture merely civil, – to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society. I wish to make an extreme statement, if so I may make an emphatic one, for there are enough champions of civilization: the minister and the school committee and every one of you will take care of that.

Unfortunately, much later appreciation of his work has been directed at his nature writing, ignoring his heterodox views. He writes: "I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which corn grows." He also proposed that, largely, they would be better off left alone: "I should be glad if all the meadows on the earth were left in a wild state, if that were the consequences of men's beginning to redeem themselves." In a statement that sounds most unlike the European conception of

245 Howarth, 1981, op. cit. Thoreau writes that: "the greater part of what my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad, and if I repent of anything, it is very likely to be good behavior." Thoreau, 1960, op. cit.: 12.
246 Thoreau, 1960, op. cit.: 395.
248 Thoreau, 1960, op. cit.: 140.
nature, Thoreau writes that people should "[e]njoy the land but own it not."\textsuperscript{250} It is simple ideas such as this that prompted Perry Miller to write, "\textit{Walden} is infinitely more antagonistic to the dominant pattern of our civilization than it was to the relatively pastoral America of 1854."\textsuperscript{251} Thoreau's work is conceived as antagonistic to the dominant paradigm because he overturned the tropes of culture, finding 'good' in nature and 'bad' in mankind, and because he pointed out the futility of domination of the world and nature. In a statement that could be the complete credo of modern nature writers, Thoreau, while lamenting the people's inability to capture the essence of nature in literature ("but living poetry like the leaves of a tree"), writes that in literature, "it is only the wild that attracts us."\textsuperscript{252}

One of his ventures into the 'wild' unknown (the Maine woods) brought him to an important conception of nature that was quite unlike his meditations at Walden Pond. On an ascent of Maine's Mt Katahdin, Thoreau became disorientated, weary and scared, and realised that the anthropocentric views of his friend Emerson did not explain nature adequately, that there was nature which did not exist for humans but was completely indifferent to them.\textsuperscript{253} He experienced the sublime that Edmund Burke had described, a nature that was at the same time "savage and awful, though beautiful."\textsuperscript{254} This understanding surfaces in \textit{Walden} when Thoreau writes that the "universe is wider than our views of it," noting, "Nature puts no questions and answers none which we mortals ask."\textsuperscript{255} In this, he parallels both Schopenhauer and Melville. Although he never

\textsuperscript{250} Thoreau, 1960, ibid: 141.
\textsuperscript{251} Miller, P., from Thoreau, 1960, ibid: 251.
\textsuperscript{252} Thoreau, 1960, op. cit.: 205, and Thoreau, Eliot, 1968, op. cit.: 413.
\textsuperscript{253} Oelschlaeger, 1991, op. cit.: 148.
\textsuperscript{255} Thoreau, 1960, op. cit.: 189, 212.
travelled to America, Schopenhauer used the prairie as an example of the sublime. He thought experience of the sublime in nature was one way that a person could gain apprehension of the noumenal, the 'will':

But the impression becomes even stronger, when we have before our eyes the struggle of agitated forces of nature on a large scale … when we are abroad in the storm of tempestuous seas; mountainous waves rise and fall, are dashed violently against steep cliffs, and shoot their spray high in the air…. Then in the unmoved beholder of this scene the twofold nature of his consciousness reaches the highest distinctness. Simultaneously, he feels himself as individual, as the feeble phenomena of the will, which the slightest touch of these forces can annihilate, helpless against powerful nature, dependant, abandoned to chance … and he also feels himself as the eternal, serene subject of knowing."

This feeling of the sublime, what Schopenhauer described as an "an exaltation beyond our own individuality" is that experienced by Ishmael on several occasions. It is also experienced by Thoreau on Katahdin, though, like Ishmael, he does not relinquish fully his belief in individualism, and does not surrender totally to the "Descartian vortices" (MD162). Thoreau's epiphany, of an indifferent nature, is reprised in Melville's whale.

Of the nature writers of America, "poetico-trampo-geologist-bot. and ornhnatural, etc!-!-!," Muir (1838 – 1914) was the most Romantic, and dealt with the wildest aspects of nature. He is iconic within the modern environmental conservation movement, largely responsible for the idea of National Parks and the implementation of

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256 Schopenhauer, 1969, op. cit.: 204.
257 ibid: 205.
258 ibid: 206.
259 This is Muir's description of himself, as reported by Nash, 1967, op. cit.: 122."He claimed that while God's glory was written all over his works, in the wilderness the letters were capitalised." ibid: 125.
Yosemite National Park (arguably the first such park in the world), and co-founder of the world's oldest environmental group, the Sierra Club. Muir was one of the first to agitate for the protection of forests for other than utilitarian reasons, being able to see beauty in America's giant redwoods where most others only saw a resource:

I was curious to learn what the impression the Sequoias had made on [a shepherd fresh from the East]. When I asked him whether it was true that the Big Trees were really so big as people say, he warmly replied, 'Oh, yes sir, you bet. They're whales. I never used to believe half I heard about the awful size of California trees, but they're monsters and no mistake.'

The size of the trees, inappropriately dubbed sequoias, was seen by many as further evidence for the argument of 'Manifest destiny', of America's obvious superiority. The trees quickly went from being objects of veneration (by the indigenous population) to being tourist objects (a form of consumption), and to timber products, despite the beliefs of some, such as Muir and painter Albert Brierly, who saw the trees as embodying both national magnitude and spiritual redemption. Muir summed up the situation plainly: "Any fool can destroy trees. They cannot run away; and if they could, they would still be destroyed – chased and hunted down as long as fun or dollar could be got out of their bark hides, branching horns, or magnificent bole backbones."

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260 Muir quoted in Teale, 1954, op. cit.: 213. It is necessary to contrast statements like this by Muir with the fact that he also ran a sawmill operation at the base of Yosemite falls, producing wood for local tourist development. Haraway, D.J., "Re-inventing Common Nature," from Cronon, 1995, op. cit.: 401.

261 They were named after an Alabama Cherokee (George Guess) who had invented a written language for his tribe, and the name was given to them by Asa Gray, the founder of the Harvard Botanical Gardens. Schama, 1995, op. cit.: 187.

262 ibid: 193.

263 Muir quoted in Teale, 1954, op. cit.: 231. "God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches, and a thousand straining, leveling tempests and floods; but he cannot save them from fools – only Uncle Sam can do that."
the protection of the forests are as valid today as they were radical then. In his beliefs
about the treatment of animals, he was equally radical and sympathetic to the non-
human: "In nothing does man, with his grand notions of heaven and charity, show forth
his innate, low-bred, wild animalism more clearly than in his treatment of his brother
beasts. From the shepherd with his lambs to the redhanded hunter, it is the same; no
recognition of rights – only murder in one form or another."264 He ridiculed the concept
of a designed world and he scoffed at "erroneous views" that everything was also made
for humans.265 Instead, he suggested, "Nature's object in making animals and plants
might possibly be first of all the happiness of each one of them, not the creation of all for
the happiness of one."266 Muir was on the side of preservation of the great forests,
opposing Gifford Pinchot and the professional foresters of the 'wise use' group.267 The
latter group had the argument half won by the simple linguistic trick of nominating
themselves as the 'wise use' school.268 Despite some successes, the National parks and
preserves had only paper (legislative) boundaries, and exploitation was not even slowed.
Pinchot used the new rhetoric of resources while Muir's language was religious,
reflecting his attitude that the wilderness was the source of spiritual understanding. For
example, Pinchot spoke of "substituting" a lake for a "swampy" floor, his lexical choices
accentuating the positive of what he was planning, neutralising the act and degrading the

264 ibid: 302.
265 ibid: 316. "In the same pleasant plan, whales are storehouses of oil for us, to help out the stars in
lighting our dark ways until the discovery of the Pennsylvania oil wells."
266 ibid: 317.
267 Nash, 1967, op. cit.: 131. Muir and Pinchot found themselves on different sides of an ideological
divide on most of the issues involving conservation during the late 1800s and early 1900s, including the
damming of the Hetch Hetchy valley (which was within the confines of the Yosemite National Park) to
supply water to San Francisco.
268 Pinchot and his colleagues also managed to appropriate the term 'conservation' for their 'wise-use'
viewpoint. ibid: 139. Similar allegations of appropriating terms are levelled at the Deep ecologists, for
using a designation that relegates all others to the uncomplimentary 'shallow' ecology. See Fox, 1995, op.
cit.
original. The *San Francisco Chronicle* described the preservationists (who included Muir) as "hoggish and mushy esthetes." 269 The bitter debate between Muir and Pinchot defined a chasm that continues amongst those who profess to environmental leanings, a gulf in ideology between those who favour preservation and those who favour conservation. Conservation is anthropocentric, and favours controlled resource use, attributing instrumental value to resources, whereas preservationists claim natural things should be preserved for themselves, because of their own inherent intrinsic value.

The third of the trio of icons is Aldo Leopold (1887 – 1948). A ranger, trained forester and keen recreational hunter, Leopold was concerned initially with conservation and National Park recreation. However, over time he began to formulate the idea that the concept of wilderness was important to the American national spirit, suggesting that, "the chance to find a pasque flower is a right as inalienable as free speech." 270 His work took him to Arizona and New Mexico where he was charged with the business of 'exterminating' predators. After a series of hunting vacations in the Sierra Madre in Northern Mexico, he "first clearly realized that land is an organism, that all my life I had seen only sick land, whereas here was a biota still in perfect aboriginal health." 271

Inspired by thinkers such as Muir, Thoreau, Liberty Hyde Bailey, Albert Schweitzer, and the Russian Peter D. Oupensky, Leopold began to envisage an ecological philosophy. Although his most famous work, *A Sand County Almanac*, is mostly set at his Wisconsin farmland home, it is events related in this book, of a hunting experience on a southern mountain, that were important in framing his ethic. As he recounts, he was the sort of ranger who liked shooting and believed that fewer predators meant more

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270 Leopold, 1987, op. cit. Foreword.
271 Leopold, Foreword (July 31, 1947, Leopold Papers, Box 8), cited by Nash, 1967, op. cit.: 192.
game and more 'sport'. However, one day, after shooting one such predator, he reached "the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes." Before this event he subscribed to the general policy of predator reduction but "after seeing the green fire die, [he] sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view." His revelation was that both he and the wolf were insignificant in the ecological totality of the mountainside, and that he did not know enough about this ecology to make decisions on the eradication of the wolf. As he writes, "only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf."272 Leopold's revelation is, as with Thoreau's on Mt Katahdin, a revelation of an indifferent nature, a rejection of anthropocentrism.

Leopold conceived what he called the 'Land Ethic', arguably the widest extension of what should be considered in any moral decision suggested to that time: "The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, water, plants and animals, or collectively: the land." He claimed the extension of ethics to include "this third element in human environment [which] is … an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity."273 "In short," he continued, "a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it."274 Leopold's work is simply stated, leading to multiple interpretations, defences and criticisms.275 He asserts that, "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

Obviously, the terms "integrity, stability, and beauty" are indefinable but it is the

272 Leopold, 1987, op. cit.: 129-30
273 ibid: 203.
274 ibid: 204-25.
perceiver's intuition that, in the end, decides their concept of right and wrong, and many commentators claim they know intuitively what Leopold means by these terms. Leopold was also conscious that the English language manifests a worldview antagonistic to the natural world. At the University of Wisconsin, he taught that when people refer to an animal as 'cruel', 'ugly' or 'useful' they are failing to see its part in its own ecosystem. He noted that a carburettor is not called 'greedy' but seen as part of a functional motor. Although his radical ideas were not appreciated at the time, his lasting legacy is the suggested extension of the sphere of morality to include the land or biotic community.

It took until 1988 for the Roman Catholic Church to acknowledge the environmental movement in the encyclical *Solicitudo Rei Socialis (On Social Concerns)*. Pope John Paul II wrote that humanity should show "respect for the beings which constitute the natural world" and added:

> The dominion granted to man by the creator is not an absolute power, nor can one speak of a freedom to 'use and misuse', or to dispose of things as one pleases … When it comes to the natural world, we are subject not only to biological laws, but also to moral ones, which cannot be violated with impunity.  

By the middle of the twentieth century the pace of industrialisation, human population growth, habitat loss and pollution, indicated that the world could no longer sustain

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277 Nash, 1967, op. cit.: 196

human expansion without restraint. Despite some awareness of this fact, that there were
distinct and dire repercussions of the Western orientation to the natural world, attitudes
remained largely unchanged, as did the language in which they were 'enframed' (to
borrow Heidegger's term). In the last decades of the last millennium, while there were
many credible attempts to manage environmental problems, in this new millennium the
dominant belief continues that humans and scientists are in control of 'the situation' and,
by extension, in control of much of the natural world. At an intellectual level, however,
writers have accepted the arguments of Thoreau, Muir, Leopold and others, and there
has been an increase in the number of writings on environmental issues.

vi. Modern environmental theory: new voices in an old language

The 1960s and 1970s saw a profusion of writing on animal rights and
environmental issues, and the decades since have continued to produce works of this
nature. These theoretical accounts have come from an increasing demand, both from
within and from without philosophy, to address the problems of environmental
degradation. Generally, thought has been divided into several basic models, with
predictable criticism resulting from opposing viewpoints. There are divisions between
preservationists and conservationists, anthropocentric and biocentric adherents, Deep
ecologists and Shallow ecologists, and animal rightists and nature rightists. Writers who
have continued in the dominant anthropocentric traditions have accused those positing
an ecocentric position of being mystical, while the latter accuse the former of a lack of
understanding, of being too constrained in their thinking. The debate has often been ad
hominem, with H. J. McCloskey accusing those in the neo-ecological drive of a pernicious tendency towards totalitarianism, and Tom Regan claiming that the idea of an individual's rights being supplanted by the biotic community is environmental fascism.\(^{279}\) There are genuine concerns that the Western environmental movement's idea of 'wilderness' is that of a colonial invader, which then excludes indigenous people.\(^{280}\) It is true that it is extremely difficult to look at the world other than through anthropocentric lenses as this human viewpoint is the only one to which there is considerable access (what Fox terms the 'trivial' aspect of anthropocentrism).\(^{281}\) Eco- and bio-centrism involve looking at the world through different eyes, or more accurately, not through eyes at all – instead, through identification with the natural world.

Admittedly, it is extremely hard for philosophers to agree on what form an environmental ethic should take when there is little consensus on what constitutes an ethic that is binding on humans in their treatment of other humans. Derek Browne sums up history's quest for providing a rational justification of morality with the words: "No attempt has so far succeeded."\(^{282}\) In the secular world, most ethical systems arguably reduce to subjective grounds and are therefore proscribed by the hegemonic scientific world. Many attempts to fashion an ethic for human interaction with the environment


\(^{281}\) Fox, 1994, op. cit.: 9-15.

\(^{282}\) Browne, D.: 1990, "Ethics without Morality" Australian Journal of Philosophy 68, 4: 397. Johnson agrees, stating that, "no one else has ever been able to offer a satisfactory formula, either, for determining the nature and scope of our moral obligations, not even in the similar case of humans only – whether or not this is admitted in all quarters." Johnson, 1991, op. cit.: 185.
offer the possibility that such an ethic may then supply a general ethic for all human concerns. However, much of the endeavour of environmental ethicists has been in trying to show that animals/plants/biosystems/land have rights, without questioning the basic assumption that humans have rights.283 The assumption that humans do have rights is heavily ingrained in Western culture, and has been extended from those of life and liberty to more questionable areas such as property. It has been further extended to the point that many people assume humans have a 'right' to domination of the natural world. The earth is seen as 'property' of humanity. As I have noted, these assumptions often enter language in the form of presuppositions or metaphors.

J. Baird Callicott suggests that the need for an environmental ethic "was in fact the burden of the 1970s generation of philosophical environmental literature."284 Philosophers in the 1980s, spurred on by discussion in Eugene C. Hargrove's journal Environmental Ethics, developed a number of diverse theories, which by the 1990s were competing with each other for authority. Callicott divides environmental ethics into three main groups. He notes that a "neo-Kantian family of environmental ethics (united by conation as a criterion for moral consideration) seems to be attracting more converts as time goes on."285 He also comments that a second family of environmental ethics (of altruism with roots in Hume) has sprung from the Leopold land-ethic (in this division he includes himself, Edward O. Wilson, William Godfrey-Smith and Richard and Val Routley), and a third family, centred on 'Self-realization' and based on "the unity

283 In my opinion, Salt said it well, when he declared: "Have the lower animals 'rights?' Undoubtedly – if men have." Salt, 1980, op. cit.: xvii.
285 Callicott lists Paul Taylor's biocentrism as the classic example, and notes Robin Attfield and Rolston's contribution. ibid.
between self and world suggested by ecology," is also advocated by some.286 This is one of many such typologies.

Callicott is inadvertently describing the progression of ethics from older moralities towards the more radical propositions of today. Often older ideas have been adapted and extended to include aspects of the natural world. For example, Aristotle's idea of 'virtues' (continued by Alasdair MacIntyre) is proposed as including the moral consideration of animals.287 Callicott's revives deontology to argue that there are duties and obligations to people and animals also. The older idea of Christian 'stewardship' is certainly a large part of modern deontological arguments, and is one of the arguments most often proposed for conservation. Alternatively, Hans Jonas proposes that a modified form of the Kantian imperative might offer the solution.288 Utilitarianism offers a moral framework for resource conservation, with Singer extending the scope of this particular moral code to include sentient animals. The sphere of moral consideration has been extended still further to include humans, animals, plants, life (Naess 1979, Attfield 1983, Goodpaster 1978 and Taylor 1986), species, ecosystems, and 'land' (Leopold).289 Associated with these divisions, are various reasons that have been proposed for moral extension. These include traditional concepts of rationality and morality, modern arguments for considerability based on sentience, 'interests' (Johnson), telos (for example, Taylor) or conatus (via Spinoza).290 Holmes Rolston III has argued

286 ibid: 530. Richard and Val Routley now go by the name of Richard Sylvan and Val Plumwood, and William Godfrey-Smith uses the name William Grey.
290 See also O'Neill, J.: "The Varieties of Intrinsic Value," from Brennan, 1995, op. cit.: 55
that the fact that animals and plants possess a minimally conative life or tendencies and
directions in growth gives them their own 'good'. Lawrence E. Johnson proposes a
similar ethic in which everything that has 'well-being interests' counts morally.

Andrew Brennan's assessment of environmental ethics divides the field into two
general categories: 'assimilation' or 'challenge'. The first contains those philosophers
who have attempted to show that existing moral categories are applicable to
environmental situations. He notes that more radical versions of this idea try to extend
concepts of 'goods', 'rights', 'care', 'duty' and 'value' to non-humans. The second category,
that of 'challenge', includes the thought of those philosophers who, perhaps prompted by
the failures of assimilationists to extend clearly and convincingly such concepts as those
listed, argue that the moral categories are flawed to start with and instead try "to find
ways of revising the categories themselves so as to provide a richer account of our moral
situation." Using John Rodman's work, Brennan develops a typology that further
adumbrates four increasingly radical forms by which the field of moral concern may be
extended. These are: conservation (wise resource use); preservation; the granting of
intrinsic value to creatures other than humans (moral extensionism); and lastly, "a new
ecological sensibility." He further splits moral extensionism into four levels, 'higher'
animals, 'lower' animals and plants, whole species, and ecosystems themselves.

Arguably, the most accepted of the moral extension arguments, possibly because
it requires the least concessions, has been that of Singer and other animal rights

though Rolston frequently cites Leopold, his immediate intellectual ancestor is Albert Schweitzer's
294 ibid: xx-xxii.
advocates. Within the traditional assumptions of consequentialist utilitarianism, Singer uses a principle of "equal consideration of interests" to induct animals into the supposed existing moral framework. Rodman claims, "Singer's Animal Liberation is the most comprehensive work yet to emerge from the contemporary renascence and radicalization of the humane movement." Christopher Stone also used argument by analogy in his 1974 essay "Should Trees Have Standing," in which he attempted to argue legally for the 'rights' of a Sierra valley named Mineral King against development by Walt Disney. This landmark essay uses the familiar legal notion of guardianship to argue that humans are responsible for the protection of such areas. Philosophers such as Brennan are not convinced by the 'argument of human analogy' by which such concepts are extended. Passmore claims "animals cannot have rights since (citing D.G. Ritchie) they 'are not members of human society'." However, Stone's bold attempt to define such recondite rights legally shows one way in which the issue of environmental rights can be settled because it is possible to argue that even human rights only exist legally, not naturally. Stone notes that ships have "long had an independent jural life, often with striking consequences." He rightly points out that throughout legal history, "each successive extension of rights to some new entity has been, theretofore, a bit unthinkable." There is a long history of legislation to protect the environment. Stone was well aware of the way in which language covertly establishes the idea of property in people's minds,

295 Rodman, 1977, op. cit.: 85. However, he suggests the idea that "we can liberate" animals is "patronizing and perverse."
299 ibid: 6.
noting that the "vocabulary and expressions that are available to us influence and even steer our thought."300 "Operationally," he writes, "the word 'property' symbolizes a threat of action; it is a verb like entity, but (being a noun) the word biases our thoughts towards the substantives we call things." He suggests that even after "we become aware of the misdirection of attention enforced by the noun 'property' we may still passively acquiesce to the inaccuracy of its continued use because a degree of social stability is needed."301

Many environmental ethical arguments depend on the concept of 'intrinsic' versus 'instrumental' value, which is value that things have in themselves as opposed to value that others (humans) give them. The latter is implicit in arguments of divine mandate and the metaphors of 'resources'. It is this division that Fox proposes is the distinction between anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric philosophies, and between 'Shallow' and 'Deep' ecology.302 Fox extends William Grey's suggested four grounds that people employ to argue for the defence of wilderness (shown in italics) to give nine arguments for resource preservation: the life support system argument, the early warning system argument, the laboratory argument, the silo argument, the gymnasium argument, the art gallery argument the cathedral argument, the monument argument and the psychogenetic argument.

300 Stone, 1974, op. cit.: 40.
301 ibid: xii.
302 Fox's work is an excellent appraisal of the different divisions in environmental ethical theory. After discussing the many typologies writers have used to differentiate between anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric ethics, he notes the shortcomings of the term 'shallow' and the reasons why the shallow/deep dichotomy became more accepted than others. He concludes that his preferred term is ecocentric ecology. Fox, 1995, op. cit. He notes that: "while the term deep ecology can and does refer to a nonanthropocentric approach to environmentalism, it also stands for a particular kind (or, perhaps, particular kinds) of nonanthropocentric approach" (75). Sylvan, not liking the metaphorical connections between ideas of shallow and deep, proposes the terminology of deep-green theory versus pale-green theory. Sylvan, 1985, op. cit.: 45.
Fox's systematic adumbration of the arguments for 'resource preservation' (on the basis of instrumental value) is important because it is these arguments that are evident in various discourses. He then divides 'intrinsic' value theories into ethical sentientism, biological, autopoietic (or life-based) ethics, ecosystem ethics and cosmic purpose ethics.\footnote{Fox, 1995, op. cit.: 162.}

Philosopher Arne Naess argues for a 'deep ecology', a belief that strives to reject "the man-in-environment image in favour of the relational, total field image."\footnote{Naess, A.: 1973, "The Shallow and Deep Long-Range Ecology Movement. A Summary," \textit{Inquiry} 16: 95. Brennan is critical of Naess, noting that while he argues for new moral paths he still uses concepts and ideas (such as the ecological conception of self) from older moralities, and uses 'traditional philosophical equipment'. Brennan, 1995, op. cit.: xix. See also the "Eight Basic Principles of deep ecology" listed by Sessions and Devall, 1985, op. cit.: 70, or as outlined by Fox, 1995, op. cit.: 114-15.} For him, the term 'deep' derives from the profound questioning he suggests is necessary. There are many variations on such bio-centric views and, while they are the hardest to defend (forced as one is to deal with traditional philosophical methods), they may offer the best answer to what is an increasingly pressing environmental question. Oelschlaeger observes that deep ecology has been criticised for a number of perceived failings: for being more a secular religion than a legitimate philosophy; more a mystical than a scientific discipline; that Deep ecologists are green bigots who ignore the legitimate needs of underprivileged human beings; and that their program for social reform borders on hopeless utopianism.\footnote{Oelschlaeger, 1991, op. cit.: 304.} Naess' philosophy derives partly from the beliefs of Gandhi and partly from Spinoza's pantheism.\footnote{Fox claims Naess derives his concept of self-realization from Gandhi, as Naess himself confesses, whereas Becker claims that it comes from Hegel. Fox, 1995, op. cit. and Becker, 1992, op. cit.: 109. See Naess, A.: 1980, "Environmental Ethics and Spinoza's Ethics. Comments on Genevieve Lloyd's article" \textit{Inquiry} 23: 313 -25.} The latter postulated an idea of self-realisation whereby every organism had a \textit{conatus}, an impulse for self-preservation, the "effort by
which each thing endeavours to persist in its own being." While Fox concludes that Naess' formal sense of deep ecology is untenable, he finds that its philosophical sense is not only tenable and distinctive, but offers the way forward, through what he terms a "transpersonal ecology." He cites several influential environmental thinkers to support his position that what is needed is an ecological consciousness that can only come from a transpersonal philosophy, as per Naess' conception of 'Self-realization'.

In a radical change of direction from the mainstream of environmental ethical thought, which has largely attempted to show the similarities between the natural world and humans in attempts to force axiological extension, Peter Reed (inspired by Martin Buber, Rudolf Otto, and Peter Wessel Zapffe) tries to ground an environmental ethic in the idea of nature as wholly other than humanity. Reed suggests an "ethic of humility and respect for non-human nature" based on awe for the intrinsic value in nature. His idea assimilates older ideas of the Holy, sacred and sublime. Another extremely important group of environmental philosophers are those considered to be ecofeminists. Writers such as Carolyn Merchant, Ynestra King, Rosemary Ruether, Carrol Gilligan, Ariel Kay Salleh and Elizabeth Dodson Grey see a parallel between exploited women and exploited nature, and they claim that it is patriarchal and androcentric attitudes to women/the natural world that are responsible for environmental problems.

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307 Mathews, 1988, op. cit.: 351.
308 Fox, 1995, op. cit.: 118ff.
309 "Self-realization refers to the realization of as expansive a sense of self as possible." ibid: 106.
This is only a brief summary of many competing or complementary versions of environmental thought that exist today. There is a growing canon of 'nature' writers, particularly in the United States, whose work does indeed discuss such concerns. At a linguistic level, in many texts it is possible to find presuppositions of instrumental and intrinsic value, and in some cases there are evident Deep ecological ideas that are more biocentric and holistic. However, the discourse of many literary texts, and numerous non-literary texts and work in other mediums (such as film and particularly television), still involves older ideas about nature, including the basic dichotomy of nature as opposed to humanity and culture. In my opinion, deep ecology, though it may be the most difficult of the theories to conceptualise, does show a way that humanity can co-exist with all other planetary species. I will argue that Melville, in *Moby-Dick*, describes a similar conception of reality.
Chapter 4: Moby-Dick and other nineteenth century texts on whaling

i. Introduction: an ecocritical reading of *Moby-Dick*

Dreamt of
Moby Dick the Great White Whale
cruising about
with a flag flying
with an inscription on it
'I Am what is left of Wild Nature'
And Ahab pursuing in a jet boat with a ray
gun and jet harpoons …

Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *The Dream Book*¹

A hunt. The last great hunt.
For what?
For Moby Dick, the huge sperm whale: who is old, hoary, monstrous, and swims alone; who is unspeakably terrible in his wrath, having been so often attacked; and snow white.
Of course he is a symbol.
Of what?
I doubt even Melville knew exactly. That's the best of it.

D. H. Lawrence, *Selected Literary Criticism*²

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Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* is one of Western culture's pre-eminent texts and refers directly to the natural world. I have argued that the English language can reflect its speakers' behaviour towards the environment and that the texts of Western culture show evidence of this fact. As expected, *Moby-Dick* reveals some of the environmental attitudes of Western society at the time of its production. That Herman Melville was able to write a narrative about the antebellum American whale fishery, which would become a classic of American literature, remains a remarkable achievement, and a tribute to his genius. To that time, most books on whaling and whales were non-fictional, and no fictional narrative on whaling since has threatened *Moby-Dick*'s status as the supreme whaling tale. Melville was able to create a powerful and lasting novel by the skilled use of a combination of ancient and contemporary mythologies, a Shakespearean understanding of the human condition, and by weaving his narrative into the historical, religious and social matrix of a particularly important period in the larger narrative of America. Notwithstanding the best efforts of some notable thinkers, Western culture in the early to mid-1800s, especially in America, was one in which the industrialisation of the cities and cultivation and exploitation of the country were wholeheartedly embraced by most of the population and the government. This capitalist culture of expansion and exploitation was based on a particular intellectual history and was manifest in the dominant culture.

Melville was not immune to the influence of contemporary ideas; however, a large part of his work's modern appreciation is a result of the way in which his writing questioned the dominant ideologies of the time. Michael Paul Rogin argues that antebellum romance, in which he includes Melville's writing, "was not so much a flight
from historical reality, as a rendering of the distinctive American social facts of
mobility, continental expansion, and racial conflict."³ Melville takes a flensing knife to
his America, and lays it open for the reader to examine. Democracy, the frontier, and the
racism inherent in the establishment of the larger American state, are all portrayed
symbolically in *Moby-Dick*. Substantial studies have examined many aspects of *Moby-
Dick* and it is the purpose of this thesis to focus solely on the aspects of Melville's novel
that pertain to the environment and environmental attitudes. However, attitudes to the
environment are often linked inextricably to other aspects of Melville's writing. His
creative method, the layering of paradox and ambiguity, makes the search for definitive
meanings difficult, if not impossible.⁴ For example, in an apparent contradiction,
Captain Peleg refers to Ahab as "a grand, ungodly, god-like man" (MD83). The plurality
of voices and Melville's use of symbolic themes quickly subverts any single message. It
is this aspect of the novel that has led to such a rich and diverse body of critical
literature.

There are various ways in which *Moby-Dick* approaches the natural world,
historically, politically, through religion and epistemologically. In *Moby-Dick*, Melville
explores the American nationalistic project (which is linked to American capitalism),
though the characters in general profess a utilitarian acceptance that whales have to be
killed to provide oil for American industry. He frames his ocean as frontier, to critique
the unrestrained expansion of America at the time. Equally symbolically, his
"Anacharsis Clootz deputation from all the isles of the sea, and all the ends of the earth"

³ Rogin, 1983, op. cit.: 16.
⁴ Thompson, whose work *Melville's Quarrel with God* is an ironic reading of Melville's oeuvre, writes: "I
had only finished a few pages of the first chapter [of *Moby-Dick*] when I thought I noticed that Ishmael
was particularly fond of sarcastically saying two things at once: of insinuating a meaning which was quite
contrary to the superficial sense of the overt statement." Thompson, 1952, op. cit.: 7.
represents an idealised American democracy, a group of Isolatoes, "federated on one keel" (MD122). *Moby-Dick* maintains a non-racist stance. Ishmael proclaims early in the novel: "It's only his outside; a man can be honest in any sort of skin" (MD22). Most things in *Moby-Dick* have their inverse, and the opposite of his democratised ship is the totalitarian spirit of Ahab. As Starbuck notes: "Horrible old man! Who's over him, he cries; – aye, he would be a democrat to all above; look, how he lords it over all below!" (MD172). As if to stress the importance of his "federated" crew, and to highlight the epic nature of his narrative, there are two adjacent chapters in the novel entitled "Knights and Squires," the first dedicated to Starbuck and concluding with a remarkable plea for the common 'man' and democracy, and the second to Stubb, Flask, the harpooners and Pip. As Rogin suggests, there was a crisis of bourgeois society on both continents during the nineteenth century and this crisis entered American politics through questions of race and slavery rather than class. In Rogin's opinion, Melville was particularly sensitive to this crisis, as no doubt he was to many aspects of contemporary society.\(^5\)

There is, in Ishmael's narration, an understanding that the act of killing the whale can be cruel and degrade humans. Ishmael situates humanity as part of the natural cruelty that the world appears to exhibit. The narrative oscillates between the killing of whales, their objectification, and sympathy for them. There is also, in Ishmael, the realisation that nature can be sublime, and perceived to be indifferent to humanity. In this, he echoes Thoreau's epiphany on Mt Katahdin. The idea of an indifferent nature is linked to the idea of an indifferent god, and in *Moby-Dick* there is discussion of whether or not there is a god and what the natural world's relationship to this god can be. This

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questioning is framed in the novel's Calvinist mode. The relationship between the visible manifestations of gods and the nature of reality is the important epistemological question of the novel, captured succinctly in Ahab's "pasteboard mask" speech (MD167). Robert Zoellner suggests *Moby-Dick* reduces to two questions: "Is Ahab's version of the cosmos correct?" and "If Ahab is wrong concerning the meaning of the cosmos, does the novel offer an alternative version?"6 Despite Ishmael's scorn for philosophers (best evidenced in the chapter entitled "Stubb and Flask Kill a Right Whale; And Then Have a Talk Over Him" – M336), the novel is a philosophical investigation of reality.7 *Moby-Dick* investigates a Kantian concept of the noumenal world as distinct from the phenomenal world of surfaces.

Melville delivers, in his various characters, divergent ways to approach the problematic world. There is an understanding that the comic mode offers a subversive alternative to the dominant tragic Western tradition. There is also, in much of Ishmael's narration, the intuition that the real world is inadequately described by linear, anthropocentric and atomistic metaphors, and a conception of self, in the deep ecology sense of an expansive a sense of self.8 Melville uses several key symbols that licence an ecocritical reading of his work. For example, Ishmael frequently reiterates a Platonian epistemology by foregrounding actual and metaphorical surfaces, and yet, in contrast to this conception of reality, Melville infuses the novel with tropes representing the intertwined and interconnected ecological quality of the world – the various images of

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7 "So, when on one side you hoist in Locke's head, you go over that way; but now, on the other side, hoist in Kant's and you come back again; but in very poor plight. Thus, some minds for ever keep trimming boat. Oh, ye foolish! throw all these thunder-heads overboard, and then you will float light and right" (MD336).
8 Fox writes that deep ecology calls for "as expansive a sense of self as possible in a world in which selves and things-in-the-world are conceived as processes." Fox, 1995, op. cit.: 197.
weavings and circles. He employs light/dark imagery, again reflecting a Platonian epistemology, but perhaps also reacting to the evolutionary archetypal oppositions discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. Another crucial symbol is that of fire, which becomes a metaphor for Ahab's madness, the tragedy of the Pequod, and the possibility of apocalypse. It is probable (as Mani, H. B. Kulkarni and Bruce Franklin have argued) that such imagery is partly derived from Melville's readings in Eastern mythology. The use of Eastern mythology relates to his discussion of forms of consciousness that break free of the traditional Western linear viewpoints. His own Calvinist heritage is severely questioned, if not abrogated, throughout the novel. The antagonistic attitude to the environment associated with the Western (and Biblical) tradition of mythology is emphasised by the focus on an apparently malevolent whale capable of retaliation and sinking a ship. This is subverted, however, by aspects of the novel that strip away any hint of wilful malignity on Moby Dick's part. Melville's work also countermines dominant ideologies of that period in its use of comedy and in the humanisation of the whales.

The task of interpreting Melville's language is difficult, not least because of the instilled multiplicities in most parts of Moby-Dick. There is a vast potentiality in meaning, and a study of any character quickly affirms this. Robert Levine, for example, claims Melville has anticipated twentieth-century interrogations of gender, sexuality, race and nation, "Thomas Kuhnian and Foucauldian ways to the relation of interpretative paradigms to cultural meanings," body criticism, the politics of reading and response criticism, Derridean deconstruction, neopragmatism, cybercriticism, and debates on
nationality and transnationalism. He also claims that the chapter titled "Does the Whale's Magnitude Diminish? – Will He Perish?" anticipates ecocriticism.

John Bryant suggests it is possible to "trick out certain political readings" and gives the example of a reading in which "Ahab as hunter is the capitalist whose rapacity commodifies nature and destroys the communal values." As Bryant explains, these modern political extractions were largely unrecognizable to Melville's contemporaries. The fact that it is possible to recognize Ahab as the rapacious capitalist is because there is now the language to describe, to conceptualize, and to label such a personality in those terms. It is unfair, however, to label him a capitalist, as his concern is not with the revenue-raising of the ship's owners Peleg and Bildad, but with the White Whale. While the fire of Ahab may resemble that of capitalism, he is representative of the spirit of scientific enquiry and individualism that gave rise to capitalism.

Bryant's premise is that a novel is revolutionary "when it places the reader in the condition of one caught between deeply felt but conflicting ideologies." He suggests that Moby-Dick continually puts the reader in this "revolutionary condition of doubt" by its pervasive bifurcated nature. This tension between such bifurcations of possibility occurs not just at the level of ideology, but is evident in lexical pairings, ambiguous metaphors, continual prediction and repetition within the text, repressed sexuality and

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11 Bryant describes him in these terms: "Ahab's callous commodification of whales and crew bespeaks his role as unregenerate demagogue, capitalist, and imperialist." ibid: 79.
13 Bryant, from Levine, 1998, op. cit.: 71.
other psychic states, and the struggle for narrative voice between Ishmael, Ahab and Melville. Like all polarities, Melville's meaning turns out to be the multiple shades of grey that the interrogation and deconstruction of opposition discloses. Melville's polyphony of voices and multiplicity of tropes create tensions in the novel. His whale ship is an excellent metaphor for Bakhtin's dialogism, where the crew of characters are the "thousands of living dialogic threads" that are interwoven to supply meaning. It is into the warp and woof of these threads that the reader must venture to understand *Moby-Dick*.

ii. Symbols and surfaces, warp and woof

> It is no peice [sic] of fine feminine Spitalfields silk – but it is of the horrible texture of fabric that should be woven of ships' cables and hausers.

Herman Melville, in a letter to Sarah Huyler Morewood, 12.9.1851.

The *Pequod* is a ship upon the ocean, a mere speck in infinity, and the ocean is a plane beneath which sailors and observers dive at their peril. Melville's preoccupation with surfaces anticipates the postmodern, and the metaphors he uses are crucial because they interrogate an epistemology and metaphysics that have been dominant in Western society since classical times. The representation of duality inherent in these images of surfaces in turn evokes questions about the self. From the very outset of the narrative

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14 Foley draws attention to Melville's habit, inspired by Browne, of using couplets of words to draw attention to the limits of language: "far from being pretentious verbosity, this habit of 'doubleting' reflects a struggle to 'say in words what cannot be said in words'." Foley, B.: "Herman Melville and the Example of Sir Thomas Browne," from Hayes, 1994, op. cit.: 206.

15 Bakhtin, from Morris, P.: 1994, op. cit.: 76.

(the naming of Ishmael), it is obvious that Melville is preoccupied with the idea of 'self' and how this can be defined and reflected by nature. Melville intimates that there may be a way to overcome our apparent entrapment in the world of surface phenomena, and it is these traces of a different understanding that separate *Moby-Dick* from all other whaling books of the nineteenth century and allow an ecological perspective to be brought to the text.

Surfaces play an important part in Melville's symbolic arsenal. Whatever else *Moby-Dick* is, it is a look at the way in which humans search for meaning, and the difficulty of distinguishing deeper meanings in a world of surfaces – the epistemological problem of how to know the noumenal behind the phenomenal. However, as John Wenke notes, "Melville's pursuit of ultimate Truth presupposes its intrinsic futility." Ishmael alludes to this at the beginning of the novel:

Why is almost every robust healthy boy with a robust healthy soul in him, at some time or other crazy to go to sea? … And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all. (MD3)

In the story of Narcissus, Melville has the ideal representation of obsession with surface, the myth of a beautiful youth and his reflection. The mirror is the ultimate example and

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17 The biblical Ishmael was outcast and exiled to the wilderness. Wadlington interprets this opening as "[assigning] an identity that is less a statement of individuality than it is a relationship initiated between author and reader." Wadlington, W.: "Ishmael's Godly Gamesomeness: Selftaste and Rhetoric in *Moby-Dick*," from Hayes, 1994, op. cit.:141. Mani interprets the novel as a limning of the relationship between Me (the Self as Ego and the Self as Personality), and the Not-ME (God, Nature, Society). Mani, 1981, op. cit.: 211.

18 Wenke, 1995, op. cit.: 64.
symbol of a surface, the depth of which is only illusion. In *Moby-Dick*, the mirror of the sea is simultaneously a symbol for the ineffable in life and for the human self and mind. The reflective quality of the ocean is demonstrated when Ahab leans over the rail to find, in a play on the story of Narcissus, "two reflected, fixed eyes" staring back at him, those of Fedallah (MD551). In "The Fountain" chapter, Melville returns to the idea of an image in the fountain when he discusses the spout of the whale and the reflection of humanity in the whale, ending the chapter with a brief synopsis of the book, or at least of Ishmael's character: "Doubts of all things earthly, and intuitions of some things heavenly; this combination makes neither believer nor infidel, but makes a man who regards them both with equal eye" (MD384). Wenke's summation of the Narcissus myth is another synopsis of *Moby-Dick*: "By attempting to 'grasp' the mysterious other, he [Ahab] falls into the pool and drowns."19

The doubloon that Ahab nails to the mast offers another very symbolic surface. In the significant and ekphrastic chapter "The Doubloon," each character (with the exception of Ishmael and arguably Pip) offers their own interpretation of the coin.20 The concentration on the surface images of the doubloon gives way to a great depth of interpretation. Ahab is the first to contemplate its significance:

one morning, turning to pass the doubloon, he seemed to be newly attracted by the strange figures and inscriptions stamped on it, as though now for the first time beginning to interpret for himself in some monomaniac way whatever significance might lurk in them. And some certain significance lurks in all things, else all things are little worth, and the round world

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19 ibid: 121.
itself but an empty cipher, except to sell by the cartload, as they do hills about Boston, to fill up some morass in the Milky Way. (MD440 – emphasis added)

The significance that Ahab finds at first is narcissistic, "egotistical." He sees himself in the image's mountain-tops, towers, all other grand and lofty things, the three peaks, the firm tower, the volcano, and in "the courageous, the undaunted, and victorious fowl." Although he declares that "all are Ahab," he recognises that the "round gold 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" (MD441). Ahab realises the dangers of reading too much into the mirror's reflection. The second interpretation of the coin is by the devout Starbuck, who finds that although "the sun of Righteousness still shines a beacon and a hope" the lack of such guiding light at night is saddening. Stubb attempts to delve deeper than the surface, using his "Bowditch," his "almanak" to decipher the doubloon's astrological symbols, without success (MD442). He repudiates the idea that there is nothing outside the text: "Book! you lie there; the fact is, you books must know your places. You'll do to give us the bare words and facts, but we come in to supply the thoughts" (MD443). In typical Melvillian ambiguity, it is a repudiation itself quickly contradicted by Flask, who in a metafictional moment proclaims: "'There's another rendering now; but still one text. All sorts of men in one kind of world, you see" (MD444).

It is from Pip that the reader is given the final rendering of the doubloon:

'I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look.' …
'Here's the ship's navel, this doubloon here, and they are all on fire to unscrew it. But, unscrew your navel, and what's the consequence? Then again, if it stays here, that is ugly, too, for when aught's nailed to the mast it's a sign that things grow desperate. Ha, ha! old Ahab! the White Whale; he'll nail ye! This is a pine tree. My father, in old Tolland county, cut down a pine tree once, and found a silver ring grown over in it; some old darkey's wedding ring. How did it get there? And so they'll say in the resurrection, when they come to fish up this old mast, and find a doubloon lodged in it, with bedded oysters for the shaggy bark. Oh, the gold! the precious, precious gold! --the green miser 'll hoard ye soon! Hish! hish!' (MD445)

Pip, for all his madness, is one of Melville’s wiser speakers, reminiscent of Lear's fool, and in this scene, he predicts that the "green miser," the world of Nature, will claim the Pequod.21

The doubloon is not the only thing in Moby-Dick to undergo this plurality of interpretation. It is a plurality that reflects the ecological nature of language. In Bakhtinian terms, the reader is required to enter into a 'dialogue' with the narrative's various voices. The whale is offered as a meta-fictional guide to the novel's reading. The whale itself is read, and interpreted. This is alluded to in the footnote in the chapter titled "The Cassock," which notes the blubber sections are called "Bible leaves" (MD431). Nor are the possible exegeses of the whale's skin restricted. Ishmael's fascination with the cryptic markings, "mysterious cyphers," on the whale's skin is another example of his fascination with surfaces (MD315). He notes that these marks are not on the skin, the "isinglass," but seem "to be seen through it, as if they were engraved upon the body itself," and comments on the impossibility of reading these hieroglyphics:

21 This section also demonstrates Melville's comic sense, with Pip's joke about unscrewing one's navel.
there is no Champollion to decipher the Egypt of every man's and every being's face. Physiognomy, like every other human science, is but a passing fable. If then, Sir William Jones, who read in thirty languages, could not read the simplest peasant's face, in its profounder and more subtle meanings, how may unlettered Ishmael hope to read the awful Chaldee of the Sperm Whale's brow? I but put that brow before you. Read if it you can. (MD356)

Melville writes of Queequeg's tattooed skin, and Ishmael even jokes of tattooing a poem on his body, as well as a whale skeleton's dimensions (MD462). In an exposition of the way in which humans are confined to the phenomenal world of surfaces, Ishmael discusses Queequeg's tattoos:

And this tattooing, had been the work of a departed prophet and seer of his island, who, by those hieroglyphic marks, had written out on his body a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth; so that Queequeg in his own proper person was a riddle to unfold; a wondrous work in one volume; but whose mysteries not even himself could read, though his own live heart beat against them; and these mysteries were therefore destined in the end to moulder away with the living parchment whereon they were inscribed, and so be unsolved to the last. And this thought it must have been which suggested to Ahab that wild exclamation of his, when one morning turning away from surveying poor Queequeg – 'Oh, devilish tantalization of the gods!' (MD491/2).

Ahab alludes to the impossibility of deciphering the universe. Yet, this obsession with surfaces mirrors a similar obsession in Western science, manifest in the historical project to read the book of God, to explicate all aspects of nature. It is an obsession with
surfaces, in which learning is often not accompanied with understanding. It is an obsession that reflects the Cartesian duality entrenched in Western thinking.

Reiterating classic Calvinist doctrine, Starbuck claims, "vengeance on a dumb brute" is "blasphemous." This prompts Ahab to make his famous speech of defiance:

Hark ye yet again, – the little lower layer. All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event – in the living act, the undoubted deed – there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. (MD167)

Like Job, Ahab demands to see the thing that is tormenting him. He makes an epistemological distinction between the phenomenal world of perceived surfaces and the noumenal world that he asserts is there behind and beyond. For Ahab, the transcendent is symbolised by Moby Dick and is malign. The metaphors of this speech, of

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23 Nash Smith, notes that Melville is using 'agent' in an etymological sense which has been lost to twentieth-century usage, to mean the power in command, the executive (whereas now one customarily employs 'agent' as a synonym for Melville's 'instrument') Nash Smith, Hayes, 1994, op. cit.: 189.
penetration, striking and thrusting, suggest harpooning and lancing, but also Ahab's aggressiveness to that which plagues him. His obsession with the whale reinforces the duality, and eliminates the possibility of understanding.

This speech contains the second reference to a "lower layer." Earlier in the same conversation, Ahab had rebuked Starbuck for his capitalist obsession with the "Nantucket market": "But come closer, Starbuck; thou requirest a little lower layer" (MD166). Ahab is contemptuous of Starbuck's pragmatics, suggesting he think more deeply on the issue. In this metaphor, he also introduces the idea of a motivating force closer to the surface of reality. Ishmael later negates Ahab's conception of the 'wall'. His description of the whale's forehead, as "[u]nerringly impelling this dead, impregnable, uninjurable wall," is modified by the remark that the "most buoyant thing within; there swims behind it all a mass of tremendous life … and all obedient to one volition, as the smallest insect." This conception of all nature being alike owes a debt to Spinoza's concept of conatus, and the idea of "obedient to one volition" parallels Schopenhauer's concept of the 'Will'.

Though both Ahab and Ishmael maintain there is more to life than what is seen, the text stresses that if there is more to life than the surfaces inhabited, it is difficult for humans to reach any depth of understanding. Ahab's conception of reality is Platonian, and his 'pasteboard mask' alludes to the Platonic conception of reality, best illustrated by the "Simile of the Cave." As representative of scientific rationalism, Ahab reflects the Platonian idea that rational 'man' can know this extra-

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25 Plato: 1963, The Republic. Trans. H. D. P. Lee. Penguin Classics Penguin, Ringwood, Australia: 278. In the "Chapel" chapter, Ishmael echoes the Platonic philosophy of the world: "Methinks that what they call my shadow here on earth is my true substance. Methinks that in looking at things spiritual, we are too much like oysters observing the sun through the water, and thinking that thick water the thinnest of air. Methinks my body is but the lees of my better being" (MD38).
reality, whereas Ishmael subscribes to a more Kantian view, that the noumenal is unknowable.

Schopenhauer's major legacy to philosophy was his metaphysics of a world divided into 'Will' and 'Representation', as per Kant into noumenal and phenomenal realms – the division into what is and what is rationally knowable. However, unlike Kant who claimed the noumenal world was completely unknowable, Schopenhauer proposed that humans had a very limited access to knowledge of the 'Will' through their body, which was 'Will' objectified. He claimed that the world we inhabit is only subjective, as we perceive it, and thus is only 'representation' of the 'Will', the appearance of this one 'Will' to itself. The 'Will' is 'the thing-in-itself' – and has the form of a dynamic striving. In *The World as Will and Representation*, he describes it thus: "We have long since recognized this striving, that constitutes the kernel and in-itself of everything, as the same thing that in us, where it manifests itself most distinctly in the light of fullest consciousness, is called will." Brian Magee describes the 'Will' as "a universal, aimless, unindividualized, non-alive force." Much of the resistance to Schopenhauer, however, has been because of his choice of terminology, particularly the use of the word 'Will', which has engendered confusion with other more common senses of the word. For Schopenhauer, the 'Will', this "ceaseless striving," explains the base

26 Ishmael alludes to this felt embodiment in the "Nightgown" chapter, when he claims, "no man can ever feel his own identity aright except his eyes be closed; as if darkness were indeed the proper element of our essences, though light be more congenial to our clayey part" MD55. Peter Bellis notes that this "awareness of one's body as one's own is indeed a kind of perception distinct from all others – proprioception." Bellis, P. J.: 1990, *No Mysteries Out of Ourselves*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia: 5.
28 Schopenhauer, 1969, op. cit.: 309.
29 Magee, 1997, op. cit.: 144.
30 Magee writes: 'by a disastrous choice as regards the key term in his vocabulary he has ensured that all but the closest students of his work are bound to take him to be saying something else.' He suggests that 'energy' or 'force' would have been better terms. Magee relates how Schopenhauer complicates this fact
level of reality where the meaning behind the phenomena of perception resides. Melville intuitively posits a similar transcendental 'layer' and his metaphor for this is 'whiteness', most evident in (but not existent in) the white whale. The chapter "The Whiteness of the Whale," contains many statements that reflect Schopenhauer's belief in the noumenal underlying the phenomenal. For example, Ishmael contrasts the "phenomenon of whiteness" with "the prime agent," and notes, "though in many of its aspects this visible world seems formed in love, the invisible spheres were formed in fright" (MD199). That the spheres are not just "invisible" but formed in fear allies this claim further with Schopenhauerean thought.

While Ishmael is conscious of the difficulty in penetrating the surface of reality, several times he alludes to ways in which it is possible, suggesting that the way to overcome the epistemological conundrum caused by the intangibility of the noumenal is through some sort of holistic understanding, an 'oceanic' moment. Overcoming entrapment in a world of surfaces is thought by some to be possible through meditation, spirituality, mysticism and what are termed 'oceanic states' (all of which are concepts more prevalent in Eastern religions). These states have been described in the ancient Indian texts, the *Upanishads*.  

Alex Comfort claims that so impressive is the contrast between an oceanic perception, even if brief, and conventional linear perception, and so old is the record of such states in human history, that they are

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bound to have been formative of human ideas to an extent quite out of proportion to their frequency.32

He glosses the Sanskrit words *advaita* as "'not double' – the state of mind in which all, including the self, is perceived as one and without distinction" – and *samādhi* as: "'equalization' – the state of suppressed identity experience which is the universal object of yoga: state in which 'I' and 'That' are perceived as non-different: oceanic state."

Kulkarni proposes that the idea of *advaita* or 'god-realization', in which "the dichotomy between the individual and the universal soul is lost in cosmic harmony, where the appearance of opposites is fused into the oneness of reality … is the ultimate vision of *Moby-Dick*."33 Ishmael experiences these states in several crucial chapters, "The Mast-Head," "A Squeeze of the Hand" and "The Try-Works." His conclusion is, that despite there being a possible way through the surface, or at least a fleeting perception of what is behind the surface, there is still no authority or definitive meaning there. This implies that meaning is only ever possible through context, which is, as he realises, a mass of interconnected strands. This ecological awareness, of the constant association of one idea with another, of the interdependency of things, is an important conclusion, and one that is fundamental to deep ecology and poststructuralist theories.

In a letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne (June 1\(^{st}\) 1851), Melville mentions discovering Goethe's statement that one must "*Live in the All,*" which he interprets to mean that one's "separate identity is but a wretched one – good; but get out of yourself, spread and

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expand yourself and bring to yourself the tinglings of life" (MD600). Goethe (1749-1832) was influenced by Plato and Spinoza, and derived an exuberant pantheism from their ideas. Demonstrating an ambiguity similar to that of his characters, Melville at first proclaims "What nonsense!" However, in a postscript, he concedes, "this 'all' feeling, though, there is some truth in it. You must have often have felt it." He concludes, "what plays mischief with the truth is that men will insist upon the universal application of a temporary feeling or opinion." In "A Squeeze of the Hand," Ishmael surrenders to the moment and, in one of the most sensual scenes in the novel, describes the feeling of continually squeezing the spermaceti, which they had removed from the sperm whale's head:

I squeezed that sperm till I myself almost melted into it; I squeezed that sperm till a strange sort of insanity came over me; and I found myself unwittingly squeezing my co-laborers' hands in it, mistaking their hands for the gentle globules. Such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling did this avocation beget; that at last I was continually squeezing their hands, and looking up into their eyes sentimentally; as much as to say, – Oh! my dear fellow beings, why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill-humor or envy! Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness.

(MD427)

34 Letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, June 1st, 1851, from Leyda, 1952, op. cit.: 433. He humbly adds that he also has, in proportion to his contact with Goethe, "a monstrous deal" of flummery" in him. Strangely, Barbara Glenn writes that Melville "almost certainly found [the 'live in the all' quote] in Carlyle." Glenn, B.: 1976, "Melville and the Sublime in Moby-Dick" American Literature 48, May: 181.


36 Leo Marx interprets this letter as a bold, subversive, witty attack on Augustan pastoralism and the romantic avant-garde. Marx, 1964, op. cit.: 280-1.

37 This excerpt also illustrates Melvilean beliefs in democracy and brotherhood.
While in this state, Ishmael sees for the first time "long rows of angels in paradise" and reneges on his promise to follow Ahab in pursuit of Moby Dick: "I forgot all about our horrible oath; in that inexpressible sperm, I washed my hands and my heart of it" (MD427). Ishmael reaches the necessary state of ontological and cosmological identification necessary to realise the futility of Ahab's quest.

Thompson suggests Melville took "wicked pleasure in sneering at the Carlyle-Goethe notion (essentially Calvinistic) that all created things were emblems of God's power." He claims that Melville "asserted his inverted transcendentalism by suggesting, cynically, that his worthy opponents might do well to fix their gaze on that aspect of Nature represented by the ruthless jungle-law of the sea." Thompson suggests this "aspect of Nature would seem to suggest the infinitely ruthless malice of God." I prefer the interpretation that Melville accepted Goethe's pantheism was linked to the 'jungle-law', but that it was not representative of the malice of a god, but evidence of God's absence or indifference.

Writers such as Mani and Kulkarni have investigated Melville's familiarity with similar Hindu thought in which such 'oceanic' states are commonplace. Ishmael's mention of Spinoza demonstrates knowledge of the work of this Dutch Jewish philosopher (MD344-5), whose identification of God with nature perhaps profoundly influenced Melville's similar association, although this concatenation is also related to the transcendentalist beliefs from which Melville was keen to distance himself. While greatly influenced by the New England transcendentalists, Melville claimed he did not

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38 Thompson, 1952, op. cit.: 133.
39 ibid.
"oscillate in [their] rainbow." As noted previously (page 148), some argue that Spinoza's pantheism provides a metaphysical foundation for modern environmental deep ecology. In "The Lee Shore," a speech ostensibly designed to convince Bulkington that his uneasiness on land is understandable; Ishmael again praises the oceanic and mysterious over the landed, rational and known. The narrative also justifies Ishmael's decision to go to sea: "almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me" (MD1). Ishmael says:

But as in landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God – so, better is it to perish in that howling infinite, than be ingloriously dashed upon the lee, even if that were safety! For worm-like, then, oh! who would craven crawl to land! Terrors of the terrible! is all this agony so vain? Take heart, take heart, O Bulkington! Bear thee grimly, demigod! Up from the spray of thy ocean-perishing – straight up, leaps thy apotheosis! (MD109)

Ishmael's depiction of God as indefinite and shoreless corresponds more to Spinoza's pantheistic beliefs than it does to the fixed deity of Calvinism.

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41 Melville, Correspondence 121, quoted by Wenke, 1995, op. cit.: 72, and also by Bryant, from Levine, 1998, op. cit.: 69.
42 ibid: 845-6. Arne Naess, who is credited as the first to coin the term deep ecology, writes that the "sheer complexity of Spinoza's thinking makes it impossible for any movement to use him as a patron. But philosophically engaged ecologists and environmentalists may find in his system an inexhaustible source of inspiration." Naess, 1980, op. cit.: 313. Also Naess, 1973, op. cit.: 95.
44 Nash Smith says that this "six inch chapter" has been recognised by Brodkorb as a capsule statement of the theme of the novel. Nash Smith, Hayes, 1994, op. cit.: 199.
There are, however, several sections within *Moby-Dick* where Ishmael discusses such meditative states with a note of caution. Clearly aware of the number of deaths caused by "falls from aloft" (and Melville's own hypsophobia – the fear of falling from a high place), in "The Mast-Head" he warns that such reveries can be fatal. Falling from aloft was one of the more common ways to die on a whaling ship. In what is clearly both a satire of Romanticism and ironic self-deprecation, Ishmael warns the "ship owners of Nantucket" to beware of enlisting "any lad with lean brow and hollow eye; given to unseasonable meditativeness; and who offers to ship with the phaedon instead of Bowditch in his head" (MD161). In a paragraph that echoes the description of himself in the opening chapter "Loomings," he notes that, "the whale-fishery furnishes an asylum for many romantic, melancholy, and absent-minded young men, disgusted with the carking cares of earth, and seeking sentiment in tar and blubber" (MD166). Alluding to Byron, he notes that "Childe Harold not unfrequently perches himself upon the mast-head of some luckless disappointed whale-ship" (MD166). Ishmael relates how one can enter "an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie" where "the blending cadence of waves with thoughts" causes one to lose:

identity; takes the mystic ocean … for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every strange, half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing [seems] … the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it. In this enchanted mood, thy spirit ebbs away to whence it came; becomes

45 Kulkarni points out that Melville repeatedly uses the idea of a plunge into the unknown, in which the "metaphysical significance is emphasized as a necessary counterpart of its physical catastrophe." Kulkarni, 1970, op. cit.: 52. Pip's plunge in the sea, the mast-head warning, Jonah's expulsion from the ship, Narcissus's sacrifice, Cato's self-immolation and the *Pequod*'s final moments are all examples of such situations which Melville milks for metaphysical significance.

diffused through time and space; like Cranmer's sprinkled Pantheistic ashes, forming at last a part of every shore the round globe over. There is no life in thee, now, except that rocking life imparted by a gently rolling ship; by her, borrowed from the sea; by the sea, from the inscrutable tides of God. (MD162)

This exceptional description of the oceanic state comes with the admonition that:

while this sleep, this dream is on ye, move your foot or hand an inch; slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror. Over Descartian vortices you hover. And perhaps, at mid-day, in the fairest weather, with one half-throttled shriek you drop through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise for ever. Heed it well, ye Pantheists! (MD162)

Ishmael satirises pantheists such as Goethe and Spinoza, and at the same time declares that while there may indeed be a transcendent world, it is the 'rational' world of Descartes and Newton that awaits those who fall, as clear a refutation of solipsism as Dr Johnson's kicking of a rock. Ishmael thus infers that, though the 'oceanic' can be preferred to the 'rational', a person risks death, both psychological and physical, in its attainment.

The other route to such understanding is through insanity. Pip, the cabin boy, reaches such a Goethe-like pantheistic or 'oceanic' understanding when he is left behind in the ocean. When Pip is misplaced at sea, the narrator Ishmael says that:

The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul. Not drowned entirely, though. Rather carried down alive to wondrous depths, where strange shapes of the unwarped primal world glided to and fro before his passive eyes; and the
miser-merman, Wisdom, revealed his hoarded heaps; and among the joyous, heartless, ever-
juvenile eternities, Pip saw the multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the
firmament of waters heaved the colossal orbs. He saw God's foot upon the treadle of the
loom, and spoke it; and therefore his shipmates called him mad. So man's insanity is
heaven's sense; and wandering from all mortal reason, man comes at last to that celestial
thought, which, to reason, is absurd and frantic; and weal or woe, feels then uncompromised,
indifferent as his God. (MD426)

The god that Pip saw, and which the narrator does not ridicule (in fact from this point on
Pip is depicted as having certain insights) is Spinoza's god in nature. It is also an
indifferent God, as experienced by Thoreau on Mt Katahdin, and as articulated by
Starbuck.47

The metaphor Melville uses for the pantheistic world is the 'loom' (and its
product, woven material), however, it is only one of many metaphors of dialogic
relationships, of interconnectedness in Moby-Dick.48 Melville anticipates thinkers such
as Derrida and Bakhtin. His book is layered with intricate and intertwined meanings, and
accentuates and comments on the surfaces of mirrors, the ocean, and reality. Even with
the word 'loom' itself, there is ambiguity. It can mean a machine for weaving, to rear
over as a ship does to a person in the water, or in a metaphorical extension of the
physical meaning, it can mean a coming menace or presence. This meaning
complements the many omens and prolepses in the novel, and conforms to the older

47 Starbuck: "See! Moby Dick seeks thee not" (MD577).
48 Strangely, Arvin relegates both the sword-mat and monkey-rope to the level of incidental or secondary
symbols. Arvin, 1961, op. cit.: 154. Wenke shows several sources where Melville may have derived the
idea of a loom as metaphor, including Carlyle's Sartor Resartus and Plato's Myth of Er in the Republic. He
notes Carlyle's character Teufelsdrockh's use of the Loom of Time metaphor adapted from Goethe, and the
allusion to this in Pip's vision in "The Castaway" when he see "god's foot upon the treadle of the loom"
ideas of whales or monsters as portents. There are many such prophetic 'loomings', not
the least being "the portentous and mysterious monster" whale, "one grand hooded
phantom, like a snow hill in the air" (MD6).49

Despite these elaborate portents, it is the first sense of the word, that of a
machine for weaving, which is most important to the way this thesis understands Moby-
Dick. The loom is an integral part of Melville's metaphorical structure, suggesting
interconnectedness and interdependence. Equally significant and symbolic of this
conception of ecological structure are the metaphors of mats and weaving. For example,
Father Mapple's "two stranded lesson" from "Jonah" (MD42), and the Monkey-Rope
that binds Ishmael inextricably to Queequeg (MD327). The chapter entitled "The Mat-
Maker" is the most blatant and contrived, where Ishmael talks of "passing and repassing
the filling or woof of marline between the long yarns of the warp," and in doing so he
notes he "weave[s his] own destiny into these unalterable threads" (MD220). Ishmael's
metaphorical structure for reality, and human society, is a woven mat in which "there lay
the fixed threads of the warp subject to but one single, ever returning, unchanging
vibration, and that vibration merely enough to admit of the crosswise interblending of
other threads with its own." To Ishmael it "seemed as if this were the Loom of Time"
(MD219).

At the expense of simplifying ideas of ecology, there are parallels here to the
concepts of webs people use to describe the inter-dependent relationships of nature.

49 Other 'loomings' include the clearly titled initial chapter; major obvious divinations from prophets and
preachers (such as Father Mapple, Gabriel from the Jereboam, Elijah on the dock, and Fedallah's
numerous auguries); a host of minor prophecies from characters such as Bildad (MD81) and Ishmael
himself; the portentous symbolism such as the nine ships they meet, the painting in the Spouter Inn and
the inscriptions in the Chapel. Melville has Ahab debunk such omens, "'Omen? omen? – the dictionary! If
the gods think to speak outright to man, they will honorably speak outright; not shake their heads, and
give an old wives' darkling hint. –Begone!" (MD560)
Phillip Dana accuses ecocritics of misunderstanding modern ecological theory, claiming that analogies of webs and unity have been supplanted by ideas of "indeterminism, instability and constant change." Melville, again, has been there before ecologists – aware that ideas of balance and stability are not necessarily implied in a subscription to the interconnectedness of all aspects of reality. Melville evidently perceives that whether it is in nature, culture or literature, all meanings co-relate and intermingle. His conception of the world is holistic, fluid and interdependent.

Melville has many metaphors for this interdependence. Describing the whale line, Ishmael notes that it "folds the whole boat in its complicated coils, twisting and writhing around it in almost every direction" (MD289). In his description of the monkey-rope that attaches Ishmael to Queequeg during a delicate operation, Ishmael says he saw "that this situation … was the precise situation of every mortal that breathes; only, in most cases he, one way or other, has this Siamese connexion with a plurality of other mortals" (MD327-30). On examination of the nature of his connection to Queequeg, he notes, "I seemed distinctly to perceive that my own individuality was now merged in a joint stock company of two; that my free will had received a mortal wound; and that another's mistake or misfortune might plunge innocent me into unmerited disaster and death" (MD328). Melville presents the bonds that are needed in life as this rope, another instance of the ongoing marriage metaphor that he uses to describe Ishmael's relationship with Queequeg. Earlier, in the bedroom scene with Queequeg, Ishmael declared his need for human companionship with the statement, "Nothing exists

in itself" (MD55). Melville also uses the idea of yarn for the same effect, symbolic of intertwined lives and aspects of experience. It would have been an obvious metaphor to a sailor in Melville's day, who would have spent much time spinning small threads into yarns and ropes. The word brings with it the ambiguity of yarn's alternative meaning, that of a story that may not be necessarily true. The multiplicity of imagery and plurality of voices all add to Melville's manifold meanings, all of which interconnect in the same way as his metaphors structure the world. His use of language emphasises the systematic quality of language generally, and is, in itself, a good metaphor for reality. He is echoed by Derrida who writes: "The interweaving (Verwebung) of language, of what is purely linguistic in language with the other threads of experience, constitute one fabric…. the warp cannot be distinguished from the woof." Melville again alludes to the interconnectedness of nature in the typographically ambiguous chapter entitled "The Gilder." The narrator says, "the mingled, mingling threads of life are woven by warp and woof: calms crossed by storms, a storm for every calm" (MD500). In this pastoral chapter, the narrator describes the oceanic state of epistemological and ontological blending: "fact and fancy, half-way meeting, interpenetrate, and form one seamless whole" (MD500).

51 Some critics have taken this out of context as an exposition of the existence of nothing, placing the stress on 'exists', but when Ishmael expresses this sentiment the word 'in' has the meaning of 'by'. Nothing exists by itself. Everything has interconnections to everything else.

52 Mawer sees the second meaning of yarn as deriving from the first, yarn spinning being a routine task on a whaleship. "Yarn spinning became synonymous with story telling; the longer and more fanciful, the better to beguile the hour – not for nothing has 'a whale of a tale' acquired proverbial status." Mawer notes that such yarns were formulaic: "Whales were always villains, albeit sometimes admired." Mawer, 1999, op. cit.: 275.


54 See Wenke, 1995, op. cit.: 145, and Bryant, from Levine, 1998, op. cit.: 87-8, for a discussion on the implications of different punctuation (between English and American published versions) on this chapter.
The symbolic deployment of the loom is refigured in the chapter entitled "A Bower in the Arsacides." Ishmael, by way of explaining the sperm whale skeleton, describes how he entered a "grand temple of lordly palms" to find such a skeleton and found it like a giant green factory full of busy looms:

Oh, busy weaver! unseen weaver! – pause! – one word! – whither flows the fabric? what palace may it deck? wherefore all these ceaseless toilings? Speak, weaver! – stay thy hand! – but one single word with thee! Nay – the shuttle flies – the figures float from forth the loom; the freshet-rushing carpet for ever slides away. The weaver-god, he weaves; and by that weaving is he deafened, that he hears no mortal voice; and by that humming, we, too, who look on the loom are deafened; and only when we escape it shall we hear the thousand voices that speak through it. For even so it is in all material factories. (MD460)

Here Ishmael reflects again on the "weaver god" that controls the "great world's loom," and notes that, despite the desperate entreaties of believers, god is silent. There are two possible conclusions: either God chooses to remain quiet, or there is no God. Ishmael's questioning resembles that of Schopenhauer, who asks:

But must nature then, from sheer obduracy, for ever remain dumb to our questioning? Is nature not, as everything great is, open, communicative and even naïve? Can her failure to reply ever be for any other reason than that we have asked the wrong question, that our question has been based on false presuppositions, that it has even harboured a contradiction?

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55 Zoellner writes that Ishmael's statement ("I saw no living thing within; naught was there but bones" – MD461) was, in Melville's nineteenth century America, "as close as Ishmael dare come to an overt denial of the existence of an intelligent and personal God, and consequentially to a direct controversy of Captain Ahab's agentistic thesis." Zoellner, 1973, op. cit.: 210. Implicit in Ishmael's busy weavers, is a criticism of modern industrial technologies.
For can it be imagined that a connexion between causes and consequences could exist in nature which is essentially and for ever undiscoverable?\textsuperscript{56}

Schopenhauer comes to the same conclusion as Ishmael: "Nature is unfathomable because we seek after causes and consequences in a realm where this form is not to be found…. merely the form under which our intellect comprehends appearance, i.e. the surface of things."\textsuperscript{57} It is this realisation that differentiates Ahab from Ishmael. Ahab is representative of the rational 'man' who can understand nature by concerted effort, whereas Ishmael suspects that, as Schopenhauer claims, nature is unfathomable.

In keeping with the nineteenth-century fascination with phrenology, and entrenched beliefs that the mind is housed in the skull, Ishmael's exposition on the sperm whale's skull in several chapters is, as would be expected, full of symbolism and diverse possible interpretations. In the chapter titled "The Sphynx" Ahab addresses the whale's skull:

'Speak, thou vast and venerable head,' muttered Ahab, 'which, though ungarnished with a beard, yet here and there lookest hoary with mosses; speak, mighty head, and tell us the secret thing that is in thee. Of all divers, thou hast dived the deepest…. Thou saw'st the locked lovers when leaping from their flaming ship; heart to heart they sank beneath the exulting wave; true to each other, when heaven seemed false to them. Thou saw'st the murdered mate when tossed by pirates from the midnight deck; for hours he fell into the deeper midnight of the insatiate maw; and his murderers still sailed on unharmed – while swift lightnings shivered the neighboring ship that would have borne a righteous husband to outstretched, longing arms. (MD320)

\textsuperscript{56} Schopenhauer, 1970, op. cit.: 57.
\textsuperscript{57} ibid: 57.
Hawthorne said of Melville that he was a man who could neither accept God nor rest content in his disbelief.\textsuperscript{58} This speech is a remarkable questioning of fate and God, and the nature of evil, and it echoes Ishmael's speech in "A Bower in the Arsacides." The 'true' lovers are still punished and the murderers escape, and Ahab, like so many before him, commits the heresy of questioning how God can allow such things. It is an interrogation of standard Calvinist doctrine, which claims that nothing happens except by God's decree.\textsuperscript{59} Yet, Ahab's answer is that it does no good to ask questions of gods, for they never answer: "O head! thou hast seen enough to split the planets and make an infidel of Abraham, and not one syllable is thine!" (MD320). Ahab comes to the same conclusion as Ishmael and consigns the dead whale to the bulk of unfeeling, unknowing, unanswering nature. The conversation with the dead whale is just another example of the book's emphasis on the futility of questioning.

In correspondence with Nathaniel Hawthorne, Melville discussed the problem of questioning God, and of overly contemplating the ramifications of totality:

\begin{quote}

We incline to think that God cannot explain His own secrets, and that He would like a little information upon certain points Himself. We mortals astonish him as much as He us. 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 from your stool and hang from the beam.\textsuperscript{60}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{59} Herbert, from Brodhead, 1986, op. cit.: 110.
\textsuperscript{60} Melville, from correspondence to Nathaniel Hawthorne, April 16(?), 1851, Leyda, 1952, op. cit.: 428.
The ineffable is also evident in Melville's allusion to the "Sphynx," the mystical creature that is both the Egyptian statue and the riddling monster.61 Webster's dictionary has as its third definition of 'Sphinx': "person of mysterious or enigmatic character, an inscrutable person."62 Ahab's parting comment returns to the metaphors of interconnectedness: "O Nature, and O soul of man! how far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies! not the smallest atom stirs or lives on matter, but has its cunning duplicate in mind" (MD320). This comment inextricably connects the human to the natural, showing that any opposition is an unsustainable illusion.

The view of the world as comprising interconnected entities not only anticipates many contemporary theorists, and reveals Melville's reading in Eastern mythology, but it establishes the necessary mindset for such environmental ethics as deep ecology and, arguably, Aldo Leopold's 'land ethic'. It is in keeping with Barry Commoner's first 'law' of ecology: "Everything is connected to everything else."63 Fox posits that there are three ways in which a person can identify with the world, to aid our realisation of a larger-than-self reality: personal, ontological, and cosmological.64 Moby-Dick examines these ways carefully, and the narrative leads towards Ishmael's similar self-realisation. Ishmael's descriptions of whales, sharks, and other characters are an example of 'personal' identification, and his careful dissection and consideration of the body of the whale contributes to his conception of existence, of dasein – an 'ontological' identification. Lastly, it is through his metaphors of interconnectedness that Ishmael suggests an understanding of commonality that resembles Fox's 'cosmological'

61 Curiously, Melville spells the chapter "Sphynx" and later refers to the "Sphinx". I can't find the reason for the original (arguably incorrect) spelling.
64 Fox, 1995, op. cit.: 249-58.
identification. Ishmael's identification resembles Schopenhauer's reason for morality, compassion, the recognition in "another's individuality [of] the same inner nature as one's own."\(^{65}\)

Melville does not just use looms and yarn as symbols of intertwined aspects of being, he also uses them as a metaphor for the novel itself, with its intertwined, interdependent, interconnected and sometimes contradictory meanings. \textit{Moby-Dick} is an example of Bakhtin's 'heteroglossia', in so far as different voices within the novel "foreground the clash of antagonistic social forces."\(^{66}\) Foucault, in an article entitled "Of Other Spaces," discusses the idea of 'heterotopias', countersites where all the other real sites in society are "simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted." It is a fitting description of the \textit{Pequod}, both as a real ship and a literary vehicle:

Brothels and colonies are two extreme types of heterotopia, and if we think, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is, closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development … but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia \textit{par excellence}. In civilizations without boats,

\(^{65}\) Schopenhauer, 1969, op. cit.: 367-8.
\(^{66}\) Morris, 1994, op. cit.: 249. Holquist writes that in Bakhtin, "there is no one meaning being striven for: the world is a vast congeries of contesting meanings, a heteroglossia so varied that no single term capable of unifying its diverging energies is possible." Holquist, 1990, op. cit.: 24. Sheila Post-Lauria writes that too much has been made of Melville's heterogeneity, and that rather than being his invention it "actually reflects the narrative license of the times" (what she terms "mixed form narrative"). She suggests it was "a deliberate, even conventional approach to narrative form by metaphysical writers – a common strategy that mid-nineteenth century reviewers recognised and understood." Post-Lauria, S.: 1990 December, "Philosophy in Whales … Poetry in Blubber": Mixed Form in \textit{Moby-Dick} Nineteenth-Century Literature 45: 300.
dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates. 

The whale ship is an utterance loose on the ocean of meaning, its position always movement and process, relative to other points, defined by both observers and crew. The Pequod is Melville's symbolic ship of state, where he raises questions and interrogates possibilities.

In the dialogue intensive "Midnight, Forecastle" chapter, a fight develops between Daggoo and a Spanish sailor. As the men form a ring to encircle the fighters, the old Manx sailor questions the need, pointing to the circular world they inhabit:
"Ready formed. There! the ringed horizon. In that ring Cain struck Abel. Sweet work, right work! No? Why then, God, mad'st thou the ring?" (MD180). Though spoken by the old Manx sailor, in this quotation it is possible to discern Ishmael's questioning tone, and behind that Melville's: 'Why have you made the world like this?' Melville's quarrel with God is important in any ecocritical reading of Moby-Dick, because if Melville doubts the existence or omnipotence of God, as some aspects of Moby-Dick lead the reader to believe, then other parts of religious dogma are also put into doubt, specifically the idea of a designed universe and a subsequent mandate for humanity to exploit animals such as whales. That Moby-Dick interrogates this authority is established from the outset, with the very first extract alluding to design and omnipotence: "And God created great whales" (MDxlv). Any doubt as to the veracity of religious claims reflects on this primary foundation.

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Much has been made of the importance of the god of *Moby-Dick*, though critics are divided on the issue. Although there are accusations that it is an atheistic novel, there are pervasive Christian allusions and symbolism. Franchot writes that there is "nowhere [in *Moby-Dick*] that [Jehovah] is not a metaphor, allusion, echo." For Edlinger, there can be "no doubt that the white whale symbolizes the deity." Hoffman disputes this, asserting, "Moby Dick is no more the God of *Moby-Dick* than Leviathan is the God of the Book of Job." Melville consciously adds to this confusion by linking his whale with the biblical leviathan. In the chapter entitled "Moby Dick," Ishmael describes Ahab as "this grey-headed, ungodly old man, chasing with curses a Job's whale round the world … [with a crew which seemed] specially picked and packed by some infernal fatality to help him to his monomaniac revenge" (MD190). Writers have taken the expression 'Job's whale' to be Melville's description of the whale, "a proof of Jehovah's mighty power" (according to Mani), when it is more likely to describe Ahab's view, that Moby Dick is the messenger of a god, not the god itself.

It is not the intent of this work to catalogue biblical allusions in the novel but several are of definite interest. From the biblical naming of Ishmael at the outset of the narrative, and the pre-naming references to biblical texts in "Extracts," it is clear where much of Melville's symbolism is derived. The opening extract from Genesis

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70 Hoffman, Gilmore, 1977, op. cit.: 70. Giles Gunn writes, "Melville was much too deeply imbued with the spirit of Calvinism ever to confuse a manifestation of God's power, as Ahab does, with the very nature of God's essence, and he shares sufficient affinities with the Transcendentalists to doubt that God, if He exists, would ever become wholly and incarnate in a single form. If there is a God in the universe of this book, then Moby Dick is not that God himself but merely, as Daniel Hoffman has argued, the greatest among His creatures and one who, in his inscrutable but not entirely unknowable otherness, embodies as much of the principle of divinity as Nature expresses." Gunn, G.: 1979, *The Interpretation of Otherness*. Oxford University Press, New York: 171.
71 Mani, 1981, op. cit.: 224. See also Edlinger, from Parker, Higgins, 1992, op. cit.: 473.
immediately establishes a connection between the Old Testament God and whales, and the second extract, from "Job," links whales with the leviathan and the conflict between the Old Testament God and this creature. There is little in the novel to suggest that Melville rejected the idea of the Genesis mandate to use the world for mankind's needs.72 Melville's caveat on this, however, is that humanity should not be foolish, malicious or wasteful in its use. Of course, if there is no god behind the authorship of the bible, then there is no mandate, and Melville does question the concept of the Calvinist God, at least.

There are echoes of both "Jonah" and "Job" throughout the novel.73 Ahab, "that anaconda of a man" (MD180), is largely contrived from biblical allusions, from his blighted biblical name to his trials. He is the inverse of the Jonah myth, an unrepentant, reluctant prophet, irrespective of any divine message. Ishmael contributes to the debate on the veracity of the Jonah myth, attributing doubt to an "old Sag-Harbour whaleman" who evinces, in Ishmael's words "foolish, impious pride, and abominable, devilish rebellion against the reverend clergy" (MD374-6). The suspicion that Ishmael may make this accusation ironically is compounded by the statement that Sag-Harbour, "had but little learning except what he picked up from the sun and sea," a form of learning that Ishmael obviously respects. The story of Jonah was clearly a major point of discussion in whaling circles. Daniel Day recounts the unlikely story of English sailor Bartley of the Star of the East, who reportedly was swallowed by a sperm whale in the South Atlantic on the 25th August 1891:

72 Melville does lampoon the uses of whales in several places, "Postscript," for example (MD115).
73 Parker claims Job provides an analogue for Ahab's quarrel with God, and sees in Jonah an analogue for Ishmael's "less defiant" way. Parker, from Parker and Higgins, 1992, op. cit.: 389.
within a couple of hours of the whale swallowing Bartley, it was killed and brought to the mother ship. There, after hours of butchering, the stomach section was opened and the astonished crewmen found the lost Bartley: unconscious, bleached to a deathly white by the gastric acids, but still living. For two weeks Bartley remained in a near delirious condition, but apart from his almost albino state (which remained with him all his life), he made a full recovery.74

Tashtego is reborn like Bartley and Jonah, however, the most overt reference to Jonah is obviously Father Mapple's sermon, one that is curiously reflected and satirised in Fleece's sermon to the sharks. Melville's description of Mapple pulling the rope ladder up behind him (MD41) satirises the inflexibility of the Calvinist interpretation of nature, as compared to Fleece's comic take.75 In another analogue, Jonah is the reader who descends into this whale of a text to be taught the lesson. Yet, it is Ishmael who descends into the whale, and alone returns (after a three day chase) to play the role of prophet.

Even with all the biblical allusions, Ahab's god offers no help in the questioning of reality. There is still a "dumb blankness of meaning."76 The voices raised in protest at Ahab's quest, whether they are Ishmael's, Starbuck's, or that of the English Doctor Bunger, are those of reason as opposed to obsession. Starbuck questions Ahab on this point: "Vengeance on a dumb brute! … that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous"

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75 Cowan notes that Father Mapple's sermon illuminates the Calvinist belief in nature as a "place of 'terror' and imprisonment." Cowan, 1982, op. cit.: 83.
76 For Gilmore, the very plot of *Moby-Dick* is Melville's metaphor for the futile effort to interpret the world: "A blind man hurling himself against the impregnable wall of a monstrous whale." Gilmore, 1977, op. cit.: 6.
The mistake made by Ahab (and at first also by Ishmael), and by most of Western culture, is the belief that Nature (whether representative of a god or not) cares for humanity one way or another. Not only is the true essence of the world inscrutable, it is indifferent. It is this indifference that Starbuck avows to Ahab on the third day of the chase (MD577). During the crew of the *Pequod's 'gam'* with that of the *Samuel Enderby*, Doctor Bunger tells Ahab that he should not make the mistake of believing nature cares for individual egos: "Do you know, gentlemen, that the digestive organs of the whale are so inscrutably constructed by Divine Providence, that it is quite impossible for him to completely digest even a man's arm? And he knows it too. So that what you take for the White Whale's malice is only his awkwardness" (MD452). In my opinion, it is this understanding, that nature is indifferent to humanity, which is necessary in any attempt to escape the anthropocentrism inherent in Western culture.

In the world of the whaleship, the ocean represents nature. Ishmael observes that:

>Like a savage tigress that tossing in the jungle overlays her own cubs, so the sea dashes even the mightiest whales against the rocks, and leaves them there side by side with the split wrecks of ships. No mercy, no power but its own controls it. Panting and snorting like a mad battle steed that has lost its rider, the masterless ocean overruns the globe. (MD283)

In this quotation, the term 'masterless' is an indication of Ishmael's conception of the natural world. The statement also alludes to the eventual future for "the mightiest

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77 Richard Slotkin proposes, perhaps like Ishmael, that if "there is no reasoning intelligence behind the events of life, then Ahab's quest is the projection of a madman's vision on the neutral face of reality." Slotkin, R.: "*Moby-Dick: The American National Epic*," Gilmore, 1977, op. cit.: 21. Nash Smith suggests, however, "Ahab's madness does not consist in conceiving of the universe as being controlled by forces hostile to man, but simply in imagining that these forces are embodied in, or adequately represented by, a single whale." Nash Smith, Hayes, 1994, op. cit.: 189.
whale['s]." Moby Dick, subverting ideas of omnipotence, both in a god or a whale. Melville's symbols of interconnectedness allow no authority, only phenomenal surface. This, coupled with a conception of an indifferent nature lay the basis for an ecological reading of the novel.

iii. Language: "the bare words and facts"78

In his article "Psychology and Literature," Carl Jung suggests that both Goethe's Faust and Melville's Moby-Dick offer examples of what he terms the 'visionary' mode of artistic creation (as opposed to the 'psychological').79 Jung's theory of archetypes offer an alternative naming of the categories that this thesis suggests may be evolutionarily engrained in language. In Jung's 'visionary' mode:

The experience that furnishes the material for artistic expression is no longer familiar. It is a strange something that derives its existence from the hinterland of man's mind – that suggests the abyss of time separating us from pre-human ages, or evokes a super-human world of contrasting light and darkness. It is a primordial experience which surpasses man's understanding, and to which his is therefore in danger of succumbing. The value and the force of the experience are given by its enormity. It arises from timeless depths; it is foreign and cold, many sided, demonic, and grotesque.80

78 Stubb's: "You'll do to give us the bare words and facts, but we come in to supply the thoughts." MD443.
80 ibid: 178.
Jung attributes this mode of artistic creation to the intuition of a pre-human past, without either suggesting it may be ingrained or constraining. He proposes that both Melville and Goethe have derived inspiration from such extra-linguistic experience.

It is interesting that Jung should write of a world of "contrasting light and darkness." In Melville's arsenal of symbolism, light/dark imagery predominates. In this, he echoes his American Puritan predecessors, although Melville's dichotomy does not display their simple correspondence to good/evil. Writers such as Julian Markels demonstrate that Melville was conversant with the duality of Zoroastrian doctrine, which posited a universe divided between Ahmazd (light) and Ahriman (darkness). Fedallah, Ahab's "shadow" (MD337), as a Parsee is representative of Zoroastrian belief. In a metaphor anticipating the novel's conclusion, Ishmael refers directly to Zoroaster when Queequeg is ill, comparing both the harpooner's and Zoroaster's eyes to ripples: "And like circles on the water, which, as they grow fainter, expand; so his eyes seemed rounding and rounding, like the rings of Eternity" (MD487).

Melville does not only derive inspiration from Eastern religions for this duality. He alludes to the Platonic association of light and truth, however, he does not make the correspondence because of Plato, but rather they both utilise such symbolism because it is one of the archetypal metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson propose that the statements, "SEEING IS UNDERSTANDING; IDEAS ARE LIGHT SOURCES; [and] DISCOURSE IS A LIGHT MEDIUM" are all connected forms of one of the English language's most basic metaphors. The linkage is evident in the English word 'illumination'.

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81 Markels, 1993, op. cit.: 75. Ahmazd is also spelt Ormazd or Ahura Mazda. Hanks, 1979, op. cit.
of light and good/wisdom may be one of the evolutionary innate concepts in humans (evolved from light receptors) and this would explain its trace existing in such metaphors.

Melville utilises light/dark to symbolise a number of dichotomies including truth/untruth and good/evil. Ahab utilises the opposition when he says: "So far gone am I in the dark side of earth, that its other side, the theoretic bright one, seems but uncertain twilight to me" (MD535). In another example, after the "Tryworks" chapter in which Ishmael discusses the nature of wisdom, he offers his ruminations on "The Lamp," suggesting that the whaleman is more "illuminated" than others are.85

Melville, in his use of the word 'white', alludes to, and offers an ironic double for Hawthorne's "great power of blackness."86 With an ebullient egoism, he builds a similar power into the antithesis, white.87 Of all the adjectives in Moby-Dick, those of light (182) are only surpassed by 'last' (256), numeric terms, 'great' and its cognates (377), 'old/young' (496), and 'strange' (and similar words – 205).88 Terms synonymous with dark (including black and night) also feature heavily (127). The nouns night and day are also common (119/154). However, while Melville presents the world of the whale-ship as a Manichean world of black and white, he acknowledges that this is only

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84 Barnhart suggests the word 'illumination', meaning to enlighten, derives from the Latin illūmināre, from the genitive lūminis – light). Barnhart, 1998, op. cit.: 508. Other English words that link the idea of thought and light include "enlighten", "brilliant" and "bright"
85 "But the whaleman, as he seeks the food of light, so he lives in light" (MD436).
87 The association between whiteness and blankness was continued after his death. Melville's gravestone, (Woodlawn Cemetery, The Bronx) has on it a blank scroll, as Levine notes, a "haunting testament, perhaps, to the mysteries of silence but a tantalizing invitation as well to further inscription." Levine, 1998, op. cit.:10.
88 I am including here adjectives synonymous with 'light', such as 'white', 'bright', 'brilliant' and 'illuminated'. There are ten instances of the word 'light' used as an opposite to 'heavy'. Other terms' frequencies include: 'great' 284, 'greater' 13, 'greatest' 12, and 'vast' 68; 'curious' 53, 'strange' 97, 'peculiar' 55; 'four' 69, 'many 143', 'second' 58, 'several' 46, 'three' 231, 'two' 279; 'old' 420, 'young' 76; and 'last' 256. Irey, 1982, op. cit.
the human perception of the phenomenal world, that the noumenal world has no colour. For Ishmael, the colour white was extremely significant: "yet for all these accumulated associations, with whatever is sweet, and honourable and sublime, there lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea of this hue, which strikes more of panic to the soul than that redness which affrights in blood" (MD192). Ishmael argues that in many cultures, including Western, the colour white is often associated with death. He notes that:

Witness the white bear of the poles, and the white shark of the tropics; what but their smooth, flaky whiteness makes them the transcendent horrors they are? That ghastly whiteness it is which imparts such an abhorrent mildness, even more loathsome than terrific, to the dumb gloating of their aspect. So that not the fierce-fanged tiger in his heraldic coat can so stagger courage as the white-shrouded bear or shark. (MD193)

In the chapter entitled "The Whiteness of the Whale," Ishmael, typically, layers on questions, and stresses the ambiguous nature of human responses to the colour. He notes that the colour white is often associated with God, but that at the same time it can terrify people:

But not yet have we solved the incantation of this whiteness, and learned why it appeals with such power to the soul; and more strange and far more portentous – why, as we have seen, it is at once the most meaning symbol of spiritual things, nay, the very veil of the Christian's Deity; and yet should be as it is, the intensifying agent in things the most appalling to mankind. (MD199)

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89 This chapter, "The Whiteness of the Whale," contains many statements that reflect Schopenhauer's belief in the noumenal underlying the phenomenal.
After discussing the sources of Melville's *The Whiteness of the Whale*, Brian Foley concludes: "The contradictions leave Melville unable to assign the color [white] any definite meaning." Instead, it becomes Ishmael's "dumb blankness, full of meaning" (MD199):

not so much a color as the visible absence of color, and at the same time the concrete of all colors … a colorless, all-color of atheism from which we shrink? And when we consider that other theory of the natural philosophers, that all other earthly hues … all these are but subtile deceits, not actually inherent in substances, but only laid on from without; so that all deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot, whose allurements cover nothing but the charnel-house within; and when we proceed further, and consider that the mystical cosmetic which produces every one of her hues, the great principle of light, for ever remains white or colorless in itself. (MD199)

Melville confesses to his literary method when Ishmael notes, "[a]nd of all these things the Albino Whale was the symbol" (MD200).

There are many exhaustive studies of Melville's use of metaphor and lexicon. Melville utilises a great range of expressions and colours to describe the sea, and Irey notes that a similar variance and pattern of description can be found often, including with regard to lightning, sharks, and the Great White Whale. This leads Irey to conclude: "the ambiguity of Nature [is] one of the main themes of the novel." The very technique of dynamic intertextuality and heteroglossia Melville employs acts as a metaphor for

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90 Foley, Hayes, 1994, op. cit.: 211.
93 Irey, 1982, op. cit.: xi.
reality, a version of Derridean *différance*, where meaning is volatile and unstable.\(^94\)

Reading *Moby-Dick* is like trying to study a whale in the water, where the liquid medium itself constantly and simultaneously gives the illusion of sight and obscures, shows and denies. The text simultaneously interrogates and stresses the relationship between the noumenal and the phenomenal. This continual epistemological questioning manifests itself in metaphors of representation. Melville's emphasis on appearance is also reflected in the preponderance of the word 'seem' (and its forms) in the novel.\(^95\)

A good example of Melville's technique is his depiction of the painting, "a boggy, soggy, squitchy picture," that Ishmael encounters within the smoky confines of the Spouter Inn:

On one side hung a very large oil-painting so thoroughly besmoked, and every way defaced, that in the unequal cross-lights by which you viewed it, it was only by diligent study and a series of systematic visits to it, and careful inquiry of the neighbors, that you could any way arrive at an understanding of its purpose. Such unaccountable masses of shades and shadows, that at first you almost thought some ambitious young artist, in the time of the New England hags, had endeavored to delineate chaos bewitched. (MD11)

Melville is possibly describing a painting by J. M. W. Turner known as *The Whale Ship*, that one could argue has "a sort of indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable sublimity about it that fairly froze you to it, till you involuntarily took an oath with yourself to find out what that marvellous painting meant" (MD11). Turner died in London in 1851, two

\(^{94}\) Hawthorn, 1992, op. cit.: 61.

months after Melville's *The Whale* was published in England. In his book *Turner and the Sublime*, Wilton notes, "the whale seems to materialise out of the waves as if conjured up by an effort of Turner's imagination." This is not unlikely, as Turner had been reading Beale's *Natural History of the Sperm Whale*. Ishmael, by the same effort of interpretation that is necessary to read *Moby-Dick*, manages to make some sense of the painting, and in another pre-figuration of the novel's end, suggests it depicts: "a Cape-Horner in a great hurricane; the half-foundered ship weltering there with its three dismantled masts alone visible; and an exasperated whale, purposing to spring clean over the craft, is in the enormous act of impaling himself upon the three mast-heads" (MD11).

Melville's language also exploits ancient mythic structures with his imagery of monsters, of 'man versus beast'. He alludes to the ancient lineage when Ishmael says that Ahab "piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down" (MD187). Melville has perhaps drawn upon the unconscious information that predates modern people, an innate antagonism between humans and the natural world. For example, in recounting the circumstance of Ahab's first meeting with Moby Dick, Ishmael notes:

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The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung. That intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds; which the ancient Ophites of the east reverenced in their statue devil; – Ahab did not fall down and worship it like them; but deliriously transferring its idea to the abhorred White Whale, he pitted himself, all mutilated, against it. All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. (MD187)

Ishmael conjectures a correspondence between the black half of the Manichean world, the Christian conception of Satan, the serpent, the search for meaning in the world, and Moby Dick.

The idea that Moby Dick is "practically assailable" leads to metaphors of warfare and battle, which are common throughout the novel. Joseph Meeker, for example, argues that, "warfare is the basic metaphor of tragedy" (see page 269).98 Such tropes contribute to a reading of Moby-Dick as tragedy, though there are many other metaphors that contradict such a reading. The war metaphor in Moby-Dick is what Lakoff and Johnson refer to as an "old myth … [of the type that] share a common perspective: man as separate from his environment."99 The world of Moby-Dick is one in which not only are humans separate from their environment, but they are at war with it, subscribing to the oldest battle metaphor, 'man versus beast', a metaphor that has occurred in such disparate

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98 Meeker, 1972, op. cit.: 38.
99 Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, op. cit.: 229. Lakoff and Johnson suggest that the conceptual metaphor 'argument is war' is "reflected in our everyday language by a wide variety of expressions" (ibid: 4).
places as the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and stories of Saint George and the dragon. Melville devotes a whole chapter, "Knights and Squires," to an elaboration of the whaleboat as medieval army metaphor: "In that grand order of battle in which Captain Ahab would probably marshal his forces to descend on the whales" (MD120). This is obviously not a new metaphor, but one that dates at least to Oppian. It also has antecedents in the biblical conflict between God and the leviathan. Although Melville's intimations that the traditional conceptions of the relationship between humanity and nature are insufficient, his use of myth and language which is yoked to covert presuppositions and ideologies inevitably links his text to these same traditional conceptions of opposition.

Carl Van Doren, suggests that *Moby-Dick* contains "the semblance of a conflict between the ancient and scatheless forces of nature and the ineluctable enmity of man." It is this enmity that this thesis suggests can be found in texts, including the first recorded. It is a tension that is evident in many of the world's mythic traditions. Many authors have investigated the numerous references in Melville's work to alternative religious mythologies, in variance with the Calvinist Christian tradition in which he was steeped. These include the 'oceanic' states already discussed. By employing such mythologies, Melville can not avoid importing ancient symbolic oppositions. Although he subtly satirises the heroic Perseus and Saint George (MD371-4), his narrative borrows too heavily from such mythologies to avoid the same interpretation, that there is an inherent aggression between humanity and the natural world. Melville was conversant with both Persian and Indian systems of religious

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thought, as well as relying heavily on Egyptian mythology to add to the worldliness of the novel. H.B. Kulkarni, for example, claims the repeated use of 'loom' and 'weaving' metaphors in the novel is an example of the Hindu concept of Karma, which binds people to the wheel of life. Franklin asserts Melville relied more heavily on Egyptian than Hindu mythology, seeing in Egyptian mythology the direct source of Hebrew mythology and Melville's own cultural tradition. He claims that the "struggle between Osiris and Typhon forms a basic part of the conception of Ahab's struggle with Moby Dick." The myth of Typhon's yearly assault on Osiris is embodied in the yearly typhoon cycle, the archetypal assault of nature on humanity – a conflict between chaotic forces and humanity. This struggle features as one of the most ancient symbolic representations of the opposition between culture and nature. There is much in the Osiris myth that is echoed in *Moby-Dick*. Osiris was a priest-god-king who sailed the ocean in a ship, hunting Typhon (or the Egyptian God Set), an "aquatic monster … who symbolizes the ocean and all in nature that is malignant to man." In earlier versions, Typhon turns into a crocodile or hippopotamus (the two most dangerous Nile creatures) to kill Osiris. In some later accounts, Typhon dismembers Osiris. However, in the Syrian Ugaritic texts it is Yam, the leviathan that is dismembered, as in "Psalms" 74:14:

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104 Melville's word play is evident in his linkage of the chapter on the inside of the whale's skull, "The Great Heidelberg Tun" (Chapter 77) with its inverse "The Nut" (Chapter 80). He was also well aware that in Egyptian mythology, Nut was Osiris' mother.
105 There are many allusions to Egyptian thought in *Moby-Dick*, including parallels between Ahab/Whale and Osiris/Typhon. As Franklin notes, Ahab is a priest/god/king who sails the ocean hunting a 'sea-monster', who is dismembered by the monster and returns to the sun to heal. He also points to phallic rituals, fire worship and "infernal orgies" (MD172) in *Moby-Dick* as analogous of Osiris worship practices. Franklin, Gilmore, 1977, op. cit.: 103.
106 ibid: 102.
"Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness." In some versions, Osiris is killed (though not dead) by Typhon, when he is tricked into an elaborately decorated chest or coffin (not unlike Queequeg's), which travels in Osiris' boat in his place until he is annually reborn. In the Ugaritic texts, the storm god Baal is the hero who brings rains and fertility, reflecting the less tropical climate of Syria (compared to that of Egypt). Baal's enemy is Yam, the sea and the equivalent of the biblical leviathan (also described as river, serpent and dragon). The idea of the leviathan being a crocodile is logical considering the area in which these myths arose. It is reasonable to infer that Egyptians may have incorporated the region's most dangerous animal, the flooding river, and the storm-tossed sea as mythological nemesis. It is only later (before 1382) that 'leviathan' became interpreted as the whale, from the Hebrew livyāthān, meaning dragon or serpent.

The mythic power of these stories, that represent nature in a relationship of enmity to humanity, was scarcely diminished in the period in which Melville revisited them. There are several reasons why they maintained their impact. It may be because they do tap into a primal belief of humans, or because Judaic (and later Christian) mythology adapted these earlier narratives. Melville dwells on the leviathan in his earliest "Extracts," with nine of the first twenty-five extracts referring to it, three being from different biblical sources, "Psalms," "Isaiah" and "Job." He returns to biblical

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108 The ancient Syrian Ugaritic texts were only found at Ras Shamra in Syria in 1928 and would have been unknown to Melville. Daniel, G.: 1981, _A Short History of Archaeology_. Ancient People and Places (G. Daniel, ed.). Thames and Hudson Ltd, London: 106.
description of the leviathan (paraphrasing "Job" 41:1), when Ishmael relates the killing of the old crippled whale:

'Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish- spears? The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold, the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon: he esteemeth iron as straw; the arrow cannot make him flee; darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of a spear!' (MD365)

He also alludes to this passage with his reference to the whale as a bird. One of the Old Testament God's questions of Job ("Job" 41:5) is "Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?" Melville's fourth extract is from "Isaiah" (27.1): "In that day, the Lord with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (MDxlv). Much is made of this quotation, as if the death of Ahab, not Moby Dick, somehow makes a lie of the threat. The final description of the leviathan in "Job" can be interpreted as an admonition of Ahab's hubris: "He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride" ("Job" 41:34).

Though in the old pantheistic societies there were beneficial gods to aid humanity in its conflict with the malignant gods and nature, the various Hebrew gods were eventually amalgamated into the idea of Yahweh (a trend towards monotheism continued with the Christian tradition) to leave one supreme being and 'his' antagonist Satan (a dichotomy clearly influenced by Persian Zoroastrianism). In the chapter 112 Mani suggests that Melville uses Isaiah's interpretation of the Leviathan as Satan. Mani, 1981, op. cit.: 218. The idea that Satan was of lesser power than God leads Ahab, in "The Sphynx," to the conundrum of who is responsible for evil and unwelcome outcomes.
entitled "The Chase – Third Day" Moby Dick is described by Ishmael as "[c]ombinedly possessed by all the angels that fell from heaven" (MD576). In making the conflict with a whale the symbolic representation of the battle of good against evil, Melville conjoins his tale and the same symbolism apparent in the transformation of the wilderness with a garden myth that is so crucial to an understanding of the American frontier. In whaling, this "recovery story" had been taken to sea and focused on one element, the whale.113 Though Melville's use of these ancient antagonistic mythologies invoke his readers' dispositions to perceive the whale as evil, the text conspires also against such a reading, a point to which I will return.

iv. Images of fire: "There burn the flames!"114

The terrible fatality.
Fatality. Doom.
Doom! Doom! Doom! Something seems to whisper it in the very dark trees of America. Doom!
Doom of what?
Doom of our white day. We are doomed, doomed. And the doom is in America. The doom of our white day.

D. H. Lawrence, Selected Literary Criticism115

One may think that having a huge roaring inferno (the try-works) upon the deck of a wooden whaleship full of oil (and often covered with it), is a disaster biding its time, and there were indeed accidents resulting from these circumstances. For example, The Cassander from Providence, Rhode Island, was burned at sea on June 10, 1848, the

113 See Merchant, from Cronon, 1995, op. cit.
114 MD515.
115 Lawrence, 1973, op. cit.: 391.
Charles Adams burned at the Falklands Islands in 1837, and the Young Hero burned in the Sandwich Islands in 1858. In addition, there were missing ships, such as the Commerce out of Nantucket in 1805, the Exchange from New Bedford in 1850, and the Theo Chase from Westport in 1849, which may have been burned, wrecked or attacked by whales. Bennett relates that:

There is a story current amongst whalers, that on one occasion a South-Seaman was thus employed [trying-out] in sight of a British ship-of-war, when the latter, alarmed at her flaming appearance, approached within hail, and demanded of the crew what they were about. The master of the whale-ship replied that they were trying: 'Trying!' repeated the commander of the man-of-war, somewhat puzzled at the explanation, 'trying what, sir? – to set your ship on fire?'

Fire was to burn one third of the port of Nantucket in 1846, fuelled by the barrels of sperm oil. The threat of fire from the try-works was omnipresent and whaling writers reflected this in their descriptions. In the chapter entitled the "Try-works" Ishmael says the ship:

yet steadfastly shot her red hell further and further into the blackness of the sea and the night, and scornfully champed the white bone in her mouth, and viciously spat round her on all sides; then the rushing Pequod, freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning a

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116 Mawer discusses the disappearance of the Lady Adams and of a ship seen burning from the French Whaler Asia. Mawer, 1999, op. cit.: 71. Other ships from Starbuck, op. cit.: The Cassander (p. 449) Charles Adams (329), the Young Hero (531), the Commerce (205), the Exchange (468), and the Theo Chase (463).
117 Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 212.
118 Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: 222.
corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness, seemed the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul. (MD434)

Melville could not have made the symbolism in this chapter clearer. Fire is aligned with Ahab's monomania. Elsewhere, "the hot fire of his [Ahab's] purpose" is mentioned (MD216), and in a phrase that both describes Ahab and is illustrative of Melville's frequent frontier metaphors, the first whale they chase is described as "a white fire upon the prairie" (MD231).

Melville taps into older elemental theories, noting "the unnatural combat of the four primal elements," and dwelling on the implications of earth, water, fire and air (MD11). Images of fire, fire-worshippers, and 'fiery' things are ubiquitous in *Moby-Dick*, and often associated with the tormented soul of Ahab.119 Michael Osborn notes that fire, as a metaphor, can be associated with warmth, bodily comfort, growth of the body, preparation of food, vertical scale imagery, youth and regeneration.120 It can also symbolise the permanence of nature, the home, the church altar-fire, a destructive or purifying force, and infernal or purgatorial associations. From an ecocritical point of view, fire is something that spreads in a non-conscious non-teleological fashion. It is non-anthropocentric, caring not for humanity, in the same way as Ahab is indifferent to his crew's plight (at least until the narrative's conclusion).

In *Moby-Dick*, there are also many references to fire in Eastern mythology and to the Platonic idea of the sun as light and truth. Melville employs fire symbolism to link

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his text to a strong, mythic, cultural tradition. For Ishmael, the 'fire at night' imagery
takes on the diabolic antithesis of daytime and the Platonic light of god. The use of fire
imagery automatically conjures associations with biblical themes, including the
apocalypse.\textsuperscript{121} Melville admired Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand," and uses similar language.
This is most obvious in his description of the try-works.\textsuperscript{122} In his \textit{Etchings of a Whaling
Cruise}, J. Ross Browne describes the try-works as like a sketch from Salvator Rosa, the
seventeenth-century painter known for his wild and savage scenes:

A trying out scene has something peculiarly wild and savage in it; a kind of indescribable
uncouthness, which renders it difficult to describe with anything like accuracy. There is a
murderous appearance about the bloodstained decks, and huge masses of flesh and blubber
lying here and there, and a ferocity in the look of the men, heightened by the red, fierce glow
of the fires, which inspire in the mind of the novice feelings of mingled disquiet and awe.\textsuperscript{123}

Browne writes that he knows of "nothing to which this part of the whaling business can
be more appropriately compared than to Dante's pictures of the infernal regions."\textsuperscript{124}

Meeker cites Dante's \textit{Comedy} as "ecological in the largest sense of the term," in
that Dante's Hell is a fitting description of environmental catastrophe.\textsuperscript{125} Many of the
ideas and images of a biblical apocalypse can be easily translated to those of an
environmental apocalypse. The idea of fire as a metaphor is not strange to ecological

\textsuperscript{121} Mani asserts that the use of fire imagery emphasises the similarity with the \textit{Book of Revelation}. 1981,
Doubloon and the Shield of Achilles" \textit{Nineteenth-Century Literature} 26, September: 178.
\textsuperscript{122} Bennett also describes the "grand and terrific" spectacle of 'trying-out'. Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2,
211.
\textsuperscript{123} Browne, 1968, op. cit.: 62-3.
\textsuperscript{124} Browne quoted by Vincent, H. P.: "Sources of 'The Try-Works'," from Hayford and Parker, 1967, op.
cit.: 602.
\textsuperscript{125} Meeker, 1972, op. cit.: 163 ff.
scientists familiar with the boom and bust pattern of species expanding unchecked (up to a point) into their environment. Animal and plant species have the capacity to proliferate exponentially to fill their environment, consuming available resources, in the same way as fire does. Malthus argued that ancient theories of senescence were wrong and that humans are also capable of such increase. Capitalist dogma proposes that humans should be allowed to expand at will (arguing that there are 'checks and balances') and as a result, capitalist economies expand fire-like, using all available 'resources'. Whalers throughout history had acted in this way, depleting first right whale resources, and then in Melville's time, the sperm whale populations.

In *Moby-Dick* Melville questions the ideas of the scientific Enlightenment, and the 'age of reason'. Ahab is representative of such scientific questioning, and Ishmael perceives him to be an all-consuming, "mono-maniac" fire:

> So seemed it to me, as I stood at her helm, and for long hours silently guided the way of this fire-ship on the sea. Wrapped, for that interval, in darkness myself, I but the better saw the redness, the madness, the ghastliness of others. The continual sight of the fiend shapes before me, capering half in smoke and half in fire, these at last begat kindred visions in my soul, so soon as I began to yield to that unaccountable drowsiness which ever would come over me at a midnight helm. (MD434)

In his Faustian reverie, he has been turned about, both literally and metaphorically. He realises that Ahab's mania is not the way to truth: "Look not too long in the face of the

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fire, O man!" He warns that human delusions are merely products of their imagination and that the real world is plainly visible, "the glorious, golden, glad sun, the only true lamp – all others but liars!" (MD435). For Ishmael, there is sadness and wildness in the world and people should accept such things, not rail, like Ahab, against what they cannot affect and which cares not for them:

So, therefore, that mortal man who hath more of joy than sorrow in him, that mortal man cannot be true – not true, or undeveloped. With books the same. The truest of all men was the Man of Sorrows, and the truest of all books is Solomon's, and Ecclesiastes is the fine hammered steel of woe. 'All is vanity'. ALL. This wilful world hath not got hold of unchristian Solomon's wisdom yet. (MD435)

Melville alludes to Plato in the phrase "the glorious, golden, glad sun, the only true lamp" – echoing "The Good as Ultimate Object of Knowledge" and "The Simile of the Cave." Ishmael notes that the hunt (embodied in the chart of Ahab's making) transforms Ahab from the Promethean figure which could "grimly live and burn" to a debased "vulture"; his "ray of living light" has been warped into "a blankness in itself" (MD206). By employing the imagery of fire, Melville taps into ancient mythology and symbolism and at the same time, his association of Ahab with fire binds the Captain inextricably to the idea of apocalypse. It is not, however, a biblical apocalypse but one that results from Ahab's mania. The diabolic fire of Ahab is contrasted with the pure

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127 When Ishmael proclaims, "give not thyself up, then, to fire, lest it invert thee, deaden thee; as for the time it did me," he is not just discussing the try-works but his involvement in Ahab's insane quest (MD436).
128 Ishmael here is repeating his claim that the whale is not a conscious agent, neither malevolent nor conniving, despite their "seeming malice" (MD187).
divine light of day and truth. Though Melville does not conceive of environmental
apocalypse, he does present Ahab's personality as leading not to truth but tragedy.

This is a theme he returns to in his most Hawthorne-like story, "The Bell-
Tower," from the *Piazza Tales*. Melville's Promethean character Bannadonna, echoes
Bacon in his attempt to "solve nature, to steal into her, to intrigue beyond her, to procure
someone else to bind her to his hand … to rival her, to outstrip her and rule her." For this
pride he pays with his life: "The creator was killed by the creature…. so pride went
before a fall." This story stands as Melville's most overt and concise criticism of the
Baconian/Cartesian scientific project. However, he does not just question scientific
rationalism, but also the ideological hegemony that it sought to replace, that of religious
explanation. This dual questioning is also apparent in *Moby-Dick*.

v. Trying-out: metaphors of technology and capitalism

Walter Bezanson suggests that there are three propositions in *Moby-Dick*; that
nature is ultimately chaos, that experience is "already one remove from nature," and that
art, twice removed, "is a major means for transforming experience into patterns that are
meaningful and communicable." The try-works are a metaphor for this
transformation, a way of rendering chaotic nature, in the form of the whale, into an
orderly human resource, the oil for illumination. Which poses the question: was the
ocean merely another 'frontier' for Americans to conquer, a marine version of 'the West',

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131 Bezanson, from Hayford and Parker, 1967, op. cit.: 669.
with Melville's language supplying the ideological wagon train, or was he perhaps predicting, possibly unconsciously, the failure of the rampant capitalist project to understand and know the natural world? If Frankenstein provides us with a perfect metaphor for the future of genetic engineering, so too does Moby-Dick provide a metaphorical ship for the future of the world's environment.132

It can be argued that the twin cultural engines of Western capitalism and the Christian religion133 supply their own justification for the idea of human domination over nature. Clearly, the business of whaling is that of capitalism – it is pure demand and supply. In the early industrial age, it was the axiomatic example of capitalism at work. To light the hours of the industrial night it was determined that sperm whale oil, specifically from the substance in the head called spermaceti, was, as Beale explained, "the animal oil best adapted to the purpose of illumination."134 Our unit of light, the candlepower, was defined from the brightness of the spermaceti oil candle.135 If any character in Moby-Dick is representative of capitalism, it is Starbuck, who expresses values in relation to the market: For example, Starbuck queries Ahab's emotional quest: "How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? it will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market" (MD166). Ahab counters this by thumping his chest:

133 In some manifestations.
If money's to be the measurer, man, and the accountants have computed their great counting-house the globe, by girdling it with guineas, one to every three parts of an inch; then, let me tell thee, that my vengeance will fetch a great premium here! (MD166-7)\textsuperscript{136}

Ahab concedes that the orchestrators of capitalism, the accountants, have claimed the globe but rejects their measure. In another example, in the chapter entitled "The First Lowering," Ishmael, in describing Fedallah's crew of Manillas, claims that "honest white mariners" suppose them to be "paid spies and secret confidential agents on the water of the devil, their lord, whose counting-room they suppose to be elsewhere" (MD222). While there is a note of irony in Melville's use of the word 'honest', the statement allies the devil with the forces of capitalism, again represented by a 'counting-room'.

In "Cetology," Melville lists the quality and value of the oil each whale produces. Most whale writers from this period did not hide the fact of the whale fishery's exploitation, instead celebrating its achievements. Beale writes of "the sperm whale fishery" as a "branch of commerce." His defence of whaling is expressed in language that accentuates the danger of the whale, at the same time understating the strength of humans:

During the early part of the last century, a few daring individuals who inhabited the shores of the American continent, fitted out their little crafts, furnished with weak and almost impotent weapons, to attack and destroy in its own element the mighty monarch of the ocean, in order to rob his immense carcass of the valuable commodity in which he was surrounded.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{136} Prompting a watching Stubb to exclaim: "'He smites his chest,' whispered Stubb, what's that for? methinks it rings most vast, but hollow'" (MD167). Stubb suggests Ahab's vengeance would be hollow. \textsuperscript{137} Beale, 1973, op. cit.: 136.
Scoresby, another of Melville's major sources, notes: "The whale, from its vast bulk and variety of products, is of great importance in commerce, as well as in the domestic economy of the savage nations; and its oil and whalebone are of extensive application in the arts and manufactures."\textsuperscript{138} He refers to the whale as "the most formidable of the brute creation," and justifies whaling on capitalistic and religious grounds.\textsuperscript{139} Writing of a protective right whale mother, he says:

> There is something extremely painful in the destruction of a whale, when thus evincing a degree of affectionate regard for its offspring, that would do honour to the superior intelligence of human beings; yet the object of the adventure, the value of the prize, the joy of the capture, cannot be sacrificed to feelings of compassion.\textsuperscript{140}

Frank Bullen hints that such "feelings of compassion" were not always directed towards the crew either (as is the case when Pip is left in the ocean), "since it is well known that whales are of much higher commercial value than men."\textsuperscript{141}

Ishmael stresses the importance to the capitalist world of whaling (MD111), and catalogues the colonial achievements of whalemens:

> That great America on the other side of the sphere, Australia, was given to the enlightened world by the whaler. After its first blunder-born discovery by a Dutchman, all other ships long shunned those shores as pestiferously barbarous; but the whale-ship touched there. The whale-ship is the true mother of that now mighty colony. (MD108)

\textsuperscript{138} Scoresby, 1820, op. cit.: Vol. 1, 475.
\textsuperscript{139} ibid: Vol. 2, 2.
\textsuperscript{140} ibid: 472.
\textsuperscript{141} Bullen, 1926, op. cit.: 42. While Ishmael defends Stubb's action in the event of Pip's abandonment, he notes, "such considerations towards oarsmen jeopardized through their own timidity, is not always manifested by the hunters in all similar instances; and such instances not unfrequently occur" (MD425).
Ishmael is correct is suggesting that whaling played a pivotal role in modern history. Though he notes the importance of whaling to the Western economies, Ishmael also criticises the needs of capitalism, its rapacity and frivolity. After the pathetic death of a crippled whale, he remarks: "he must die the death and be murdered, in order to light the gay bridals and other merry-makings of men, and also to illuminate the solemn churches that preach unconditional inoffensiveness by all to all" (MD367). This is a blatant indictment of both capitalist and religious hypocrisy. Unlike the religious doctrines this thesis has discussed, however, he espouses a particularly environment-friendly doctrine: "Not ignoring what is good, I am quick to perceive a horror, and could still be social with it – would they let me – since it is but well to be on friendly terms with all the inmates of the place one lodges in" (MD6).

The whaleships were not only at the forefront of European humanity's push into the Pacific, they were the vanguard of capitalist ideology. This ideology reflected the depth of lineage I have discussed, and was supported unquestioningly. For example, as well as stating his obvious utilitarian beliefs, Scoresby reiterates the old justifications for whaling:

The Providence of God is manifested in the tameness and timidity of many of the largest inhabitants of the earth and sea, whereby they fall victims to the prowess of man, and are rendered subservient to his convenience in life. And this was the design of the lower animals in their creation. God, when he made man, having given him 'dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth'.

142 Scoresby, 1820, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 240.
For Scoresby, the biblical mandate is implicit. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, the early passages of Genesis to which Scoresby is referring have historically been enough to justify humanity's rapaciousness.

The biblical mandate was an implicit ideology justifying the push into the North American continent. Edward Fussell has read *Moby-Dick* as showing that even at sea the frontier myth has significant echoes. "Basically," writes Fussell, "*[Moby-Dick]* is a hunting story…. And as an American hunting story, regardless of ostensible locale, [is] inevitably a story about the West."143 However, if the ocean is Melville's metaphor for the West, what does the West symbolise? Wilson Clough asserts that *Moby-Dick* may have been originally intended to be "as much the embodiment of the American boast as any tale of the far west," detailing the mighty American whaling industry, but that Melville was inspired by Hawthorne's "great power of blackness" to take the novel to a higher metaphorical level. Thus, Clough sees the ocean setting of *Moby-Dick* as a way to provide Melville with "a West beyond the ravages of time and the depredations of man."144 Melville clearly saw and was affected by the impact of the invaders' encroachment on American nature, alluding to, for example, "the last of the Grisly Bears lived in settled Missouri" (MD155), "stumps of old oaks out of wild wood-lands" (MD341), and the sale of the "prairies of Illinois and Missouri" (MD471). He also referred to the "hills about Boston" which they "sell by the cartload" (MD440). It was the prairies that gave Melville the most obvious example of the settler's impact on American nature, the decimation of the buffalo. The bison were largely gone when

143 Fussell, 1965, op. cit.: 257-9. Writers have scoured *Moby-Dick* to find references to the West. Fussell says they are "almost continuous," and that there are "almost more allusions to the West than to whaling."

144 ibid: 234.
Melville was writing, but he claimed his 'buffaloes', the whale, safe from such annihilation, declaring, "the great whale [may] outlast all hunting, since he has a pasture to expatiate in, which is precisely twice as large as all Asia, both Americas, Europe and Africa, New Holland, and all the Isles of the sea combined." For Melville, "the whale [was] immortal in his species, however perishable in his individuality" (MD473). Of course, Sven Foyn's lethal harpoon gun was not in use in his time, the invention that would indeed take the largest species, the blue whale, to the very edge of extinction. The belief that the ocean is close to infinite is still held by many people, yet, as writers, including James Lovelock and George Fichter point out, the possible effects of our impact on the oceans is perhaps the least understood of our environmental influences, but may well be the most catastrophic.

Melville's America was at the cusp of the frontier period and the new industrial state. As Tony Tanner points out, Moby-Dick is "a book which could only have been written in America, and arguably, only in the mid-nineteenth century, when America seemed to stand at a new height, or new edge, of triumphant dominion and expansionary confidence in the western world" (MDviii). The Pequod is a small multi-cultural microcosm, a floating America, and Melville's imagery and metaphors of technology bridge the old and the new. His encyclopaedic garnering includes pastoral metaphysics.

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145 One needs only to look at the rubbish that is dumped into the seas around the world.
146 "The really critical areas which need careful watching are more likely to be the tropics and the seas close to the continental shores." Lovelock, 1987, op. cit.: 121. "The great oceans are vital to all life on earth. We dare not let them be destroyed. We have really just begun to learn how to use the sea wisely and effectively. Our very survival in the future depends on how we manage this last remaining great resource." Fichter, G. S.: 1978, The Future Sea. Sterling Publishing Co., New York: 165-6. Human interference in the oceans already impacts on this great meta-ecosystem. In one example, the overfishing of the Bering Strait and Aleutian Islands has meant that orcas are killing more sea-otters than usual (the sea-otter population declining by a quarter each year – from 53,000 in 1978 to 6,000 in 1997) which has meant the population of the sea-otter's prey, sea-urchins, is booming, at the expense of the critical kelp beds. 1998, 25 October, "Ecology Shift Sets Killer Whales on Sea-otter," in The Guardian Weekly: 23.
and modern factory conditions.\textsuperscript{147} Leo Marx's \textit{The Machine in the Garden} has illuminated well the use of the 'machine' metaphor in American literature, a metaphor that highlights the conflict between emerging technologies and the pastoral ideal. For Marx, "Melville's narrator fuses into a single, compelling image the inward and outward implications of man's assault upon nature."\textsuperscript{148} These images of technology are common throughout the book, from the textile mill inside the whale skeleton, to metaphors of Ahab as train, sweeping through the landscape: "The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run. Over unsounded gorges, through the rifled hearts of mountains, under torrents' beds, unerringly I rush! Naught's an obstacle, naught's an angle to the iron way!" (MD172). In the same chapter, "Sunset," in a meditation on the crew's easy compliance in his quest, Ahab describes himself as figuratively wearing an iron crown, as a weaver, and notes that his deterministic purpose is like "one cogged circle fit[ted] into all their various wheels, and they revolve" (MD171). This is not the only instance that Ahab or others in the crew are described as machines, or the only thing on the ship metaphorically allied to 'iron'. It is another of Melville's common metaphors. For example, after the first day of the chase Ahab admonishes Stubb for laughing at the wreck of the whaleboat: "What soulless thing is this that laughs before a wreck? Man, man! did I not know thee brave as fearless fire (and as mechanical) I could swear thou wert a poltroon" (MD560). This idea is reiterated when, after two days of being frustrated by Moby Dick, Ahab asks of the men:

\textsuperscript{147} As Marvin Fisher explains, Melville's visit to a paper mill in January 1851 prompted the anti-industrialism story, "The Maids of Tarturus." The disadvantages of industrialism, for the poorer classes, were clearly an issue that concerned Melville. Fisher, M.: 1977, \textit{Going Under: Melville's Short Fiction and the American 1850s}. Louisiana University Press, Baton Rouge: 70-94.

'D'ye feel brave men, brave?'

'As fearless fire,' cried Stubb.

'And as mechanical,' muttered Ahab. (MD570)

Any record of American culture from this period contains references to this conflict between the machine and the pastoral, because it was not just at a metaphorical level that there were tensions. It was becoming patently clear to many that the dominant Western paradigm had real potential for harm, both to the natural world and to humanity's own condition. Sacvan Bercovitch suggests that texts such as *Moby-Dick* are a jeremiad, a plaint against the changes in American society, "simultaneously lamenting a declension and celebrating a national dream." Melville, whilst proud of aspects of American society was also sensitive to less positive aspects, including the exploitative expansion into the frontier.

Marx suggests the try-works enable Melville "to fashion a metaphor of heedless, unbridled, nineteenth-century American capitalism." Yet, there are many metaphors for capitalism within the novel. What could be a greater symbol of capitalism than 'capital', the doubloon that Ahab nails to the mast? Inherent in such an incentive, analogous to Judas and his pieces of silver, is the belief that his men's compliance could be purchased. When Ahab first nails up the coin, in the "Quarterdeck," he almost metamorphoses into the 'machine' of capitalism:

slowly rubbing the gold piece against the skirts of his jacket, as if to heighten its lustre, and without using any words was meanwhile lowly humming to himself, producing a sound so

150 Marx, 1964, op. cit.: 306.
strangely muffled and inarticulate that it seemed the mechanical humming of the wheels of
his vitality in him. (MD164)

Such a payment was not unusual in whaling ships. Druett relates a fifteen dollar bounty
(twenty if the whale made one hundred barrels) by Captain Hamblin on the Eliza Adams
in 1872. On the Cape Horn Pigeon, a thousand cigars were on offer. In the "Extracts"
Melville cites A Voyage to Greenland (1671) in which "the first discoverer has a ducat
for his pains" (MDxlviii). Other bounties included clothes, shoes, tobacco, pipes and a
single gold dollar.151 It is worth repeating that the last word on the multiple
interpretations of the doubloon belongs to Pip, warning that the greed for the doubloon
will only lead to annihilation, that in the end (echoing Ecclesiastes), the planet, "the
green miser," will reclaim its sovereignty and all human beliefs of the opposite are just
vanity.

vi. Tragedy and comedy in Moby-Dick

Moby-Dick presents at least two ways to approach the world, the ways
represented in Ishmael and Ahab.152 It is a separation similar to that which writers such
as Meeker and Bakhtin see as fundamental to human culture, the choice between the
comic and the tragic, the carnivalesque and the authoritarian, between the picaresque
and the pastoral. Meeker claims that an "environmental ethic requires that human
behavior be modified to agree with the ecology of the world, not that the world be

152 There is a good argument to posit Starbuck's and Queequeg's attitudes as major also.
arranged to suit human desires."\textsuperscript{153} He advocates a more flexible way of interacting with nature and this is arguably Ishmael's chosen path, willow to Ahab's wind. Melville presents in \textit{Moby-Dick} an alternative to the dominant approach to the natural world. Meeker's appraisal of comedy and tragedy in literature suggests that the Greek tragic mode reflects belief in anthropocentric superiority and conflict with the environment, whereas the comic mode reflects an ecological, more adaptable, evolutionary and humble mode of human interaction.\textsuperscript{154} In his idea of an opposition to tragedy, Meeker is in agreement with Bakhtin, who proposes 'carnival' as the revolutionary form of human expression: "In the world of carnival the awareness of the people's immortality is combined with realization that established authority and truth are relative."\textsuperscript{155}

Arguably, the major plot elements of \textit{Moby-Dick} subscribe to the tragic mode, not surprisingly given Melville's respect for Shakespeare and the novel's debt to \textit{King Lear}.\textsuperscript{156} Surprisingly though, it is a great comic novel, due to the narrative voice of Ishmael.\textsuperscript{157} Amongst other things, Ishmael satirises religious dogma and the trivial needs of the modern industrial world. A. Robert Lee asserts that in "American literature … the drive to invent matching 'anatomical' imaginative forms for the nation's space and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Meeker, 1972, op. cit.: 162.
\item "The comic mode of human behavior represented in literature is the closest art has come to describing man as an adaptive animal." ibid: 39. Meeker admits that it cannot be said that the tragic view has caused ecological crisis, but rather "literary tragedy and environmental exploitation in Western culture share many of the same philosophical presuppositions." ibid: 59, 42.
\item Bakhtin, \textit{Rabelais and His World}, Morris, 1994, op. cit.: 226.
\item Guetti argues that Ahab's death is not tragic as he is an instrument of Melville's convictions and purpose. Guetti, 1967, op. cit.: 111. I suggest this definition would also exclude the deaths of MacBeth and King Lear.
\item Rosenberry has catalogued the comic touches of \textit{Moby-Dick}. Rosenberry, 1955, op. cit. Bezanson notes Ishmael's love of "laughter and hilarity," and his "deep belly laugh for the crudities and obscenities that mark the life of animal man." Bezanson, Hayford and Parker, 1967, op. cit.: 657.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
plenitude has been perennial." Melville's giant whale is the quintessential example of this drive; however, he also satirises this drive by countermining his creation, by making it both sublime and ridiculous, importing aspects of the grotesque. Bakhtin argues that the 'grotesque', with its emphasis on exaggeration, hyperbole and excessiveness and its focus on body organs, including sexual organs, is analogous to the carnival. There are many aspects of Moby-Dick that conform to Bakhtin's interpretation of the Rabelaisian grotesque, including the numerous references to the zodiac, the dismemberment of the whale body (fleshing out the sublime), both Stubb's and the sharks' feast (and associated 'table-talk'), the degraded and devoured body, and the comic and ironic chapter on the whale penis ("The Cassock").

From the outset of the narrative, Ishmael makes clear his attitude to humour. In his introduction to Queequeg, one of the more comic scenes in the novel, he is the victim of Peter Coffin's (the Spouter Inn's landlord) humour. Rather than take offence, he suggests:

However, a good laugh is a mighty good thing, and rather too scarce a good thing; the more's the pity. So, if any one man, in his own proper person, afford stuff for a good joke to anybody, let him not be backward, but let him cheerfully allow himself to spend and be spent in that way. And the man that has anything bountifully laughable about him, be sure there is more in that man than you perhaps think for.

The resilience of the comic mode is emphasised by Ishmael's adaptability and resultant survival. In his epic Anatomy of Melancholy (a work Melville was familiar with), Robert

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159 Bakhtin, from Morris, 1994, op. cit.: 195-234
Burton relates how the Ancient Greek townspeople of Abdera bade the physician Hippocrates to visit Democritus because they feared the latter was mad, because he was laughing too much.\footnote{160} Hippocrates' diagnosis was that "notwithstanding those small neglects of his attire, body, diet, the world had not a wiser, a more learned, a more honest man, and they were much deceived to say he was mad."\footnote{161} Burton suggests that "Democritus esteemed of the world in his time, and this was the cause of his laughter: and good cause he had."\footnote{162} Ishmael similarly suggests humour is the only way to cope with the absurdity of life.

Meeker claims that the tragic view "assumes that man exists in a state of conflict with powers that are greater than he is." He includes such forces as "nature, the gods, moral law."\footnote{163} There is no doubt that Ahab is in conflict with such forces. Meeker also proposes that, "warfare is the basic metaphor of tragedy … That is why tragedy ends with a funeral or its equivalent. Comic strategy, on the other hand, sees life as a game. Its basic metaphors are sporting events and the courtship of lovers."\footnote{164} In typical Melvillean bifurcation, though there are ubiquitous metaphors of war in \textit{Moby-Dick} they are often negated by the comic mode. Thus, there is the tragic motif of the funeral in the finale, yet a comic motif in Ishmael's early metaphorical wedding to Queequeg.

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{162} ibid  
\footnote{163} Meeker, 1972, op. cit.: 22.  
\footnote{164} ibid: 38.  
\end{footnotesize}
impact of the final burial at sea is also subverted by Ishmael's survival on the very symbol of burial, Queequeg's cryptically inscribed coffin.\textsuperscript{165}

Meeker suggests that the pastoral belongs to the tragic mode of literature. Ahab's longing for a garden that has been tragically lost is contrast with Ishmael's more comic and picaresque attitude.\textsuperscript{166} In \textit{Moby-Dick} there is certainly both this tragic view of the garden and a repetitive use of pastoral imagery. Marx notes this, suggesting that \textit{Moby-Dick}:

is divided, provisionally at least, into three realms: (1) a ship, mobile replica of a technically advanced, complex society; (2) an idyllic domain, a lovely green land that figures a simple harmonious accommodation to the conditions of nature, and (3) a hideous, menacing wilderness, habitat of cannibals and sharks located beyond (or hidden beneath the surface of) the bland green pastures.\textsuperscript{167}

In the very beginning of the novel, Ishmael asks: "Are the green fields gone?" (MD2), yet, towards the end, it is Ahab who longs for home symbolised by greenness; "By the green land; by the bright hearth-stone! this is the magic glass, man; I see my wife and my child in thine eye" (MD550). In the final lowering, Ahab looks back fatalistically at his ship:

\textsuperscript{165} In another example of the cohesive structure of the book, the coffin that saves Ishmael, is introduced in the first paragraph of the chapter entitled "Loomings," when Ishmael narrates that he is "involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses" (MD1).

\textsuperscript{166} "Eden, after all, was merely a small farm characterized by abundance, purity, and simplicity until its agrarian tenants noticed the existence of some awkwardly polarized contradictions like good and evil, male and female, obedience and rebellion, and as a result were sent off to build cities where such conflicts belong." Meeker, 1972, op. cit.: 86.

\textsuperscript{167} Marx, 1964, op. cit.: 285.
But good bye, good bye, old mast-head! What's this? – green? aye, tiny mosses in these warped cracks. No such green weather stains on Ahab's head! There's the difference now between man's old age and matter's. But aye, old mast, we both grow old together; sound in our hulls, though, are we not, my ship? Aye, minus a leg, that's all. By heaven this dead wood has the better of my live flesh every way. I can't compare with it; and I've known some ships made of dead trees outlast the lives of men made of the most vital stuff of vital fathers.

(MD573)

The tragedy is Ahab's, because in this moment of pastoral longing he realises that his madness and mania have made him dead to the world of greenness and living. Ishmael, by his embrace of both the wilderness and its denizens ("the unharming sharks … the savage sea-hawks" – MD583) survives. Thus, Ishmael and Ahab conform to the archetypal characters from the pastoral and picaresque: the quester, Ahab, and the picaro, Ishmael.

The need to combat the seriousness of the world of the whaleship is best illustrated by the chapter titled "The Hyena" (the name symbolic of laughter). After facing death in a stove boat Ishmael comes to a very picaresque conclusion:

There are certain queer times and occasions in this strange mixed affair we call life when a man takes this whole universe for a vast practical joke, though the wit thereof he but dimly discerns, and more than suspects that the joke is at nobody's expense but his own… and death itself, seem to him only sly, good-natured hits, and jolly punches in the side bestowed

168 Meeker contends that the scene of the picaresque in literature is not a garden but the forest, the wilderness. The picaresque hero is the comic hero, who adapts to their environment, and to the difficulties they are faced with, as Meeker explains: "Grossly put, escape from the mad world or adaptation to its conditions are the choices offered by the pastoral and picaresque modes." Meeker, 1972, op. cit.: 81.
by the unseen and unaccountable old joker…. There is nothing like the perils of whaling to
breed this free and easy sort of genial, desperado philosophy; and with it I now regarded this
whole voyage of the *Pequod*, and the great White Whale its object. (MD232)

It is all a joke. Ishmael decides there is no need to take such madness as Ahab's too
seriously. This does not involve resistance but rebellion of spirit, a revolution in the
heart: "Now then, thought I, unconsciously rolling up the sleeves of my frock, here goes
a cool, collected dive at death and destruction, and the devil fetch the hindmost"
(MD234). Melville was probably inspired by Francis Olmstead in this passage. The
latter describes, under the heading of "The Levity of Sailors," a sailor who fell from the
fore-top-sail-yard arm and "narrowly escaped destruction." The next day the sailor was:

as light hearted as any of them, and as would be the case with most sailors who think it
effeminate to heed an escape from death … Though compelled to undergo the severest toils
and privations, which almost always terminate his life before he has reached his natural
limit, yet the sailor is a light-hearted, careless fellow, forgetting all sober reflections when
danger has passed by.170

Olmstead goes on to describe other instances of dire peril, in which sailors have
maintained a sense of humour and indifference. This is similar to the sense of humour
often described in times of war and during other life-threatening hardships. It is possible
to adopt the tragic mode, as I suggest Ahab does, and fight against the unknown, or take
the more flexible, comedic and picaresque route taken by Ishmael. That it is Ishmael
who survives the saga, is perhaps an indication of which route Melville advocates.

Ahab does not only reject the pastoral in the closing chapters of the novel, he rejects the feminine. The opening paragraphs of the "Symphony" set up an opposition between the feminine and the masculine, between air and water: "the pensive air was transparently pure and soft, with a woman's look, and the robust and man-like sea heaved with long, strong, lingering swells, as Samson's chest in his sleep" (MD547). Throughout Moby-Dick, the evocation of the feminine is associated with the holistic and sympathetic understanding, and the masculine is linked to the rational and Ahab-like singularity of purpose. Eco-feminists, such as Merchant, argue that Western culture has subscribed to a similar view, and yet rewarded only the masculine. Arguably, Ishmael portrays the feminine (in this sense) as the more desirable. In the chapter entitled "A Squeeze of the Hand," he suggests that:

I have perceived that in all cases man must eventually lower, or at least shift, his conceit of attainable felicity; not placing it anywhere in the intellect or the fancy; but in the wife, the heart, the bed, the table, the saddle, the fire-side, the country …" (MD428)

The "wife, the heart, the bed" suggest the feminine world. Towards the end of the narrative, Ishmael delineates the world of the whale ship into feminine and masculine:

Hither, and thither, on high, glided the snow-white wings of small, unspeckled birds; these were the gentle thoughts of the feminine air; but to and fro in the deeps, far down in the bottomless blue, rushed mighty leviathans, sword-fish, and sharks; and these were the strong, troubled, murderous thinking of the masculine sea. (MD547)
In sexual terms, Ishmael describes the air and sea "as a bride to groom" and notes that the "girdling line of the horizon, a soft tremulous motion," and the "fond, throbbing trust" with which "the poor bride gave her bosom away" (MD548). Ahab is described as "lifting his splintered helmet of a brow to the fair girl's forehead of heaven." Ishmael relates that "glad, happy air, that winsome sky, did at last stroke and caress him; the step-mother world, so long cruel – forbidding – now threw affectionate arms round his stubborn neck, and did seem to joyously sob over him, as if over one, that however wilful and erring, she could yet find it in her heart to save and to bless" (MD548). It is at this point Starbuck and Ahab discuss the world of Nantucket, Ahab's young girl-wife (whom he had only slept with once – "leaving one dent in my marriage pillow" – MD549) and Starbuck's wife and child. It is, as noted, a chapter full of pastoral imagery. Importantly, at the end of the chapter, Starbuck leaves Ahab alone, and Ahab turns to the masculine sea.\footnote{Curiously, in "The Chase – Second Day," Moby Dick's gender is confused, as if to point to the opposition as purely a human construct: "There she breaches! there she breaches! was the cry, as in his immeasurable bravadoes the White Whale tossed himself salmon-like to Heaven" (MD565- emphasis added).}

In the chapter entitled "The Chase – Third Day," Ahab again makes the distinction between the feminine world of Nantucket, and the path he has chosen, when he notes that Starbuck deserves to die "in a woman's fainting fit" and that Stubb and Flask deserve to be concerned with "cherries! cherries! cherries!" (MD580). He even thinks of his mother. Ahab's rejection of the feminine world leads to his demise. In a moment, Ahab realises the import of Fedallah's prediction ("The ship! The hearse! --the second hearse!" – MD581) and the implications of Moby Dick's impact on the ship.

\footnote{Curiously, in "The Chase – Second Day," Moby Dick's gender is confused, as if to point to the opposition as purely a human construct: "There she breaches! there she breaches! was the cry, as in his immeasurable bravadoes the White Whale tossed himself salmon-like to Heaven" (MD565- emphasis added).}
For the reader, this outcome has been predicted all along. The numerous predictions and omens come true, as if Ahab's death has been pre-destined. Yet, *Moby-Dick* is also an investigation of the implications of chance as opposed to necessity, an investigation that culminates in Ishmael's survival. It is of course possible that he only survives because of his being opportunely "unprepared for [the dart's] effects" and "flung out" of the whaleboat during the third day's chase (MD578).\footnote{172} Ishmael does not see this as chance, asserting instead that he was there because it "was [him] whom the Fates ordained to take the place of Ahab's bowsman" (MD583). In keeping with this idea, there are several strong speeches by Ahab on the subject of determinism on the last days of the chase. In the chapter preceding the last days, "The Symphony", Ahab proclaims:

> What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it; what cozening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor commands me; that against all natural lovings and longings, I so keep pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time; recklessly making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not so much as dare? Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an errand-boy in heaven; nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible power; how then 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. By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in this world, like yonder windlass, and Fate is the handspike.

(MD551)

\footnote{172} Although he does survive at least by design, that of Melville. Charles Fiedelson suggests, "Melville first and last, assumes that 'some certain significance lurks in all things.' There is no other justification for the survival of Ishmael." Feidelson, C., Jr: 1953, *Symbolism and American Literature*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 32.
In this quotation, he poses one of the great philosophical questions, that of free will versus determinism? Ahab alludes to the idea that the quest for Moby Dick is not of his volition, but controlled by some transcendent force. It is a statement reprised on the second day of the chase, in conversation with Starbuck:

Ahab is for ever Ahab, man. This whole act's immutably decreed. 'Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled. Fool! I am the Fates' lieutenant; I act under orders…. I feel strained, half stranded, as ropes that tow dismasted frigates in a gale; and I may look so. But ere I break, ye'll hear me crack; and till ye hear that, know that Ahab's hawser tows his purpose yet. (MD569)

Ahab suggests that his future is not quite decided. That he has some part in deciding the outcome. Again, he echoes the ideas of Schopenhauer. In his first work, The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, Schopenhauer writes that causality takes three forms, 'cause' in the narrowest sense, 'stimulus' and 'motive'. The first of the three applies to the inorganic kingdom, stimulus applies to vegetative life and the unconscious parts of animal life, and motives, through the medium of knowledge, define animals and humans. He asserts that, "motive is a cause, and it operates with the necessity entailed by all causes." In the case of humans, he suggests, "the more powerful motive … decides him, and his action ensues with precisely the same necessity." For him, freedom of will meant ("not the twaddle of professors of philosophy but") "that two different actions are possible to a given person in a given situation."

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173 Schopenhauer, 1974, op. cit.: 69-72. The principle of sufficient reason has four forms, i) essendi (time and space), ii) fiendi (cause), iii) agendi (motive) and iv) cognoscendi (abstract reason), and in all four forms necessity rules, so that there is i) mathematical necessity, ii) physical necessity, iii) moral necessity and iv) logical necessity. Copelston, F. S. J.: 1946, Arthur Schopenhauer - Philosopher of Pessimism. Search Press, London: 24.
Now, although animal and man are determined by motives with equal necessity, man
nevertheless has the advantage over the animal of complete elective decision
(Whalentscheidung). This has often been regarded as a freedom of will in individual actions,
although it is nothing but the possibility of a conflict, thoroughly fought out, between several
motives, the strongest of which then determines the will with necessity.174

Ishmael had alluded to this idea when he said, "I ply my own shuttle and weave my own
destiny into these unalterable threads." For Ishmael, chance, free will, and necessity
were not incompatible but interwoven and working together.175

Ahab is conscious of the strongest of 'motives' that cause him to act as he does.
On the third day of the chase, Ahab's prediction comes true: "'What breaks in me? Some
sinew cracks! --'tis whole again; oars! oars! Burst in upon him!'" (MD579). Ahab's neck
is caught by the whale line of his last attempt to harpoon Moby Dick, as Ishmael had
predicted in the chapter entitled "The Whale Line":

> All men live enveloped in whale-lines. All are born with halters round their necks; but it is
> only when caught in the swift, sudden turn of death, that mortals realize the silent, subtle,
ever-present perils of life. And if you be a philosopher, though seated in the whale-boat, you
>would not at heart feel one whit more of terror, than though seated before your evening fire
>with a poker, and not a harpoon, by your side. (MD290)

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174 Schopenhauer, 1969, op. cit.: 297.
175 It should be stated, however, that such a conception of free will is not uniquely Schopenhauer's.
Walton Patrick has suggested that the idea of necessity, as used by Melville in Bartleby, is derived from
Jonathan Edwards' Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will and Joseph Priestly's The Philosophical Doctrine
of Necessity, whereby 'the will has a degree of freedom, but is freedom to operate only within the strict
limits of necessity.' What Schopenhauer brings to this discussion is a metaphysical explanation of free
will. Patrick, W. R.: 1969, 'Melville's Bartleby and the Doctrine of Necessity,' American Literature 41,
March: 39-54.
Ishmael proposes that all people are enveloped in the lines of necessity, but that few, with the exception of "philosophers" realise this.

Chance is recognised by writers such as Hassan as an essential category of the postmodern. The determinisms of more religious periods have been replaced with the concept of a random world. I would argue, like Schopenhauer, that we are not that free. As Ishmael suggests, the mass of interconnected threads that compose life largely control actions. Often, it takes the strongest determination to take the morally and environmentally correct action. Not many people manage to extricate themselves from the discourse in which they are mired. Ecocriticism has the potential to aid this divorcement by highlighting the oppositions in discourse, to understand what decisions are available.

vii. Whale suffering: sympathy versus utility in nineteenth-century accounts of whaling

In the discourse of nineteenth-century whaling the general attitude was that the violent death of whales at the hands of whalers was a requisite of the process of obtaining the valuable oil these animals contained. The nineteenth-century whaling commentators, including Melville, were well aware that harpooned whales were in pain. Many saw the torment of the animals as incidental to the activity of whaling, or like Flask claimed that: "the wondrous whale was but a species of magnified mouse"
(MD120). Of the many insights that come to Ishmael in the course of his educational voyage, the most significant is of a different conception of the whale, and though he starts with attitudes similar to those of the other whalers, by the end of the novel he is more sympathetic to them, and to the natural world that they represent. The steadily diverging positions of Ahab and Ishmael with regard to Moby Dick are important to understanding the novel. In the almost epigraphic opening sentence of the chapter entitled "The Whiteness of the Whale," Ishmael alludes to the cryptic and changing nature of his attitude to the white whale: "What the White Whale was to Ahab, has been hinted; what, at times, he was to me, as yet remains unsaid" (MD191). Even here, he suggests, "at times" the white whale has meant something completely different for him. For Zoellner, Ahab's conception of the white whale as malevolent finds its focus in the idea of the whale's immensity, whereas Ishmael concentrates on the white whale's whiteness, a symbol of the cosmic void.\textsuperscript{177}

Though partaking of the hunt, Ishmael humbly notes that the success of whalers is not only a matter of human superiority and skill, but is greatly aided by a weakness in the armour of the whale (one of the animal's mammalian characteristics): it has to come up to breathe: "Not so much thy skill, then, O hunter, as the great necessities that strike the victory to thee!" (MD380).

Melville scarcely uses the word 'pain' in his novel, instead describing whales as "in the extraordinary agony of the wound" (MD399), in the "agony of fright" (MD363), with "sharp, cracking, agonized respirations" (MD295), and "tormented" ('torment' and variations are used twenty-three times). The last, however, is mainly used (like the word 'anguish') to describe Ahab, rather than whales. Throughout Moby-Dick, the reader often gets the impression that the majority of pain experienced is the metaphysical torment felt

\textsuperscript{177} Zoellner, 1973, op. cit.: 150.
by Ahab. Melville only uses 'suffering' or 'suffer' as words to describe human, particularly Ahab's, psychological crises, or as one of his general emotion laden adjectives, with the exception of a note (on page MD211) where he quotes "Chace's" (sic) statement that the whale that attacked the *Essex* was "fired with revenge for the other harpooned whales' sufferings." At one point, however, in describing a whale's pain, he does use the expression "more than a sufferable anguish" (MD367).

The novel and the whale are inextricably linked, and its first editions bore the same name: *The Whale*. The entire book is a series of representations of whales, of layers of images and ideas. This includes the parody of "the best and latest authorities" of nomenclature, the "classification of the constituents of chaos" (the chapter titled "Cetology"), where whales are ranked like volumes on a shelf. Ishmael claims he "swam through libraries and sailed through oceans" (MD135) reflecting the idea that both learned knowledge and pragmatic experience, theory and praxis, are necessary to gain an understanding of and earn the authority to explain the whale.178 In the "Etymology," Melville, in a demonstration of polyphony, lists the word for whale in several languages. He deliberately misspells the Greek, Hebrew and Anglo-Saxon forms, and invents a Fegee and Erromangoan form.179 From the start, he makes us aware of the artificiality of language, and of the fact that it is only through this contrived form that it is possible to approach understanding of whales. His use of markers throughout the novel to structure the account (such as the nine "gams"), the pastoral interludes, and the chapters that counter and contradict each other, complicates interpretation and gives the book its rhythmic feel.

178 "I have had to do with whales with these visible hands" (MD135).
179 Cowan, 1982, op. cit.: 63.
The sea is clearly important in the novel; however, the *Pequod* does not venture there until a twenty-one chapters into the narrative. Ishmael does not see a whale until a third of the way through the book.\(^{180}\) Melville spins the whales on his loom, fabrics made of strands of whales he has seen, woven with yarns he has read. The idea of the whale ("such a portentous and mysterious monster") is mentioned in the first chapter, as is the white whale that looms, the "grand hooded phantom" (MD6). In "Of Whales in Paint …" Ishmael also explains the astrological views "that first defined" the whale to him, the "bright points" in the Northern Hemisphere and the constellation Cetus (the Whale) in the south" (MD281). These constellations are also seen in terms of the battle metaphors previously discussed: "boats in pursuit of them; as when long filled with thoughts of war the Eastern nations saw armies locked in battle among the clouds," and with "a frigate's anchors for my bridle-bitts and fasces of harpoons for spurs." Ishmael imagines "the fabled heavens with all their countless tents really lie encamped beyond my mortal sight!" (MD281).

Besides the eponymous whale, there are numerous other whales in the novel. There is also the whale that is the novel itself, a whale of ponderous bulk that must be boiled down to find 'poetry in the blubber'.\(^{181}\) There are the whales of erudition with which Melville bombards us: whales of mythology, of religion, of history and science. Many writers have investigated the "numerous fish documents" that are Melville's

\(^{180}\) Hillway, discounting the idea that Melville wrote a book on whaling and then added to it later, calculates, "eighteen full chapters and substantial portions of fifteen more" are devoted to the whale and its habits, a quarter of the total chapters in the book. Hillway, T.: 1950, *Melville and the Whale*. Stonington Publishing Company, Stonington, Connecticut: 10.

sources of what he also called his "higgledy-piggledy whale statements." Ishmael's attitude is varied, ranging from philosophical to comical, from indifferent to reverent. In the circle of postmodern meaning, to read the whale as text is to find only text. As Ishmael notes, contemplating the whale's "hieroglyphical" skin or 'blanket', "the mystic-marked whale remains undecipherable" (MD315).

Queequeg and Ishmael are weaving a mat when they first sight whales, and the rhythmic in and out is firstly interrupted by a line of asterisks in the text (points that are a contrast to the woven mat), and then by the Indian Tashtego's cry: "There she blows! there! there! she blows! she blows!" (MD220). Yet, when the boats are lowered the crew members are more concerned with the "devilish Manillas," who have been hidden by Ahab until this point. As the chase commences, Ishmael's narration is far more occupied with the dialogue of the characters, and the thrill of it all, than with the whales. The animals are hardly given a thought.

In the course of the chase and kill, the first whale is described as: "a gigantic Sperm Whale … rolling in the water like the capsized hull of a frigate, his broad, glossy back, of an Ethiopian hue, glistening in the sun's rays like a mirror"; "like a portly burgher smoking his pipe"; "the great fish"; and a "monster" with a tail like a tower (MD292). In a telling metaphor, Melville describes the line as "like holding an enemy's sharp two-edged sword by the blade, and that enemy all the time striving to wrest it out

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182 "Extracts" (MDxliv) and "The Decanter" (MD453).
183 Edlinger notes that the pursuits of whales in the novel, "in each case … provokes either a chapter sequence or a chapter cluster of cetological lore growing out of the circumstances of the particular killing." Edlinger, Parker and Higgins, 1992, op. cit.: 474. Zoellner suggests this way of proceeding is a way of highlighting the message of the 'serious' chapter that follows.
184 Of the 3,981 words in the chapter, only 488 refer to the whale in any way: roughly 12%.
of your clutch" (MD294). Thus, at the first kill, Ishmael reiterates the age-old metaphors
of whales as other, as enemy. At the same time, he emphasises the red blood:

The red tide now poured from all sides of the monster like brooks down a hill. His tormented
body rolled not in brine but in blood, which bubbled and seethed for furlongs behind in their
wake. The slanting sun playing upon this crimson pond in the sea, sent back its reflection
into every face, so that they all glowed to each other like red men.

Ishmael's language indicates sympathy for the animal's situation; his expression
highlights the bloodiness of the undertaking. Although Melville goes to lengths to avoid
prejudice against other races, importantly including Tashtego, Queequeg, and Daggoo,
in this instance he summons images of American Indians as 'savages', after a massacre,
imagery that was still potent in antebellum America. In doing so, he allies the whaleboat
crew with barbarism, and denotes the whale as its victim.

After Stubb lances the whale ("Stubb slowly churned his long sharp lance into
the fish, and kept it there, carefully churning and churning, as if cautiously seeking to
feel after some gold watch that the whale might have swallowed"185), Ishmael witnesses
his first whale die:

And now abating in his flurry, the whale once more rolled out into view; surging from side
to side; spasmodically dilating and contracting his spout-hole, with sharp, cracking, agonized
respirations. At last, gush after gush of clotted red gore, as if it had been the purple lees of
red wine, shot into the frightened air; and falling back again, ran dripping down his motionless
flanks into the sea. His heart had burst!

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185 Perhaps an oblique reference to Descartes' theories of animals as clockwork machines.
'He's dead, Mr. Stubb,' said Daggoo. (MD295-6)

For the reader with any sympathy for the whale, it is a painful scene. Ishmael's language conjures images of pain, fear and desperation. Daggoo's statement of fact can be read as almost sorrowful.

The chapter "Stubb Kills a Whale" is followed by two that are curiously linked, and with sexual connotations, "The Dart" and "The Crotch" (an explanation of the harpoon and its receptacle). Melville is determined to discuss all aspects of whaling, giving equal or greater weight to the 'craft' of whaling, the harpoons or 'irons', than to living whales. It is interesting to note his (and other whale writers') use of words such as 'pleasure', 'joy' and 'excitement' when describing the harpooning of a whale, as if there were a form of sexual gratification involved. Philbrick notes that mates "coaxed and cajoled their crews with words that evoked the savagery, excitement, and the almost erotic bloodlust associated with pursuing one of the largest mammals on the planet." Such language highlights the claim of many ecofeminists that nature and women have been construed as 'other', and similarly subjugated by unequal power relationships. The language of the whale hunt, by using sexual terms, links the whales to the sexual subjugation of women. Patrick Murphy, in his review of contemporary ecofeminism entitled "The Women Are Speaking," writes, "Ecofeminism from its inception has insisted on the link between nature and culture, between the forms of exploitation of

186 This section suggests that Melville had watched a whale die at close range, though Severin doubts that in Melville's brief whaling career he was ever promoted to being in a whaling boat. Severin, 1999, op. cit.: 7, also Hayford and Parker, 1967, op. cit.: 552.
187 Arvin writes of: "the loving manner in which Melville lingers over his imagery of lances, harpoons, and cutting spades ... [which] recalls again the epic minstrel and the way he lingered over his imagery of javelin and sword, shield and breastplate, chariot and ship, and such practical activities as sailing, hunting, plowing and the performance of obligatory rites." Arvin, 1961, op. cit.: 159.
188 Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: 50.
nature and the forms of oppression of women."\textsuperscript{189} It is not the function of this thesis, however, to explore this connection.

As the novel progresses, Ishmael becomes more sympathetic to the whales. When Flask kills the old and crippled whale by lancing it in an ulcerous sore, Ishmael notes, with contemptuous sarcasm: "pity there was none. For all his old age, and his one arm, and his blind eyes, he must die the death" (MD367). Ishmael's description here is one of his most compassionate, noting the whale's "tormented jet," "one poor fin," and its "agony of fright." He describes the "terrible, most pitiable, and maddening sight":

\begin{quote}
So have I seen a bird with clipped wing, making affrighted broken circles in the air, vainly striving to escape the piratical hawks. But the bird has a voice, and with plaintive cries will make known her fear; but the fear of this vast dumb brute of the sea, was chained up and enchanted in him; he had no voice, save that choking respiration through his spiracle, and this made the sight of him unspeakably pitiable; while still, in his amazing bulk, portcullis jaw, and omnipotent tail, there was enough to appal the stoutest man who so pitied.
\end{quote}

(MD363)\textsuperscript{190}

The longevity of this particular whale is confirmed by the "lance-head of stone" found in him. Melville's description is reminiscent of Oppian's, who writes "he struggles and lashes the sea with his terrible fins, like a bird upon the well-built altar tossing in the dark struggle of death."\textsuperscript{191} Zoellner suggests that Ishmael's compassion for this whale marks the beginning of his rejection of Ahabian values, and reflects and counters the

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{189} Murphy, Patrick D., "The Women Are Speaking," from Gaard and Murphy, 1998, op. cit.: 23.
\textsuperscript{190} This is reminiscent of the biblical leviathan. Job is asked, "Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?" "Job" 41.5.
\textsuperscript{191} Oppian, 1963, op. cit.: 483.
\end{quote}
following heroic chapter, "The Honor and Glory of Whaling." Ishmael may, as Zoellner suggests, "harbour a thorough contempt for the superficial or naïve" reading of his account. In such a naïve reading *Moby-Dick* might be interpreted as an heroic epic as opposed to one of butchery and murder – of cannibalism and sharkishness. For Zoellner, the "*Pequod attacks and kills a helpless cripple." He posits that no amount "of critical transmogrification can elevate this brutal encounter into the epic mode."192 The death of this old whale is the turning point of Ishmael's relationship with the whale. He watches "the utmost monster of the seas was writhing and wrenching in agony!” and notes that the whale's "last expiring spout" is "most piteous" (MD365-7). In a moment of insight, Ishmael allies the fate of this whale to that of the world, writing that the whale "revolved like a waning world" (MD367). The scene is deprived of any vestiges of the "Knights and Squires" heroism when the whale sinks, taking with it any glory or reward.

These passages are seen by some as evidence of a growing empathy for the whales. Zoellner proposes that Melville starts a process of humanisation of the whale, which engenders this empathy. Yet, if it is only by referring to the whales as human that Ishmael can have any sympathy for them, he is acting in the context of traditional attitudes to animals, whereby character-full pets are worthy of consideration, but not the domestic animals destined for consumption. Ishmael's empathy with the whales is not total, and he is still content to participate in whale hunts, even that of Moby Dick.

One of Melville's most common adjectives is 'poor', and while he does occasionally use it in the sense of 'moderate to inferior in quality' or 'impecuniousness', it

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192 See Zoellner, 1973, op. cit.: 166-190, for the full development of this argument. This quotation is from page 177.
is mostly used to mean 'deserving or inciting pity'. It is telling that of the one hundred and nine times Melville writes this word, only in three instances does it refer to a whale. Once for the fin of the old whale (in the sense of substandard), once when he compares a whale to "a portly burgher" (an example Zoellner cites as evidence for the humanising of the leviathan), and once describing whale loyalty: "Forty-barrel-bull – poor devil! all his comrades quit him" (MD405). By far the most common uses of the word "poor" are reserved for Queequeg, Pip and whalenmen in general.

The crew of the Pequod sees few whales, if the Grand Armada in the straits of Malacca is omitted (MD389). The Armada itself is an interesting scene, what Lee describes as "a poetic tribute to Nature's massive generative reservoirs of life," a statement that offers associations with the ancient idea of 'plenitude', of a bountiful earth for the use of mankind. It is an example of the Kantian sublime, of sheer mathematical fecundity. This section of the novel, preceding as it does the chapter entitled "Does the Whale's Magnitude Diminish?," anticipates and answers that very question. However, "The Grand Armada" chapter negates Ishmael's later conclusion that the whale is in no trouble, when he suggests such a large group of whales only occurs for "mutual assistance and protection" owing "to the unwearied activity with which of late they have been hunted over all four oceans" (MD391). Melville echoes Owen Chase from the ill-fated Essex, who observed that: "it would appear that the whales have been driven, like

194 Irey, 1982, op. cit.
195 A scene that could be inspired partially by Bennett: "A large party of Cachalots, gamboling on the surface of the ocean, is one of the most curious and imposing spectacles a whaling voyage affords: the huge size and uncouth agility of the monsters, exhibiting a strange combination of the grand and ridiculous." Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 173. Whitehead notes that "Female and immature sperm whales often form concentrations a few hundred kilometres across, containing very approximately 750 whales. These concentrations probably roughly coincide with areas of increased food resources." Whitehead, 2003, op. cit.: 283.
the beasts of the forests before the march of civilization, into remote and more unfrequented seas until now they are followed by the enterprise and perseverance of our seamen even to the distant coasts of Japan."197 Ishmael concedes that whales have indeed been troubled by their incessant pursuit. He also hints again as to an outcome of his story when he claims, "it would almost seem as if numerous nations of them had sworn solemn league and covenant for mutual assistance and protection" (MD391), attributing conscious agency to the whales in general and prefiguring the sort of supposedly rebellious whale met by the crews of the _Pequod_ and the _Essex_.198 In this chapter, there is a clue to Melville's general belief in the rapaciousness of the expanding colonial world. Ishmael proposes that the Sunda Straits give the appearance ("however ineffectual") of protecting "the inexhaustible wealth of spices, and silks, and jewels, and gold, and ivory, [of] the thousand islands of that oriental sea" from "the all-grasping western world" (MD389).

There is no security within the straits and the _Pequod_ is pursued by pirates at the same time as the crew is eager to get down among a huge congregation of whales. The whalers chase "monsters" and are chased by "bloodthirsty pirates." Clearly, Melville was aware that this was an ironic turn of phrase, considering the business of the _Pequod_. "The Grand Armada" is crucial in presenting Ishmael's attitude to the whales. At first he resorts to a battle metaphor, describing them as "forming in close ranks and battalions, so that their spouts all looked like flashing lines of stacked bayonets" (MD394), and yet

198 Melville also prefigures the outcome with a cryptic (at the time) statement when discussing "The Sperm Whale's Head": "This peculiarity of the whale's eyes is a thing always to be borne in mind in the fishery; and to be remembered by the reader in some subsequent scenes" (MD339). As Zoellner observes, this description of the field of vision of the whale may be intended to justify Moby Dick's attacking the _Pequod_ in the final scenes. 1973, op. cit.: 264.
he notes that the whole time these whales are swimming away from conflict. They become "gallied," perplexed by the hunters:

Had these Leviathans been but a flock of simple sheep, pursued over the pasture by three fierce wolves, they could not possibly have evinced such excessive dismay. But this occasional timidity is characteristic of almost all herding creatures. Though banding together in tens of thousands, the lion-maned buffaloes of the West have fled before a solitary horseman. Witness, too, all human beings, how when herded together in the sheepfold of a theatre's pit, they will, at the slightest alarm of fire, rush helter-skelter for the outlets, crowding, trampling, jamming, and remorselessly dashing each other to death. (MD394)

Their behaviour, as unwise as it is all too understandable, prompts Ishmael to make one of the ecocritically definitive statements of the book: "for there is no folly of the beasts of the earth which is not infinitely outdone by the madness of men" (MD394). Crucial to an understanding that animals are worthy of consideration, is the recognition that humans are animals too. The understanding that there is no hierarchy, and only an artificial separation, is important to ecocritical thought.

The whalers start the serious business of killing and, in a return to a utilitarian ethic, Ishmael remarks that, "Sperm Whales are not every day encountered; while you may, then, you must kill all you can. And if you cannot kill them all at once, you must wing them, so that they can be afterwards killed at your leisure" (MD396). The boats, however, are pulled into the midst of the whales, entering a "central expanse [of] the sea [which] presented that smooth satin-like surface, called a sleek, produced by the subtle

199 It is also reminiscent of "Job" 35:11, "Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?"
moisture thrown off by the whale in his more quiet moods." Ishmael says they "were now in that enchanted calm which they say lurks at the heart of every commotion" (MD396-7). He describes the whales as like "household dogs [that] came snuffling round us, right up to our gunwales, and touching them; till it almost seemed that some spell had suddenly domesticated them." The whalers on Ishmael's boat find themselves in an amazing scene of domestic tranquillity, on an "enchanted pond" (MD396-9). Ishmael can see through the reflective mirror of the surface of reality. He begins to conceive the natural world as a continuum that contains whales, people and all else. The metaphors of reflective-ness are interposed with those of vortexes and great wheels, again alluding to Eastern mythology. Ishmael is able to witness the 'human' side of the whale, to appreciate the positive aspects of the animal-ness of humanity, the similarity in loving mothers, in nursing babies, in love, birth and death. In a book noticeable for its lack of female characters the whale is, to use Zoellner's words, "femininized and infantilized." In a footnote, Melville writes of the defining mammal-ness of whales, the white breast milk, and notes that whales make love like humans: "When overflowing with mutual esteem, the whales salute more hominum" (MD399). The footnote to the Grand Armada scene also has one of the strangest and most striking images in Moby-Dick, when Melville describes harpooning a nursing whale: "When by chance these precious parts in a nursing whale are cut by the hunter's lance, the mother's pouring milk and blood rivallingly discolor the sea for rods. The milk is very sweet and rich; it has been tasted by man; it might do well with strawberries" (MD399). Melville neatly contrasts the thought of mothers and soft breasts, with the violent imagery of lance and blood.

Ishmael describes the whales surrounding him and compares their psychological states to his own:

And thus, though surrounded by circle upon circle of consternations and affrights, did these inscrutable creatures at the centre freely and fearlessly indulge in all peaceful concernments; yea, serenely revelled in dalliance and delight. But even so, amid the tornadoed Atlantic of my being, do I myself still for ever centrally disport in mute calm; and while ponderous planets of unwaning woe revolve round me, deep down and deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy. (MD399)

The narrative oscillates between Ishmael's sympathy for the whale and acceptance of the task in which he is involved, between identification and objectification. Similarly, the narrative also swings between Melville's ideas of brotherhood and his understanding of the base aspects of humanity. This oscillation creates a series of tensions throughout the work, tensions that are unresolved at, and by, the ending of the novel. The difficulty Ishmael has in reconciling these poles of attitude contributes to tensions that build in intensity as the climax of the novel is approached. Into the scene of tranquillity, the "serene valley lake," intrudes a "drugged" whale, one that has been harpooned by another boat. This whale had been struck with a 'cutting spade' attached to a short line "to seek to hamstring him, as it were, by sundering or maiming his gigantic tail-tendon." It is a miserable scene: "in the extraordinary agony of the wound … tormented to madness, he was now churning through the water, violently flailing with his flexible tail, and tossing the keen spade about him, wounding and murdering his own comrades"
At the end of this chapter, Ishmael again countermines the general narrative when he notes that all the 'drugged' whales "contrived to escape." Again, his tone is critical of the waste and needless suffering of the whales.

After Stubb kills a sperm whale, the crew (out of superstition prompted by Fedallah) kills a right whale, described as: an "inferior creature," a "lump of foul lard," and "so ignoble a Leviathan" (MD332-3). Ishmael never seems to change his attitude to right whales, evincing the common American whalers' attitude that they were not even worth killing. They are hardly even credited with animal-ness. In the chapter "Brit" they are described as "morning mowers," "monsters," "blackened elevations of the soil," and "like lifeless masses of rock" (MD282). Ishmael is obviously reluctant to allow them much in the way of intelligence:

And even when recognised at last, their immense magnitude renders it very hard really to believe that such bulky masses of overgrowth can possibly be instinct, in all parts, with the same sort of life that lives in a dog or a horse.

Indeed, in other respects, you can hardly regard any creatures of the deep with the same feelings that you do those of the shore. (MD282)

In the same way that Western culture has traditionally accepted a hierarchy from gods through humanity, Ishmael appears to construct a hierarchy in nature, from sperm whales down to right whales and sharks, unwilling to allow animals the democracy he applauds in humanity. His "Cetology" (in the chapter of that name) begins with sperm whales, even though they are smaller than the un-catchable Fin and Blue whales.

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201 Bennett, however, notes that during this practice of 'hamstringing', the whale, "by sometimes returning the weapon amongst a boat's crew, by the action of its flukes, has given no great encouragement to this practice." Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 201.
However, at other points in the novel he indicates that he considers himself not far removed from sharks.

He refers to the sperm whale as "the most formidable of all whales to encounter; the most majestic in aspect" and notes that it is "by far the most valuable in commerce; he being the only creature from which that valuable substance, spermaceti, is obtained" (MD137). It for this reason (the economic benefits) that, though many of the nineteenth-century whale writers were sympathetic to the suffering of the whales, most condoned it on utilitarian grounds. Ishmael was not alone, however, in being sensitive to the animals suffering. The common sailors were not as intent on justifying their actions and often described their confrontations with whales in terms of awe and wonder. Enoch Cloud, a young Nantucket sailor, wrote in his journal that:

It is painful to witness the death of the smallest of God's created beings, much more, one in which life is so vigorously maintained as the Whale! And when I saw this, the largest and most terrible of all created animals bleeding, quivering, dying a victim to the cunning of man, my feelings were indeed peculiar.202

Browne writes that he could not "conceive anything more strikingly awesome than the butchery of this tremendous leviathan of the deep." He describes a whale in pain: "Now and again intensity of agony would cause him to lash the water with his huge flukes."203 Beale writes that sperm whales are "huge but timid creatures," citing their "true

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character of being quiet and inoffensive."\textsuperscript{204} It was not uncommon for whalers to utilise a whale's devotion to their advantage, harpooning a young whale to lure its larger mother.\textsuperscript{205} Bennett notes that the "females, when attacked, will often endeavour to assist each other, and those that are uninjured will remain a long time around their harpooned companions; while the males, in which the social disposition is less strong, as commonly make a rapid retreat."\textsuperscript{206} The young Olmstead, who took a whaling cruise (as a doctor) for his health, also notes that whales "do not immediately abandon the victim, but swim around him, and appear to sympathise with him in his suffering." He was perhaps more sympathetic than most, and his descriptions evoke an appalling image:

in a few minutes the poor animal exhausted with pain, and the violence of his efforts, comes up to breathe, when he receives another harpoon, and several strokes of the lance, and goes down again, lashing the sea furiously in his agony…. Meanwhile, the whale that had been first struck, exhausted with pain and the loss of blood, which tinged the sea of a crimson hue in his wake, begins to exhibit signs of giving up the contest. He runs wildly around, lashing out at the sea with his flukes, and throwing himself out of the water, while a crimson spray is blown into the air, telling that he is 'in his flurry,' or in the agonies of death.\textsuperscript{207}

\textsuperscript{204} Beale, 1973, op. cit.: 4-6.
\textsuperscript{205} Bennett writes that he does not think that a whale mother will make any more "strenuous or romantic efforts in defence of her young, or sacrifice her life for its safety." However, he also notes that, "although a whaler will harpoon a calf, in the hope of arresting the flight of the school, or of securing the mother, the measure often fails in its object." Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 179-80.
\textsuperscript{206} Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 177-8. Whalers also believed, as Cherfas notes "probably correctly," that a male whale that had just finished copulating was easier to capture. Cherfas, J.: 1988, \textit{The Hunting of the Whale – A Tragedy That Must End}. The Bodley Head, London: 37.
\textsuperscript{207} Olmstead, 1969, op. cit.: 58-61.
Another great work of whaling fiction, in a more realistic tradition than Melville's, is Bullen's *Cruise of the 'Cachalot'* (1898). Bullen describes the death of a whale that was killed with her five-day-old calf:

> Once, indeed, as a deep-searching thrust entered her very vitals, she raised her massy flukes high in the air with an apparently involuntary movement of agony; but even in that dire throe she remembered the possible danger to her young one, and laid the tremendous weapon as softly down upon the water as if it were a feather fan.

> So in the most perfect quiet, with scarcely a writhe, nor any sign of a flurry, she died, holding the calf to her side until her last vital spark had fled, and left it to a swift despatch with a single lance-thrust. No slaughter of a lamb ever looked more like murder. Nor, when the vast bulk and strength of the animal was considered, could a mightier example have been given of the force and quality of maternal love.208

Although the compassion of some of these writers for the whales they killed (or witnessed being killed) is evident, there is mostly always the implicit belief that it was a necessary undertaking, necessary to lubricate the wheels of progress.

In *Moby-Dick* and other whaling texts, not just whales receive what would now be considered cruelty. The crew of the *Essex*, in the fashion of most whaling ships, stopped off on the Galapagos Islands to collect hundreds of tortoises for food.209 They

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208 Bullen, 1926, op. cit.: 250. Bullen notes later that he did not think such an act "lends itself to eulogium." ibid: 255.
209 The *Essex* was sunk by a sperm whale in the Pacific on the 20th November 1820. The crew escaped in three open boats with what provisions they could get aboard. They made the decision not to head for the closest islands, the Marquesas, because of the fear of cannibalism, but instead headed south. They were able to gain some relief by staying on Henderson Island for a few days (leaving behind three sailors) before taking again to the sea. Two of the three boats were picked up (on the 18th and 23rd of February) after the crews had resorted to cannibalism of the dead in one boat, and drawing lots, execution and cannibalism in the other. Of the twenty crew-members only eight survived, including the three on the
were simply stacked on the deck and forgotten until eaten. As Chase described them:
"They neither eat nor drink, nor is the least pains taken with them. They are strewed over
the deck, thrown under foot, or packed away in the hold, as it suits convenience. They
will live upwards of a year without food or water, but will soon die in a cold climate."\textsuperscript{210}
Philbrick writes that, "some sailors insisted that the tortoises felt no pangs of hunger
during the time on a whaleship, but Nickerson was not so sure. As the voyage
progressed he noticed that they were constantly licking everything they encountered on
the ship's deck."\textsuperscript{211} Olmstead also described the treatment of tortoises: "these turtles
exhibited a most remarkable tenacity of life. Sometime after their heads had been
separated from their bodies, as the cook proceeded to cut them up, it was a very painful
sight to witness the contortions of agony."\textsuperscript{212} Melville, however, evinced compassion for
the tortoises of the Galapagos. In his story "The Encantadas," from \textit{The Piazza Tales}
collection, he contrasts diabolic humanity with enduring nature as symbolised by the
tortoise.\textsuperscript{213} The sorrow of the tortoise is not that it has to inhabit the islands but that it
has to interact with humanity, and for Melville, even among the wooded Adirondack
mountains, and in scenes of "social merriment," the memories of these animals, of his
"merry repast" haunt him. Melville's questioning of humanity and its anthropocentric

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\item island. Survivors included Captain Pollard and first mate Owen Chase. Starbuck's footnote is interesting, Essex – Nantucket 1819 "Stove by a whale November 1820; captain, mate and three men saved in the boats; three men left on Disco Island." Starbuck, 1989, op. cit.: 229. The island the castaways were on was actually Henderson Island, not Dulcie Island (which Starbuck wrongly reports). Chase, 1999, op. cit.: 161-4.
\item ibid: 11.
\item Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: 74. Nickerson was one of the survivors who also wrote an account of the accident. A member of the Essex crew, (Chappel – one of the survivors on Henderson Island) set fire to one of the Galapagos islands (Charles) as a prank, causing huge damage and leading to the extinction of the tortoises there. ibid: 75-6.
\item Olmstead, 1969, op. cit.: 159.
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philosophies, manifest in *Moby-Dick* and other stories such as "The Bell-tower", is also evident in these sketches.

Sharks received particularly brutal treatment and 'dolphins' (a sort of fish, not the mammal) fared little better, being killed for the spectacle of brilliant colours they reportedly turned while dying.\(^{214}\) In the spirit of science, Olmstead caught and killed albatross, dolphins, porpoise, turtles, seals, "several birds," blackfish, numerous fish, and he describes the killing of "[sea-] elephants."\(^{215}\) At sea, the human treatment of non-human animals for sport, science or food was little different from that on land. Yet Bullen writes that he never "saw any creature injured out of pure wantonness, except sharks" while he was aboard the whaleship.\(^{216}\) Melville's chapter, "The Shark Massacre," relates the treatment of sharks that was common on whaling ships.\(^{217}\) In another example, Crompton relates how: "When one is captured sailors will often inflict every torture on it they can think of" and describes how a captured shark was cut open, its guts removed, and the body thrown back to the sea – only to be caught a second time on a

\(^{214}\) Olmstead describes the changing hues of the dying dolphin fish: "The various shades of blue are the predominating colors, which are rapidly exchanged for delicate tinges of yellow and green, as the agonies of death are convulsing his frame." ibid: 333. Bullen disagrees: "The beauty of the dying dolphin, however, though sanctioned by many generations of writers, is a delusion, all the glory of the fish departing as soon as it is withdrawn from his native element." Bullen, 1926, op. cit.: 29. There may have been confusion between dolphin fish and dolphins.

\(^{215}\) Bennett's description of an albatross concludes with the statement: "I was wearied by my attempts to suffocate my prize, and was compelled to destroy it in another manner." Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 1, 260. Olmstead describes the killing of sea-elephants: "Whenever a large number of these elephants can be seen drawn up in a dense array upon the beach, a body of men are sent ashore armed with clubs, who commence laying about them on each side until all are killed that have not been so fortunate as to make their escape into the sea. The skins of the slaughtered animals are then taken off, and the carcass is abandoned after removing the blubber which immediately envelopes it." Olmstead notes that this oil is more valuable than right whale oil. 1969, op. cit.: 132.

\(^{216}\) Bullen, 1926, op. cit.: 61. Bullen, however, describes killing animals for food and interest. These include "Porps" or "sea-pigs" (16-17), Black Fish (20-1), and 'dolphins' (29). Bullen, 1926, op. cit.

\(^{217}\) See Bennett's comments on the sharks' indifference to whalers in the act of cutting up a whale. 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 222.
hook baited with its own entrails. J. Ross Browne, who was amused by a shark with its tail lopped off being chased by "his comrades," writes of a massacre similar to the one Melville presents:

With five or six thrusts I killed four of the greedy monsters, by striking them on the back of their head, and cutting the principal artery. This was quite a refreshing little episode … and my success in the destruction of sharks induced me to believe that I had a greater natural turn for sport than the monotonous turning of a grindstone.

Bullen also describes the treatment of sharks, when the sailors on his ship skewer the mouth of a shark shut with a sharpened stake so that it will starve to death. However, he questions the practice:

Rapacious the shark certainly is, but what sea-fish is not? He is not at all particular as to his diet; but what sea-fish is? … He eats man, as he eats anything eatable, because in the water man is easily caught, and not from natural depravity or an acquired taste begetting a decided preference for human flesh.

In one of the more sympathetic pieces of writing about sharks, Bullen writes that the "cruelties perpetrated upon sharks by seamen generally are the result of ignorance and superstition, combined, the most infernal forces known to humanity." Olmstead

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218 Crompton, 1957, op. cit.: 122-3. He writes: "Sailors dread sharks and their hatred of them is notorious."
220 Bullen, 1926, op. cit.: 222-4.
describes watching a sailor pour boiling oil down the mouth of a shark, and though he thought it cruel, quotes others as saying "nothing is too bad for a shark."221

*Moby-Dick* is probably the greatest literary work concerning sharks. Melville used the shark as a base symbol from which to build his conception of human society. For Ishmael, there was nothing lower in terms of morality than the shark, and yet one of the underlying beliefs of *Moby-Dick*, if not all Melville's work, is the 'sharkish' nature of both humanity and nature – an intertwined combination of vulnerability and cannibalism. In Schopenhauerean terms, there is an understanding in Melville that some animals and people are more susceptible to the 'will' than are others.

The idea of cannibalism recurs frequently in the book, often in allusions to Queequeg and to sharks, but also to the *Pequod* ("a cannibal of a craft" MD71), and to Ahab (by himself – MD550). Ishmael also assigns this quality to all humanity (if not all life) when he says: "Cannibals? who is not a cannibal?" (MD309). Queequeg, as the only authentic cannibal in Melville's world where nothing is as it seems, is the least sharkish character. Ishmael's embrace of Queequeg, ("Better sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian." – MD25) symbolises all that is enigmatic in humankind ("Queequeg in his own proper person was a riddle to unfold." – MD491), and Melville's respect for the Pacific islanders and other 'savage' races.222 It is an embrace that is stressed throughout the novel, from the "Counterpane" chapter and the beginning to Ishmael's survival because of Queequeg's coffin/life-buoy. Queequeg receives the most sensitive treatment in Ishmael's narration. In this way, Melville incorporated into his text an

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221 Olmstead, 1969, op. cit.: 184.
222 The harpooners, Tashtego, Daggoo and Queequeg are representative of "savage" races, which reflect the ideas of Rousseau, and indicate a degree of romanticism in Melville's writing. This respect started at an early age. Rogin relates how, at the age of twenty-one, Melville signed himself as "Tawney", a colloquial reference to Indians and Africans. Rogin, 1983, op. cit.: 43.
answer to the arguments of racism and slavery prevalent in pre-Civil War American society. Though Queequeg is "savage" and "pagan," he is portrayed as the most civilised on the Pequod. This respect for the 'natural' over the 'civilised' is evident throughout Moby-Dick, and as stated above, is emphasised in his Piazza Tales story "The Encantadas."

Melville contrasts Queequeg's "savage" beliefs, his "conceit," with Ahab's civilised and rational attitudes. After Queequeg recovers from his fever ("Queequeg in his Coffin"), Ishmael, alluding to the outcome of the novel, notes that Queequeg believes "that if a man made up his mind to live, mere sickness could not kill him: nothing but a whale, or a gale, or some violent, ungovernable, unintelligent destroyer of that sort" (MD491). 'Ungovernable' and 'unintelligent' are terms that reflect the way in which James Lovelock conceives of Gaia in his hypothesis and Schopenhauer's conception of the 'will'. Ishmael describes a nature that is indifferent and atheistic.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of the shark to Melville's novel, and not surprisingly, Henry Nash Smith considers the shark Melville's principal symbol. While most of the metaphysical speculation in the novel occurs with reference to whales and Moby Dick, the shark is always present, a pragmatic and realistic reminder of that aspect of nature that awaits us all, death. If humans are to be more than animals, then they need to transcend their own sharkishness; thus, Melville answers the question of Job. The inability to transcend one's sharkishness is an important aspect of Moby-Dick, and the reader can infer much about various characters by the way they are referred to

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223 Rogin suggests that "Moby-Dick does not simply respond, in general, to slavery and racial prejudice in America. It is deeply enmeshed in the crisis of 1850." ibid: 106.
224 I would like to stress that the Romantic conception of the 'natural' is no less socially constructed than other versions.
relative to the shark. Examples can be found in Fleece's admonition of Stubb (MD307), and in the many references to Queequeg as shark (or more accurately, as a well-governed shark). In his sermon to the sharks, Fleece says: "Do you is all sharks, and by natur wery woracious, yet I zay to you, fellow-critters" (MD303). Fleece's "Belubed fellow-critters" is comic, and yet ironically, it is Melville's theme throughout the novel.

The image of Ishmael's conception of the underlying 'will' is remarkably adumbrated in the chapter "Brit." Ishmael asks the reader to:

Consider, once more, the universal cannibalism of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each other, carrying on eternal war since the world began.

Consider all this; and then turn to this green, gentle, and most docile earth; consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so 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. (MD284)

For Ishmael, the sea does not conceal what he asserts is the universality of cannibalism in nature, any more than human society does. D.H. Lawrence writes, "It is silly arguing. Because after all, it is only temporary man sets up the 'oughts'. The world ought not to be a harmonious loving place. It ought to be a place of fierce discord and intermittent harmonies; which it is." For Melville, the world is not a harmonious web, but a web of interaction, often 'fierce' (in Lawrence's terms) or 'cannibalistic' (in Melville's terms).

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226 Zoellner proposes that Queequeg is Fleece's well-governed shark, but that he "is not good in spite of his sharkishness. Rather he is good because of his sharkishness: that is the source of his moral power." Zoellner, 1973, op. cit.: 225.
227 Lawrence, 1973, op. cit.: 375.
Melville's charnel house allusion (see page 241) allies him further with Schopenhauer – not only do they both posit a "lower layer," a noumenal realm separate to the phenomenal, but they both conceive of it as 'evil', to use Schopenhauer's terminology. For Schopenhauer, "there remains an unending conflict between [these] phenomena as individuals. It is visible at all grades of individuals, and makes the world a permanent battlefield of all those phenomena of one and the same will." He asserts:

... every animal can maintain its own existence only by the incessant elimination of another's. Thus the will-to-live generally feasts upon itself, and in different forms is its own nourishment, till finally the human race, because it subdues all the others, regards nature as manufactured for its own use. Yet ... this same human race reveals in itself with terrible clearness that conflict, that variance of the will with itself, and we get homo himini lupus

[quoting Plautus' 'Man is wolf to man'].

Schopenhauer concludes that satisfaction is never lasting, and that therefore, there "is no end to striving ... there is no measure or end to suffering." The combination of his belief that "essentially all life is suffering," and his generally cantankerous disposition, led to him being considered the arch pessimist of philosophy.

The idea of the world's inherent evilness was not first proposed by Schopenhauer or Melville. Hsun Tzu, writing in the fourth century B.C.E., noted: "Man's nature is evil; goodness is the result of conscious activity." This idea resembles Melville's 'well-

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228 Schopenhauer, 1969, op. cit.: 265.
229 ibid: 147.
230 ibid: 309.
231 ibid: 310. In reply, he stated: For the rest, I cannot here withhold the statement that optimism, where it is not merely the thoughtless talk of those who harbour nothing but words under their shallow foreheads, seems to me to be not merely an absurd, but also a really wicked, way of thinking, a bitter mockery of the unspeakable sufferings of mankind. ibid: 327.
governed shark.' In Ishmael's classification system of whales, he notes "we are all killers, on land and on sea; Bonapartes and Sharks included" (MD144). This is evident in Fleece's sermon to the sharks: "You is sharks, sartin; but if you gobern de shark in you, why den you be angel; for all angel is not'ing more dan de shark well goberned" (MD304). Instead of Spinoza's pantheism, which suggests humans can do as they wish because they are sovereign to their own nature, the text echoes Schopenhauer's belief that the world is all one 'will', but that the 'will' is evil, and the only recourse is through resistance (or in Melville's terms, 'government'). Martin Pops suggests that a "salient difference between Ahab and Melville is that Melville never considered Essence exclusively evil and never believed that the 'still reasoning thing,' intelligence, was presumptive evidence of purposeful malice." In opposition to this statement, I propose that if it is possible to ascertain Melville's conception of 'essence' from the text, then it is one that is evil and the "still reasoning thing" (MD167) is not purposefully malicious but indifferent.

Many times Ishmael stresses belief in a base level of the world. The chapter entitled the "The Gilder" contains another warning about indulging in a too Goethe-like reverie: "when beholding the tranquil beauty and brilliancy of the ocean's skin, one forgets the tiger heart that pants beneath it; and would not willingly remember, that this velvet paw but conceals a remorseless fang" (MD500). Similarly, in "The Funeral" Ishmael exclaims: "Oh, horrible vultureism of earth! from which not the mightiest whale

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is free" (MD317). Ishmael notes the naturalness in the shark when he says: "A sort of
generic or Pantheistic vitality seemed to lurk in their very joints and bones, after what
might be called the individual life had departed" (MD311). Other characters in *Moby-
Dick*, however, do not equate sharks with human traits; the animals are generally
considered to be a very low and dishonest form of life. For example, Captain Peleg
accuses Ishmael of lying with the enquiry: "thou dost not talk shark a bit. *Sure*, ye've
been to sea before now; sure of that?" (MD74). Inversely, quite a few characters and
objects in *Moby-Dick* are described in shark-like terms, including Stubb and Queequeg.
The list also includes a whaleboat (MD294), harpooners ("no harpooneer is worth a
straw who aint pretty sharkish" – MD93), Tashtego ("his shark-white teeth" – MD513),
Perth ("in a bristling shark-skin apron" – MD 496), Ahab's hand ("here's velvet shark-
skin" – MD529) and even Moby Dick ("in the manner of a biting shark" – MD 556).
When Ahab lowers on the third and what will be final day of the chase, it is the lunatic
Pip who cries: "The sharks! the sharks! … O master, my master, come back!" (MD574).
This final portent lies in Pip's realisation that Ahab has turned his back on his last chance
to become the "well-governed shark" like Queequeg, and has thus surrendered himself to
the "universal vultureism" of the sea. The final reference to sharks, as "unharming," is
perhaps the most enigmatic (MD583). Rather than being Job or Jonah taught a lesson by
God, Ishmael survives the masculine sea because of his greater 'feminine' understanding
of reality, his comic resistance, and his less antagonistic attitudes. He too has governed
his sharkiness, and survives because he is "unharming."

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235 For Nash Smith "The main point of [this] passage concerns economic justice: no member of a society
has a right to a larger share of the available resources than any other member (after all, the whale they are
eating belongs to someone else)." Nash Smith, Gilmore, 1977, op. cit.: 33.
236 The sharks that leave the *Pequod* to follow Ahab in his boat are described as "following them in the
same prescient way that vultures hover over the banners of marching regiments in the east" (MD574).
For Schopenhauer, "[n]o animal ever torments another for the sake of tormenting: but man does so, and it is this which constitutes the diabolical nature which is far worse than the merely bestial."\(^{237}\) He suggested the only recourse is the denial of the 'Will'. In this, he also found inspiration in the spiritual beliefs of Eastern religions. Likewise, *Moby-Dick* suggests the way to salvation is to govern the sharkishness within us all, to deny the impulses of the 'Will'. Schopenhauer claimed that it was possible for a person to reach a state of 'Will' denial:

Such a man, who after bitter struggles with his own nature, has at last completely conquered, is then left only as pure knowing being, as the undimmed mirror of the world. Nothing can distress or alarm him any more; nothing can any longer move him; for he has cut all the thousand threads of willing which hold us bound to the world, and which as craving, fear, envy, and anger drag us here and there in constant pain.\(^{238}\)

Whilst this is a good description of Melville's later eponymous characters in *Bartleby* and *Billy Budd*, it is also a description of the state reached by Ishmael in the 'Epilogue' of *Moby-Dick*.

Melville's travels around the world exposed him to nature and humanity, in all their moods. His texts include, and are critical of the injustices he experiences. Harsh treatment was not restricted to the non-human animals in the world of the whaleship. As noted by Captain Donald Poole: "Probably more rubbish has been written about that

\(^{237}\) Schopenhauer, 1970, op. cit.:139. Contrary to Schopenhauer there are several species of animals that torment other animals. Cats commonly play with their prey, as do Orcas, and larger dolphin species. In a letter to Hawthorne (June 29, 1851) Melville suggested that the diabolical was the theme of his novel. He wrote "*Ego non baptizo te in nomine patris* – but make out the rest yourself." Leyda, 1952, op. cit.: 435. In *Moby-Dick*, Ahab's oath in the chapter "The Forge" completes the statement: "*Ego non baptizo te in nomine patris, sed in nomine diaboli!*" [I baptise you not in the name of the Father but in the name of the Devil] (MD499).

\(^{238}\) Schopenhauer, 1969, op. cit.: 391.
period than any other in our history. It was colorful, all right, but there was precious little romance in it – and even less money for the lowly foremost hand. Profits went to the shipowners and officers."239 Some people profited from the decimation of the whale stocks but the majority of the whalemens continued a life that was pretty close to that described by Hobbes in *Leviathan*: "poore, nasty, brutish, and short."240 The ships were a world of violence, oppression, racism and harsh conditions.241 Philbrick notes that a whaling voyage was the lowest rung of the maritime ladder and that, far from being a glamorous life, shipping out on a whaler was often "a last and desperate resort."242 The 'lay' system was extremely exploitative, the food disgusting, and washing conditions uninviting (a tub of urine was used to soak blubber saturated clothes).243 Arvin quotes E. P. Hohman as saying that the life of a whaling seaman represented "perhaps the lowest condition to which free American labor has ever fallen."244

Leo Marx writes that the "whaling society, dedicated to an unbridled assault upon physical nature, selects and rewards men who adapt to the demand for extreme repression," and thus many of the captains of the ships were often far worse than the monomaniacal Ahab.245 Desertion from ships was common. Melville deserted the *Acushnet* in the Marquesas Islands in June 1842, his subsequent experiences giving rise to his first novel *Typee*.246 Browne's captain remains throughout his work the epitome of

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239 Graves, W.: 1976, "The Imperiled Giants," *National Geographic* 150, 6, December: 730. Captain Donald Poole is from Martha's Vineyard, and is a whaling descendant and historian.
240 Hobbes, 1985, op. cit.: 186
241 See Philbrick, 2000a, Mawer 1999, and Druett, 1991, for a good account of whaling conditions.
242 Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: 25.
244 Arvin, 1961, op. cit.: 51.
245 Marx, 1964, op. cit.: 315.
unrelenting severity, and Druett quotes one whaling wife as describing whaling captains as "men who had left their souls at home."\textsuperscript{247} Philbrick notes that the mates of whaling ships (he includes Owen Chase of the \textit{Essex}) often underwent a Jekyll-and-Hyde transformation on leaving home.\textsuperscript{248} Like a microcosm of America, the lowest class, sailor, was further divided in descending order into whites, American blacks, Portuguese and islanders.\textsuperscript{249} As Stubb notes to Pip, "a whale would sell for thirty times what you would, Pip, in Alabama" (MD424). Unlike the general shipboard camaraderie in Melville's book, the black Americans, Portuguese and Islanders were often segregated and forced to suffer worse conditions. Mawer notes, however, that in the whaleboats (as opposed to whaleships) there was no discrimination: "boat crews were selected on merit and thereby were multi-racial."\textsuperscript{250} Browne was particularly prejudiced against the Portuguese, whom he considered were "mere brutes, and, with two or three exceptions, the rest of the crew were little better."\textsuperscript{251}

Melville was far more egalitarian, and an excellent example of his technique is evident in the way Stubb treats Fleece in the chapter "Stubb's Supper."\textsuperscript{252} Melville first highlights Stubb's racism, accentuating the irony of the mate's aspersions as to the cook's intelligence, but then has Fleece answer the mate emphatically as he walks off: "Wish, by gor! whale eat him, 'stead of him eat whale. I'm bressed if he ain't more of shark dan

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\textsuperscript{247} Druett, 1991, op. cit.: 7.
\textsuperscript{248} Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: 32.
\textsuperscript{249} Druett relates the beating to death of a native sailor by Captain Norris on the \textit{Sharon}, "for no comprehensible reason." Druett, 1991, op. cit.: 136.
\textsuperscript{250} Mawer, 1999, op. cit.: 168. Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: 172.
\textsuperscript{251} Browne, 1968, op. cit.: 41. Mawer notes his attitude changed after living with them for months. 1999, op. cit.: 168.
\textsuperscript{252} Beale, however, prefaced his work on the sperm whale with a dedication (in the form of a letter) to Thomas Sturge Esq., congratulating him on his kindness to "seamen and other engaged in [his] service" and his "incessant efforts … to liberate the Negro from the condition of the slave." Beale, 1973, op. cit.: x.
Massa Shark hisself,' muttered the old man, limping away; with which sage ejaculation he went to his hammock" (MD307). Melville's Fleece in many respects resembles Olmstead's cook and steward Mr Freeman, said to belong to "the ebony race." Olmstead writes that the cook was "the fountain of all fun and good humor aboard the ship … [sustaining] a relation to the ship similar to that of the jester in a feudal establishment."

In a veiled description of what was in all likelihood cruel behaviour, Olmstead notes that Mr Freeman (or "Spot") received a "serio-comic punishment from the captain and officers every day." Like that of Fleece, his language gave the impression of an attempt at education: "He possesses all the negro accomplishments in full perfection, embellishing his conversation by use of language in all the variations of which it is susceptible."\(^{253}\) Olmstead attempts to portray the language of Mr Freeman: "we are going to have some very plausible weather, so far as the aspection of the sky would seem to elucidate" [my emphasis]. In euphemisms for what was likely cruel treatment, Mawer writes that the galley cook was like a court jester and acted as a safety valve on ship: "They are whaling's unsung heroes, their identities and dignities sacrificed in the cause of peace and harmony aboard."\(^{254}\)

Ishmael is clearly sympathetic to Fleece, and early in the narrative, he suggests, "there is considerable glory" in being a cook (MD4). Melville's views on slavery play a large part in Moby-Dick and his questioning of racism is important to any ecocritical reading of Moby-Dick because racism and speciesism are connected; environmentalism,  

\(^{253}\) Olmstead, 1969, op. cit.: 44-6. Zoellner's statement that Fleece's language is a clue to his "deliberate mask" is contradicted by Olmstead's account. Zoellner claims that everyone in Moby-Dick speaks as per their station except Fleece and yet, in the light of Mr Freeman, it is possible that Negro cooks on whaleboats did speak like Fleece. Equally possible, is that Fleece is based on the real person Mr Freeman. Without doing a study of mid nineteenth century language, I would posit that no character in Moby-Dick speaks as they would have in reality. There is a slight racism in Zoellner's proposition, denying a black cook the ability to use "bookish adjectives." Zoellner, 1973, op. cit.: 220.

\(^{254}\) Mawer, 1999, op. cit.: 178.
as many commentators claim, is unrealistic if it does not include social justice.

Melville's understanding of the natural world was inextricably linked to the conviction that people such as the three harpooners did not deserve the treatment they received in American society. Melville's inclusion of an American Indian, African and Islander, and their promotion to the Captain's table (in the chapter entitled "The Specksynder") demonstrates this. Ishmael explicates such a philosophy when he turns 'idolater': "And what is the will of God? – to do to my fellow man what I would have my fellow man to do to me – *that* is the will of God" (MD54).

viii. Whales that sink ships: socially constructed nature deconstructs its constructors

By making the whale the 'victor' in the end of *Moby-Dick*, Melville deliberately flouts the genres and myths he has woven into his story. Ahab became no St. George to the dragon, nor Perseus to the monster. Not only does Moby Dick sink the *Pequod*, he does not feature in a sequel: there are no harpoons to pull out of the whale at a later killing (as happened with the whale that attacked the *Ann Alexander*).255 This forces the reader to question Melville's motives, the meaning of the whale and the nature of reality. As with Ishmael's repeated interrogation of the idea and representation of the whale, the reader has to struggle to reach an interpretation. In the early 1800s, the idea of a whale sinking a large ship was revolutionary. The thought of nature fighting back was heretical (that it could win such a battle unthinkable). It was not purely Melville's imagination,

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255 In the post *Pequod* setting of the narration of the "Town-Ho" story, Ishmael still refers to Moby Dick as immortal (MD265).
however, that was to create this story. As writers such as Vincent have shown, much of Melville's originality lay in his ability to achieve a synthesis of his varied sources. The story that largely inspired the conclusion of *Moby-Dick* was the sinking of the *Essex* in November 1820.256 The open boat ordeal that followed is one of the most incredible in the history of sea-faring, one that continues to amaze readers, as can be seen by the 1999 republishing of the First Mate Owen Chase's account *The Wreck of the Whaleship Essex* and the interpretative *In the Heart of the Sea* by Nathaniel Philbrick.257 Prior to the sinking of the *Essex*, no ship from the American whale fishery was known to have been attacked by a sperm whale (see Appendix A).258 However, Mathews writes that:

> In earlier days Icelandic sailors went in great dread of the evil whales – and it was especially dangerous to mention their names at sea. The names were tabooed, and anyone guilty of using them was deprived of his food. Rather than mention whales at sea people called them great fish – if evil whales were mentioned they would approach the boat and try and destroy it.259

Mathews claims, "the Icelanders thought that some whales were fond of human flesh and would linger for a whole year in the place where they had got such food. People therefore avoided the banks where whales had destroyed ships."260 Although this strikes the modern reader as superstition, it does indicate a belief that whales were capable of

256 See footnote 207, page 292.
258 Note that the *Union* and the *Harmony* were both sunk by whales prior to the sinking of the *Essex*, but both these ships were sunk from hitting a whale, not by being struck ('deliberately') by a whale.
260 ibid. Cousteau says that these whales, the vicious and cunning "Red Heads," were amongst other mythological species like horse whales and boar whales. 1988, op. cit.: 252.
sinking boats. There was a real danger from ships hitting sleeping whales on the surface, with Slijper claiming that sperm whales seem "to be the deepest sleeper of all Cetaceans."261 The Union out of Nantucket had done this in 1807, breaking two timbers on the starboard bow, which was enough to sink the ship.262 Starbuck cites Marco "Paulo," who wrote (in 1298) that Chinese junks had as many as thirteen compartments in the hold "to guard against accidents which may cause the vessel to leak, such as striking a rock, or being attacked by a whale."263

In 1841, Melville, then twenty-one and aboard the whaleship Acushnet near the equator in the Pacific, met and 'gammed' with the Nantucket whaler Lima. He met William Chase, "a fine lad of sixteen or thereabouts," Owen Chase's son, and they discussed the sinking of the Essex. Chase gave Melville a copy of his father's book, "his plain and faithful narrative," and the situation in which it was read, "upon the landless sea, and close to the very latitude of the shipwreck" had a "surprising effect" on Melville, amplifying the book's impact (MD211).264 Philbrick writes that the Essex sinking provided Melville with more than just the ending of Moby-Dick: "It had spoken to the same issues of class, race, leadership, and man's relationship to nature that would occupy him."265 Many of the whale books Melville read also mentioned the wreck of the Essex, including Bennett and Beale. What was most impressive about the Essex's story was not the hardship of the open boat journey, the starvation, death, murder and cannibalism, but the extraordinary fact that a whale should deliberately (and

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262 Starbuck, 1989, op. cit.: 115.
263 ibid.
264 See also the notes to Chase, 1999, op. cit.: 177-8.
265 Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: xi.
consciously) fight back and assail the ship of its attackers. This did not conform to the perception of 'dumb animals' and god given rights to exploit marine animals. Although they had killed many thousand whales, it was shocking that a whale should choose to attack a ship. If Nature was to fight back, and Nature was God's handiwork, then the implications were staggering. There could be no greater prophecy, and Melville highlights the traditional use of whales (nominally the leviathan) by the Hebraic god in such warnings. Chase anticipates Ahab when he enquires by what "unaccountable destiny or design" the attack had been brought about. The whale researcher Hal Whitehead claims that the whale may have first struck the Essex by accident, which annoyed it enough to provoke a genuine 'attack', a theory apparently shared by many "experienced whalers." There is certainly little evidence to suggest that the event was not an accident; however, the accounts written by Chase and others maintain that it was a deliberate act (perhaps a trauma-induced psychological necessity to explain how it happened at all). Chase writes of "this sudden and most deadly attack … by an animal never before suspected of premeditated violence and proverbial for its insensibility and inoffensiveness." He concludes: "it was anything but chance" which caused the accident; the whale's actions were "calculated to do the most injury"; to produce such an impact "the exact maneuvers which he made were necessary"; and that the whole circumstances were a result of "calculating mischief." Furthermore, he writes: "[the

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266 It is possible that the reason the whale was able to sink the ship was that it was already weakened below the water line, possibly by teredo worms. It is also possible that the owners had skimped on the costs of coating the hull (that keeps out the wood destroying worms). ibid: 19. Philbrick proposes a theory that the whale may have been attracted by the banging (translated into the water as sperm whale-like clicks) of Chase's hammer as he mended his boat. Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: 87.
267 ibid: 33.
268 Cited in ibid: 87. See also Olmstead, 1969, op. cit.: 145.
269 Chase, 1999, op. cit.: 33-5.
whale's] aspect was most horrible and such as indicated resentment and fury. He came
directly from the shoal which we had just before entered – and in which we had struck
three of his companions – as if he were fired with revenge for their sufferings." Philbrick
further exaggerates this concept, writing of a whale with "the vindictiveness and guile of
a man."270 Gary Kinder, in his 1999 introduction to Chase's account, writes that the
whale was "like an enraged bull," which "rammed its blunt massive head" into the
ship.271 This implies that the whale was active in its actions, not passively involved in an
accidental collision with the ship's hull.

The boats of the Essex had lowered in pursuit of a "shoal of whales" and Chase's
boat harpooned a whale, which "threw himself in an agony over towards the boat …
[and with] a severe blow of his tail struck the boat near the edge of the water, amidships,
and stove a hole in her." Chase cut the line and returned to the ship for repairs. He
observed, "a large spermaceti whale, as well as [he] could judge eighty-five feet in
length." At first, it was lying quietly on the water then dove, coming up and heading for
the ship at what Chase estimated was about three knots (the same speed as that of the
ship). He writes, "his appearance and attitude gave [them] at first no alarm";
nevertheless, he gave the order to turn the boat away from the whale:

The words were scarcely out of my mouth before he came down upon us with full speed and
struck the ship with his head, just forward of the forechains. He gave us such a tremendous
jar as nearly threw us all on our faces. The ship brought up as suddenly and violently as if
she had struck a rock and trembled for a few seconds like a leaf.272

270 Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: xiii.
271 Chase, 1999, op. cit.: v.
272 ibid: 17-20.
The inconceivable had happened. In acknowledgement of this fact, Chase writes that the crew "looked at each other with perfect amazement, deprived almost of the power of speech. Many minutes passed before [they] were able to realize the dreadful accident." The whale was stunned, then writhed in "rage and fury," before heading off.\textsuperscript{273} Chase had already decided the ship was sinking when there was the shout, "here he is – he is making for us again." Chase writes that he saw the whale coming with "tenfold fury and vengeance in his aspect."\textsuperscript{274} The whale again struck the ship, before making off for good. Before long, the crippled ship "fell over to windward and settled in the water" (a less dramatic event than the \textit{Pequod} dragging all the crew into the depths). After noting with "a horror-struck countenance and voice" that the ship had been damaged Captain Pollard rowed up to Chase and enquired: "'My God, Mr Chase, what is the matter?'… [to which Chase replied] 'We have been stove by a whale.'"\textsuperscript{275} Dakin writes that the news of the \textit{Essex} was brought to Australia by Captain Thomas Raine of the \textit{Surry} but that it was so "extraordinary that belief would be refused had it not been confirmed by the unfortunate sufferers who Captain Raine afterwards released from a desert rock in the Pacific."\textsuperscript{276} Similarly, Starbuck notes that when the story reached England, "some of the Prominent British journals scouted the tale as preposterous."\textsuperscript{277}

\textsuperscript{273} Philbrick makes much of the fact that Chase could have lanced the stunned whale at this point, seeing it as an example of a failing in his leadership qualities. Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: 82, 254. It is possible that even though the unbelievable (that a whale would attack) had happened, the idea that it would attack twice was even more unexpected; therefore lancing the whale was not a priority. The whale passed under the ship and knocked off a twelve inch thick piece of timber, the false keel. ibid: 81.

\textsuperscript{274} Chase, 1999, op. cit.: 22.

\textsuperscript{275} ibid: 28-9.

\textsuperscript{276} Dakin, 1938, op. cit.: 88. Raine was apparently well known and trusted in Australian waters and is credited by Dakin with the rescuing of the three survivors from Dulcie (Henderson) Island. See Chase, 1999, op. cit.: 161-4.

\textsuperscript{277} Starbuck, 1989, op. cit.: 122.
The whale that sank the *Essex* was by no means the only supposedly aggressive "famous whale" to inspire Melville. There is no doubt that whalers, including the other seamen on the *Acushnet*, told stories of such whales. The 'fighting' whales were not uncommon and the more boisterous passed readily into folklore. Melville is at pains to catalogue such cases, including a detailed account of the sinking of the *Essex*. His sources go back to "the sixth Christian century." He cites a magistrate from Constantinople, Procopius, who he claims:

> mentions that, during the term of his prefecture at Constantinople, a great sea-monster was captured in the neighboring Propontis, or Sea of Marmora, after having destroyed vessels at intervals in those waters for a period of more than fifty years. A fact thus set down in substantial history cannot easily be gainsaid. Nor is there any reason it should be. Of what precise species this sea-monster was, is not mentioned. But as he destroyed ships … he must have been a whale; and I am strongly inclined to think a Sperm Whale. (MD215)

In his "Affidavit," Ishmael swears to the veracity of these claims, as if he is aware that such events are incredible and that his novel's denouement would be considered only fantastic: "a monstrous fable, or still worse and more detestable, a hideous and intolerable allegory" (MD209):

> But not only did each of these famous whales enjoy great individual celebrity – nay, you may call it an ocean-wide renown; not only was he famous in life and now is immortal in forecastle stories after death, but he was admitted into all the rights, privileges, and distinctions of a name; had as much a name indeed as Cambyses or Caesar. (MD208-9)

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278 Severin tells how the whalers of Lamalera have a word, *kea*, for a whale that arrives after another whale has been harpooned and tries to help it. Severin, 2000, op. cit.: 174.
Ishmael is extremely keen to document the 'fighting whales', and at first, it appears a tactic to make the outcome of the book seem credible. He lists Timor Tom, "scarred like an iceberg … whose spout was oft seen from the palmy beach of Ombay," New Zealand Jack, "terror of all cruisers that crossed their wakes in the vicinity of the Tattoo Land," Morquan, "King of Japan," and Don Miguel, a "Chilian whale, marked like an old tortoise with mystic hieroglyphics upon the back" (MD208-9). He further notes, as justification for Ahab's actions, that these whales were "systematically hunted out, chased and killed by valiant whaling captains" (MD209). Bennett mentions New Zealand Tom as being one of these famous 'fighting whales', as does Beale (who also mentions Timor Jack). Beale notes, however, that the stories of such whales are "numberless," but are "probably much exaggerated accounts." In Melville's typical way, the narrative conspires to subvert an interpretation of fighting whales as a real danger. For example, when Ishmael describes Moby Dick, on first hearing of him, as a "murderous monster" (MD181), it is by an unaccredited quoting of Ahab. Ishmael notes that it was "unexampled, intelligent malignity which, according to specific accounts, he had over and over again evinced in his assaults" that made Moby Dick so terrifying (MD186). Again, Melville introduces ambiguity, however, and Ishmael counterpoises his descriptions of a malicious wilful Ahabian whale, with depictions of Moby Dick's animal-ness, and the whale's awkwardness and timidity.

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279 Slijper, 1962, op. cit.: 29, refers to Timor Tom as Timor Tim, though this whale was more commonly known as Timor Jack ("the hero of many strange stories, such as his destroying every boat that was sent out against him." Beale, 1973, op. cit.: 183). To this roll-call, Slijper adds Newfoundland Tom. He notes, however, "generally, though, Sperm Whale hunting is a relatively safe occupation. It has repeatedly been noticed that cows and young bulls allow themselves to be slaughtered almost impassively." Slijper, 1962, op. cit.: 29.

280 Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 220. Beale, 1973, op. cit.: 183. Note that Melville swapped the last part of these whales' names.
As is well known, the other famous (though perhaps fictional) whale that Melville was to 'try' for the oil of his story was "Mocha Dick," a whale featured in a story published by J. N. Reynolds in *The Knickerbocker New York Monthly* (May 1839). Reynolds writes of a 'real' rogue whale, Mocha Dick, a "renowned monster, who had come off victorious in a hundred fights … an old bull male, of prodigious size and strength." The whale was "a freak of nature … *he was as white as wool!*"\(^{281}\) It is likely that Melville heard oral accounts of this whale aboard the whaleships on which he crewed. In Reynolds' account, after a chase described in excited language, the whale is finally killed, a thick spout of blood drenching the crew: "'There's the flag!' I exclaimed; 'there! thick as tar! Stern! every soul of ye! He's going in his flurry!'" Shortly, "the monster … turned slowly and heavily on his side, and lay a dead mass upon the sea through which it had so long ranged as conqueror."\(^{282}\) Though Mocha Dick is killed in Reynolds' tale, the myth of a giant fighting whale, its "back serried with irons, and from fifty to a hundred yards of line trailing it its wake," could not be destroyed as easily, a fact that Melville clearly realised, contributing to the mythopoesis of such whales with his story in which the whale is not captured.\(^{283}\)

Just after *Moby-Dick* was published, the potentiality of such a fate as befell the *Pequod* (for those who had forgotten the *Essex*) was again brought to public attention when a wounded whale attacked and sank the *Ann Alexander*, on the 20th of August.


\(^{282}\) ibid: 586.

\(^{283}\) ibid: 574. Mocha Dick, named after the island of Mocha off Chile, was almost as mythological as Moby Dick, and is credited with attacking the boats of the *Desmond* in 1840, the Russian *Serepta*, and outwitting the captain and the crew of the *John Day* in May 1841. See Cherfas, 1988, op. cit.: 87-9.
1850 in the "Offshore Grounds" (500 miles west of the Galapagos.) Melville remarked in a letter: "Ye Gods! What a commentator is this Ann Alexander whale. What he has to say is short & pithy & very much to the point. I wonder if my evil art had raised this monster." Captain DeBlois and his crew had lowered for whales, with the mate fastening to what would prove a particularly "pugnacious" specimen. The whale smashed this boat, and the crew were forced to join the captain's boat. Another boat was sent from the ship and this too was smashed by the whale. The sailors were by now six or seven miles from the ship and the situation was seen as "exceedingly critical," but fortunately, "the monster passed without harming them." Another boat was sent out and the crew regained their ship. Philbrick relates that: "It being about sundown, the attack, so far as the sailors were concerned, was given up. Not so with the whale." Captain DeBlois' 'blood was up' and he was determined to have "the artful beast." He was standing at the front of the ship with a lance when, "he discovered the monster rushing towards the ship at a speed of fifteen knots per hour, and in an instant he struck her a terrible blow … shaking her with as much violence as though she had struck rock, and broken a large hole through her bottom through which the water poured with a rushing stream." Fortunately, the crew of the Ann Alexander were spotted the next day by another ship, no doubt their minds contemplating the fate of the Essex crew. The whale's condition after the impact is not mentioned; however, five months later the crew of the Rebecca Simms killed a large "old, tired and diseased" whale containing harpoons from

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the *Ann Alexander*: "its sides were shaggy with twisted harpoons and lances; huge splinters were found embedded in its head."\(^{288}\) The sinking of the *Essex* and *Ann Alexander* were not isolated instances and Starbuck mentions the possibility that many 'missing ships' may have met similar fates:

> How many instances of the destruction of ships by whales the catalogue of 'missing' vessels may furnish can never be known, but it may be safely presumed that some of those ships from which widows, fatherless children, and sorrowing relatives have sought for some tidings or some memento in vain, would help swell the list.\(^{289}\)

Philbrick observes that, due to the success of the American whale fishery and the range of their activities, by 1845 whaling was commenting that whales were getting "wilder," "more scary" and "not so easy to capture" – "an increasing number of sperm whales were fighting back."\(^{290}\)

Tim Severin has investigated open-boat sperm whaling, as currently practised in Lamalera (Indonesia), and describes the death of a whale: "[for] a few moments nothing happened. The whale simply lay there on the surface … [then] belatedly the massive animal lunged into action. There was a tremendous heaving uprush of water, a great surge and swirl."\(^{291}\) He discusses the power of the whale but writes that the 'sleigh ride' of the whaleboat was not "a sudden hurtling rush, but the motion was sedate, unstoppable."\(^{292}\) He described the whale's futile resistance: "When it felt the tug of the

\(^{288}\) Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: 226.  
\(^{289}\) Starbuck, 1989, op. cit.: 122.  
\(^{290}\) Philbrick, 2000a, op. cit.: 224.  
\(^{291}\) Severin, 1999, op. cit.: 224.  
\(^{292}\) ibid.
whale lines, the animal plunged head down, raised its tail and thrashed the sea in anger, raising great gouts of water. The beating tail was clearly a weapon of defence.”

He relates that the whale butted the whaleboats with its head, "either by accident or design." After an hour, the whale weakens: "each surfacing of the whale made the scene more bloody and regrettable." For Severin, the "long narrow jaw, armed with rows of teeth, looked pathetic rather than menacing, a bird's mandible rather than a predator's bite." It is a pathetic scene in which a large animal is killed slowly by a process of exhaustion and blood loss. One aspect of the Indonesian whaling scene that is of note is the idea of the "whale giving itself to the hunters." It is seen as a reward for effort, a reward offered by their ancestor the whale: "The crew seemed to communicate with the animal. Their shout mingled thanks, praise, and satisfaction." Severin notes that the killing of a whale (an event that may only happen ten or fifteen times in one person's whaling career) "is a supreme, rare moment. There was no thought of inflicting unnecessary cruelty or pain on their prey." The attitude of the Lamalera whale catchers is likely similar to that of pre-industrial hunters, their reason for the catch not an involvement in capitalistic trade (as with the whale shark and manta ray hunters mentioned earlier in the book), but to feed the people of the island. In this way, their ritual and belief hark back to the more organic conceptions of reality held by older cultures.

Severin's film footage of the whaling scene does not convey the same sense of danger that Melville and other whaling writers describe, despite it being "a fighting


293 ibid.
294 ibid: 177.
295 ibid: 183.
296 In Tim Severin's documentary In Search of Moby Dick, the Indonesian villagers who still hunt sperm whales from open boats, believe that the white whale is one of their ancestors. Severin, T.: 2000, 7 January, 6.30 p.m., "In Search of Moby Dick," S.B.S.
The whale's death is slow, and there is no indication of what Ishmael says is "the great power and malice at times of the Sperm Whale" (MD214). There is no doubt, however, that many sailors died whaling – what Ishmael describes as "a speechlessly quick chaotic bundling of a man into Eternity" (MD38). Starbuck's history of whaling records numerous deaths, and includes many drownings and "falls from aloft," as well as whale-related accidents (such as Captain Dyer of the Mentor who was, like Ahab, "taken out of his boat by a foul line"). Chase writes, "[i]t is this danger and hardship that makes the sailor; indeed, it is the distinguishing qualification amongst us; and it is a common boast of the whaleman that he has escaped from sudden and apparently inevitable destruction oftener than his fellow." Nevertheless, I wonder how much of the claimed danger was also an attempt to glamorise what was otherwise a dirty, difficult, poorly paid job with low prestige. As Ishmael says: "it would much subtract from the glory of the exploit had St. George but encountered a crawling reptile of the land, instead of doing battle with the great monster of the deep. Any man may kill a snake, but only a Perseus, a St. George, a Coffin, have the heart in them to march boldly up to a whale" (MD372). Of course, there is little glamour in killing a gentle mammal, so the animal is recast in the mould of dragon-monster. Writing of the dangers of the whale to humans, Bennett notes, "the Cachalot, when first harpooned, strikes violently with its tail, plunges convulsively, and would appear to threaten destruction to every object in its vicinity, yet these actions are unpremeditated and awkward, and can only be

298 ibid: 174.
299 Starbuck, 1989, op. cit.: 263. One of the more uncommon injuries was that of Captain Cornell of the Lancaster who was badly injured "by a man falling from aloft and striking him on the back" (453).
regarded as instinctive expressions of pain and alarm, which the whaler expects to observe."{301}

Sperm whalers were more prone to such romanticism of their profession, to the point of being elitist about their activity compared to that of right whale hunters.{302} Bullen comments that accidents in right whale hunting "were entirely due to the carelessness or clumsiness of the whalemen, and not in any way traceable to a desire on the victim's part to do any harm."{303} Beale writes:

Although ancient and modern histories may abound in descriptions of man's daring by 'flood and field,' and of the accidents and escapes which accompany his voluntary exposure to a multitude of dangers, surely the recital of his doings in the chase and capture of the leviathan of the deep – the great sperm whale – can be second to none in the interest it must excite in every contemplative mind. It is not in the field, jungle, or thick forest, that these hardy adventurers seek their prey, upon man's natural element … but on the vast ocean … where he is not only exposed to the dangers which beset him in his adventures with the monster of the deep, but to others still more terrible … requiring all the moral and physical energy of which our nature is possessed, to escape the manifold dangers which surround them, but which the whale fisherman looks upon without dread, passing among them in his gallant bark, and carrying off in triumph the rich giant of the ocean.{304}

And yet, his earlier comment, that no whaleman had "stepped forward to vindicate [the whale fishery's] history from the absurd and fabulous accounts with which it had been

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{301} Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 214. Bennett notes, "the boats are seldom injured at this stage of their proceedings; although it is commonly believed to be the most critical and dangerous." This counters the common myth-making about this event. Scoresby, for example, writes, "this is the moment of danger." Scoresby, 1820, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 242.
{302} See (MD332), and Bullen, 1926, op. cit.: 181.
{303} ibid: 181-2.
{304} Beale, 1973, op. cit.: 158/9
loaded," shows that, though many whaling commentators recognised the process of mythmaking that was at work, many were willing to go along with this, if only to make their prose more exciting.\footnote{ibid: 3.} It is a mythopoesis that modern writers also use. The continued publishing success in recent years of books, such as those by Mawer, Severin, Philbrick, and the reprint of the *Essex* account, attest to this fact. Although Melville's understanding of the ineffable, indifferent and ecological character of reality certainly separates him from most of nineteenth-century whaling writers, he is still willing to exploit the dominant discourse to imbue his story with mythic qualities. He thus reiterates and reinforces the palimpsest of cultural texts that maintain the separation of nature and humanity. Regardless of the attitude of Melville, Ishmael or Ahab to Moby Dick, the possibility remains strong of an interpretation of a giant malevolent whale acting for and as nature and antagonistic to humanity.

Ishmael survives his encounter with Moby Dick, reduced again to floating on the surface of the ocean, quoting from the prophetic book of "Job": "And I only am escaped alone to tell thee."\footnote{(MD583) A reprise in "Job" 1.15, 1.16, 1.17 and 1.19.} He spins slowly at the edge of the vortex, surviving because he has remained free of the authoritative centre. To add to the lucky nature of his escape, those aspects of the natural world that have been previously portrayed as ubiquitous (the "vultureism" and sharkishness) are absent: the sharks are "unharming … as if with padlocks on their mouths; the savage sea-hawks sailed with sheathed beaks" (MD583). Moby Dick also survives the narrative that Ishmael recounts, unlike Mocha Dick, the whale that sank the *Ann Alexander*, and the old whale with the festering lance wound from Melville's text (which had survived an earlier encounter). If Moby Dick is a
symbol for nature, then it is understandable that after the conflict, insane Ahab should be left in the whale's wake, and the animal should disappear back into the continuum. The reader is left wondering what Ishmael meant with his enigmatic statement from the opening line to the chapter "The Whiteness of the Whale" (MD191).  

When Moby Dick first appears, he instantly negates Ishmael's metaphysical pondering on the "whiteness of the whale"; he is a mass of colour and light. There is the "finest, fleecy, greenish foam," the "glistening white shadow from his broad, milky forehead," "blue waters," "bright bubbles" and "on each bright side, the whale shed off enticings" (MD554). There are still vestiges of the conception of Moby Dick as godlike, for Ishmael says: "for an instant his whole marbleized body formed a high arch, like Virginia's Natural Bridge, and warningly waving his bannered flukes in the air, the grand god revealed himself, sounded, and went out of sight." Yet, to counteract the impression of Moby Dick as a god, Ishmael describes him as more than divine:

Not the white bull Jupiter swimming away with ravished Europa clinging to his graceful horns; his lovely, leering eyes sideways intent upon the maid; with smooth bewitching fleetness, rippling straight for the nuptial bower in Crete; not Jove, not that great majesty Supreme! did surpass the glorified White Whale as he so divinely swam.

Again, there is a concatenation of 'light' and 'truth' in a Platonic sense. Moby Dick is as Ahab and others have predicted he would be, "with that malicious intelligence ascribed to him" (MD556). The narrative continues, noting "the whale's intent," "his vengeful wake," that the "sight of the splintered boat seemed to madden him," and his "insolent

307 "What the White Whale was to Ahab, has been hinted; what, at times, he was to me, as yet remains unsaid" (MD191) – See page 276.
tail." There is a recurrence of the imagery of karmic-redolent vortexes as Moby Dick circles, "so planetarily swift the ever-contracting circles he made" (MD557-8). In the final attacks, the whale grows more animal-like and the ship and crew (caught in Ahab's obsession) in contrast become machine-like, the complete metaphor of humanity (mechanical) united against antagonistic nature (organic):

They were one man, not thirty. For as the one ship that held them all; though it was put together of all contrasting things – oak, and maple, and pine wood; iron, and pitch, and hemp – yet all these ran into each other in the one concrete hull, which shot on its way, both balanced and directed by the long central keel; even so, all the individualities of the crew, this man's valor, that man's fear; guilt and guiltiness, all varieties were welded into oneness, and were all directed to that fatal goal which Ahab their one lord and keel did point to. (MD564)

Moby Dick is imbued with a certain wilful vengeance and his description stresses his size, his supposed divine nature ("that mystic fountain in his head"), and the light prevalent in the landscape:

Rising with his utmost velocity from the furthest depths, the Sperm Whale thus booms his entire bulk into the pure element of air, and piling up a mountain of dazzling foam, shows his place to the distance of seven miles and more. In those moments, the torn, enraged waves he shakes off, seem his mane; in some cases, this breaching is his act of defiance. (MD564)

Moby Dick attacks the whaleboats, receiving harpoons until the lines and craft are "corkscrewed in the mazes of the line, loose harpoons and lances" (MD566). But soon,
"as if satisfied that his work for that time was done, he pushed his pleated forehead through the ocean, and trailing after him the intertangled lines, continued his leeward way at a traveller's methodic pace" (MD567). For the first time in the chase narrative, there is a sense that Moby Dick might be other than the wilful destroyer of boats, "breakfasting on three or four sailor tarts, that is whaleboats full of mariners: their deformities floundering in seas of blood" (MD273). The reader is obliged to consider why the whale is so keen to return to his original path, at an unconcerned pace.

On the third day, although smashing boats, the whale again attempts to leave the fray:

He seemed swimming with his utmost velocity, and now only intent upon pursuing his own straight path in the sea, a fact noted by Starbuck:

'Oh! Ahab,' cried Starbuck, 'not too late is it, even now, the third day, to desist. See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that madly seekest him!' (MD577)

Both Starbuck and Ishmael suspect that the white whale is not the insane rogue in this story – if there is one, it is Ahab. It is one of the few signs that Ishmael is willing to allow the white whale the same sympathy he has bestowed on the less invincible whales they have been killing. Again, there is a tension creating narrative oscillation, between the idea of the whale as either malignant and wilful, or indifferent and aggrieved. The reader is asked to consider seriously the actions of the whale. Ishmael notes that Moby Dick is swimming away, however, "[w]hether fagged by the three days' running chase, and the resistance to his swimming in the knotted hamper he bore; or whether it was some latent deceitfulness and malice in him: whichever was true, the White Whale's way
now began to abate" (MD577). The whale, for reasons Ishmael is undecided about, slows and is again attacked.

The whale's eventual reaction is prefigured by Ishmael's treatises on whale vision and on the head as battering ram, and by many other omens in the book. Moby Dick, perhaps drawn to the ship by the sound of "hammers in the broken boats," rushes the ship and strikes it with his head. Ishmael's interpretation of the whale's behaviour is that "Retribution, swift vengeance, eternal malice were in his whole aspect, and spite of all that mortal man could do, the solid white buttress of his forehead smote the ship's starboard bow, till men and timbers reeled" (MD580).308 From this statement of wilful agency, the text again wavers, describing the whale running "quivering" along the keel, and then lying "quiescent" (MD581). For Ahab, the whale to the end remains malignant, and he defiant:

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\text{[']Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins and all hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! Thus, I give up the spear!' (MD581)}
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The last reference in the text to Moby Dick is nondescript. Ishmael says, "the stricken whale flew forward" (MD581). It is as if Melville wants to emphasise that the white whale is not the focus of the novel.

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308 Melville stresses the hammering on the Pequod as if intimating, as does Philbrick, that this could attract the whale.
As pre-ordained, Ahab is caught by the neck in a loop of hemp and drowned, and the sinking ship sets up an enormous suction on the surface: "And now, concentric circles seized the lone boat itself, and all its crew, and each floating oar, and every lance-pole, and spinning, animate and inanimate, all round and round in one vortex, carried the smallest chip of the Pequod out of sight" (MD582). The slowly spinning vortex is all that is left, as always (in a Buddhist sense). 'King' Ahab is reduced to fool and dethroned as in the carnival (after Bakhtin), and the narrator Ishmael is left alone to tell, to prophesise, to warn. The conclusion of the novel suggests that Ahab may have been wrong for many reasons (not just in his dismissal of omens and his perception of his own invincibility), a lesson that is not lost on Ishmael. Ahab's attempt to grasp the noumenal world behind the world of appearance, beneath the surface of the phenomenal world, is shown for its futility. Rather than a malevolent agency manipulating the whale in a campaign against Ahab, there is an indifferent nature in which all are vulnerable to accidents. Ishmael is unable to experience directly the noumenal world and is left floating on the surface.

If, as Meeker contends, tragic literature and philosophy "undertake to demonstrate that man is equal or superior to his conflict," the message in Moby-Dick is,

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309 Ahab's final words, "Thus, I give up the spear!" (MD581) are ambiguous, 'give-up' having the sense of relinquish as well as throw. It is no doubt an allusion to "Job" 41.7: "Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears?" It is a final symbolic and futile act of defiance. "Job" 41.29 offers the answer, "Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear."

310 Bakhtin, Morris, 1994, op. cit.: 239.

311 Richard Brodhead writes, "Whether nature is maliciously evil or merely dumb; whether it operates by intention or accident; whether it is governed by an intelligent power beyond itself or by physical and biological processes – these questions become directly visible and potentially answerable in the more specific question of whether Moby Dick inflicts destruction by brute force or by design. Ahab's interpretation of the whale as an intelligent force of evil has a peculiar status in Moby-Dick. The book cannot validate his theory. If it did, it would settle the problem of the nature of the world too definitively." Brodhead, R. H.: 1973, Hawthorne, Melville and the Novel. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 138.
as he says, that the "nobility of the tragic hero has gone. He is pathetic, not tragic." In an irony not lost on Ishmael, Ahab is transformed from the quintessential tragic hero into a pathetic and misguided figure. The theme of self-consumption is repeated. Like the cannibal sharks (MD311) and the try-pots (in which the whale provides the fuel for its own rendering), Ahab's attempt to grasp the Promethean fire ends in his immolation. Ahab is like the whale in Ishmael's description of the try-pots: "Like a plethoric burning martyr, or a self-consuming misanthrope, once ignited, [supplied] his own fuel and burns by his own body" (MD432). In the end of Moby-Dick, Melville echoes Nietzsche, who writes, "who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you."

Zoellner suggests:

We touch on the meaning of Moby Dick of most relevance to technological man in the latter half of the twentieth century. If we have debauched our air and polluted our streams it has been because, like Ahab, we have seen the world as a thing to be attacked and conquered.

Both the fiery rapacious Ahab and the conservative but utilitarian Starbuck are claimed by the natural world. It is only Ishmael's holistic approach, of understanding the interconnection of all aspects of reality, which offers an alternative way of conceiving of the world. In the chapter entitled "Brit," Melville again warns humanity of the price of its arrogant ways, at the same time as he prefigures the end of the novel:

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312 Meeker, 1972, op. cit.: 22, 58.
314 Zoellner, 1973, op. cit.: 266.
though, to landsmen in general, the native inhabitants of the seas have ever been regarded
with emotions unspeakably unsocial and repelling … in a flattering future, that science and
skill may augment; yet for ever and for ever, to the crack of doom, the sea will insult and
murder him, and pulverize the stateliest, stiffest frigate he can make; nevertheless, by the
continual repetition of these very impressions, man has lost that sense of the full awfulness
of the sea which aboriginally belongs to it.

The first boat we read of, floated on an ocean, that with Portuguese vengeance had
whelmed a whole world without leaving so much as a widow. That same ocean rolls now;
that same ocean destroyed the wrecked ships of last year. Yea, foolish mortals, Noah's flood
is not yet subsided; two thirds of the fair world it yet covers. (MD283)

It is a theme Ishmael repeats, noting that not only is the sea such a foe to man (who is an
alien to it), but that no "mercy, no power but its own controls it. Panting and snorting
like a mad battle steed that has lost its rider, the masterless ocean overruns the globe"
(MD283). The eternal nature of the ocean is stressed in the last words of the novel
(excluding the epilogue): "and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five
thousand years ago" (MD582). The figure 'five thousand' is important. Biblical
chronologies supposedly put the Flood at this time.315 Melville has, as Barbara Glenn
notes, filled his text with a catalogue of the Burkean sublime, and yet leaves the reader
with sublime terror, without divine reassurance.316 He leaves the reader with Burke's
own question (repeating "Job" 4:17): "Shall mortal man be more just than God?"317

315 Genesis 6:13 "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled
with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." Anon, 1906, op. cit.
316 Glenn, 1976, op. cit.: 176.
Corporation, New York: 54.
Melville answers this question obliquely: mortal man can be more just than man is currently.

The "Epilogue" is a swift summation of Melville's method, sources and themes. Ishmael quotes from the Bible, alludes to Shakespeare and Eastern mythology, and reconfirms his position as exile ("floating on the margin of the ensuing scene") and orphan. Queequeg returns in the form of his hieroglyphic "black bubble," which reaffirms Ishmael's fraternal bond. It is important to an understanding of the novel that Moby Dick survives the narrative. Wild nature has not succumbed and no universalising truth has been established. The whale remains a symbol.

ix. Conclusion: "all the lead in Galena"318

It is easy to assume that Herman Melville's Moby-Dick is an environmental text because it refers directly to the natural world. However, it is necessary to look closely at what Melville suggests about the natural world. In Melville's world, as Rogin has argued, all things were connected: family, history, religion, American nationalism, racism and capitalist expansion. This matrix is reflected in both the structure and language of Moby-Dick; however, these aspects of Melville and antebellum America are included to be critiqued. Moby-Dick is Melville's 'American jeremiad'. Like that of Father Mapple, Melville's sermon is not quiet, but strident and animated. Unlike most jeremiads, his does not advocate regression and atavism, but envisages a parallel world

318 "It takes a great whale to go down stairs five miles or more; & if he don't attain the bottom, why, all the lead in Galena can't fashion the plummet that will." Melville, from a letter to Evert Duyckinck, Saturday 3rd March, 1849. From Leyda, 1952, op. cit.: 379.
where things are improved. In doing so, Melville, through the character of Ishmael, also discloses alternative ways in which humanity can approach the natural world.

There are various ways in which *Moby-Dick* can be considered to be ecocritical. Firstly, there are alternative, but not necessarily contradictory conceptions of nature. There is the rapturous description of the natural world, evident in chapters like "The Pacific" and "The Grand Armada." Although Ishmael portrays the natural world as one of unrelenting "cannibalism" there are also passages of praise. For example: "Bethink thee of the albatross, whence come those clouds of spiritual wonderment and pale dread, in which that white phantom sails in all imaginations? Not Coleridge first threw that spell; but God's great, unflattering laureate, Nature" (Note to page MD193). For Ishmael, it is not poetry that makes nature wondrous, but nature itself. There is also in *Moby-Dick*, the understanding that the natural world can be indifferent to humanity, and that it is not always a constructed nature.

Secondly, there is the awareness of the increasing industrialisation of the Western world, and America in particular. This is made evident by the numerous references to new technologies. Ahab symbolises Bacon's and Descartes' scientific rationalism that has led to industrialisation. Thirdly, there is an awareness and implicit criticism of Frontier expansion. There are many references to the prairies, and the changes going on in that location.319 For example, Ishmael notes:

> the humped herds of buffalo, which, not forty years ago, overspread by tens of thousands the prairies of Illinois and Missouri, and shook their iron manes and scowled with their thunder-

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319 Chapter 79, though, is spelt 'Praire' as if to imply a prayer, not the grasslands.
clotted brows upon the sites of populous river-capitals, where now the polite broker sells
you land at a dollar an inch. (MD471)

This sentence captures not only the demise of the Buffalo but it is also critical of
population increase and capitalism. This criticism, of industrialisation, expansion and
capitalism together, is linked to Melville's writing that alludes to class and race. Melville
was aware that many in America were excluded from the supposed 'Manifest destiny' of
the nation. Fourthly, there is an understanding in Ishmael's narration that the act of
killing the whale can be cruel and degrade humans. The narrative oscillates between the
objectification of whale as commodity and individual identification engendering
sympathy.

For many people, concern for the environment is connected to an ethical stance
that precludes the eating of meat. While *Moby-Dick* is hardly a vegetarian text, Ishmael
does berate the reader on the subject of eating meat, and while he does not suggest not
eating it, he certainly represents it as a hypocritical act:

> But no doubt the first man that ever murdered an ox was regarded as a murderer; perhaps he
> was hung; and if he had been put on his trial by oxen, he certainly would have been; and he
certainly deserved it if any murderer does. Go to the meat-market of a Saturday night and see
> the crowds of live bipeds staring up at the long rows of dead quadrupeds. Does not that sight
> take a tooth out of the cannibal's jaw? (MD309)

Ishmael suggests that "Feegee" cannibals are no more barbaric than "civilised and
enlightened gourmand[s]" who dine on paté-de-foie-gras, and that although the reader
might complain at Stubb eating the whale by the light of its own oil, this is no worse
than using a bone handled knife to eat roast beef, or a goose quill to write letters against animal cruelty. Melville demonstrates he is abreast of mid-nineteenth century cruelty debates when he notes, somewhat facetiously, that "the Society for the Suppression of Cruelty to Ganders" had only just "passed a resolution to patronize nothing but steel pens" (all MD309).

_Moby-Dick_ can also be considered an ecocritical novel at a deeper level. There is a profound questioning of both the nature of reality and the role of the Calvinist god. Melville suggests a Kantian concept of the noumenal world as separate from the phenomenal world, and in doing so, prefigures the interest in Schopenhauer that developed later in his career. The major question of _Moby-Dick_, whether or not there is anything behind the world of phenomena, is found to be unanswerable, but you get the impression that whatever Melville thinks is there, he does not conceptualise it in the same way that religious leaders of his time thought of their god. Metaphysically, _Moby-Dick_ offers two insights, that there is this noumenal/phenomenal distinction, and that all aspects of both the phenomenal and noumenal worlds are interconnected. Melville layers on symbols and metaphors for this interconnectedness: "Thus the whale-line folds the whole boat in its complicated coils, twisting and writhing around it in almost every direction" (MD289). It is this complicated arrangement in which Ishmael claims all men live. It is this connection to other beings, reflecting the thought of Buber and Levinas and for which Schopenhauer supplies a metaphysics, which is the possible base for a morality based on compassion. Such a morality offers a way to treat the world more environmentally consciously. Another aspect of Ishmael's philosophy is meta-ethical; the conception of the world as a place or unremitting cannibalism and "vultureism."
Melville uses many symbols for this, from sharks to sea-hawks. He also utilises the sea as a symbol of the "tiger heart that pants beneath it" (MD500), again demonstrating an affinity with Schopenhaurean thought.

While conceding, as had Kant and Schopenhauer before him, that the noumenal world was unknowable, Melville delivers, in his various characters, divergent ways to approach the problematic world and the inherent ethical problems. Ahab suggests one option (a concerted antagonism) that is ultimately unsuccessful, as are the options offered by Starbuck (mercantile capitalism), and Pip (madness). Ishmael does survive (though perhaps by chance). He offers five ways of conceiving reality that are at variance with the dominant ideologies of the period: the comic, holistic, feminine, fraternal and Schopenhaurean. As Meeker's thesis contends, the comic mode offers a subversive alternative to the dominant tragic Western tradition and this is reflected in *Moby-Dick*. Ishmael's narration, with its metaphors of interconnectedness and expansive conception of self, allies him with deep ecology's sense of self-realisation. Melville's use of Eastern and Egyptian mythologies, and such related symbolism ("that slowly wheeling circle, like another Ixion" – MD583) reflects a more holistic world view. He never completely endorses Goethic total relinquishment, however. There remains in Ishmael the real suspicion that the human mind is incapable of maintaining such an expansive sense of self, that a mind in full understanding of the holistic nature of reality would be indistinguishable from madness to a non-understanding mind. It is to this position of madness that Melville consigns Pip. I have argued that Ahab's rejection of the feminine, most evident in "The Symphony" and "The Chase – Third Day" chapters, and Ishmael's embrace of it is another reason for the latter's survival. Equally important
is Ishmael's embrace of brotherhood and in particular of Queequeg, symbolically
represented at the end by the coffin-life buoy. Finally, Ishmael's survival may be
attributed to the Schopenhauerean denial of the 'will', the rejection of "sharkishness" as
a way to renounce the universal "vultureism" of life. Melville discovered the philosophy
of Schopenhauer late in life, and must have been surprised to discover how close this
writer's philosophy was to his own beliefs. Despite this late revelation, the influence on
Melville's work was strong, and there are good arguments to show that Melville was
inspired by his ideas in the creation of 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' and Billy Budd.320

On his trip to England in 1849 aboard the Independence, Melville was introduced
to George J. Adler by his friends the Duyckincks. He wrote in his journal that Adler was
chief amongst some "very pleasant passengers," and the author of "a formidable lexicon"
in German and English, the compilation of which had "almost ruined his health."321 In
fact, Adler was committed to New York's Bloomingdale Asylum four years later
(though subsequently released). On the voyage, he was Melville's "principal
companion." Melville noted that Adler was "full of the German metaphysics, and
discourses of Kant, Swedenborg &c." He relates how he, Adler and another (James
Taylor) had drunk whiskey punches until two a.m., talking "metaphysics continually, &
Hegel, Schegel, Kant &c." Another entry describes drinking mulled wine while Adler
"got – all of us – riding on the German horse again." On another evening, he strolled the

320 See Fite, O. L.: 1968, "Billy Budd, Claggart and Schopenhauer," Nineteenth Century Fiction 23, 336-
Century Fiction 27, 268-82. See also Pritchard, G. R.: 2003, "Moby-Dick and the Philosopher of
321 Leyda, 1951, op. cit.: 319-23.
decks with Adler, talking of "Fixed Fate, Free-will, fore-knowledge absolute."322 It is not known if Adler knew of Schopenhauer's work or discussed him with Melville; however, if he did, the German philosopher's work appears not to have kindled the latter's interest at this time. It is not until two decades later (1871) that Melville scores mention of Schopenhauer in The Solitudes of Nature and of Man or, The Loneliness of Human Life by William Rounseville Alger: "Schopenhauer says: For the most part we have only a choice between solitude and vulgarity. The most social men are the least intellectual. 'He is very unsocial,' is almost equivalent to saying, 'He is a man of great qualities.'"323 It would be another two decades before Melville borrowed Schopenhauer's Counsels and Maxims from the New York Society Library on February 5th, 1891. The book had a profound effect on Melville and eleven days later he purchased his own copy of this book, as well as other books by the German writer, including a three volume translation of The World as Will and Idea (better known now as Will and Representation), Religion: A Dialogue, Studies in Pessimism, and The Wisdom of Life.324

As Arthur Stedman notes in his introduction to an 1892 edition of Typee, Melville was reading Schopenhauer during his last illness the same year.

In Melville's library, there are recorded fifteen books by Honoré de Balzac. John Haydock has pointed out the influence of Schopenhauer on Balzac and suggested the latter influenced Melville while he was writing Billy Budd. He notes that an essay, in the F. Barron Freeman edited Melville's Billy Budd by R. K. Gupta, suggests the influence

322 Wenke shows that in this quotation Melville "evokes the sedate demons" from Paradise Lost, demonstrating his knowledge of Milton. Wenke, 1995, op. cit. 96.
323 Leyda, 1951, op. cit.: 720.
of Schopenhauer on *Billy Budd.* Olive Fite has also argued for this interpretation.

Haydock notes that Melville's copy of Balzac's *Séraphita* was published in 1889, and that Melville could have been directed to Schopenhauer by the writing of George Frederic Parsons, who penned the introduction. Haydock notes that Parsons strongly connects the concept of will in *Séraphita* with the philosophy of Schopenhauer, including the belief in reincarnation and the absolute necessity for volition to subdue the instinctive 'will-to-live.' Alexander Eliot in *Furioso* and Daniel Stempel and Bruce M. Stillians in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* have argued that Melville's Bartleby is also a character largely inspired by Schopenhauerean philosophy, and Deleuze notes the similarity as well. Stempel and Stillians argue that there is a good possibility that Melville would have read the 1853 article, which is credited with introducing Schopenhauer to America, either in New York, Boston or Pittsfield, especially since the *Review* had printed a favourable reference to Melville's work in 1852. It was written by John Oxenford and entitled 'Iconoclasm in German Philosophy,' and was published in the George Eliot edited *Westminster Review* (one of only ten Eliot edited). They claim, "the evidence is so strong as to rule out the possibility that he might have simply ignored the article," if he had picked up the April issue. They imagine "the strong impression which Oxenford's article must have made as Melville found his own"


328 Magee, 1997, op. cit. 26. Stempel and Stillians write that this article not only introduced Schopenhauer's philosophy to the English speaking world, but also "catapulted the hitherto obscure philosopher into fame in his own country." They note that the article was listed in the 1850 catalogue of the New York Society Library, which was often visited by Melville. Stempel and Stillians, 1972, op. cit.: 268-82.
intimations of a malignity inherent in the fabric of creation supported by Schopenhauer's metaphysics of evil will as Kant's thing-in-itself." The connection between Melville and Oxenford's article, however, must remain at the level of conjecture, and regardless, succeeded the writing and publication of *Moby-Dick*.

Melville and Schopenhauer were both thinkers who were convinced, and you could argue rightly, that the profundity and worth of their writing were not appreciated by the bulk of contemporary readers. Like Melville, Schopenhauer found the book of *Ecclesiastes* to be a source of insight, quoting "*Qui auget scientiam, auget et dolorem,*" [He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow]. Both have quoted the same book's statement that "All Is Vanity." They were equally convinced of their own genius and thought that this aspect of their personality meant that they must lead solitary lives, even in the company of others. When Melville finally purchased Schopenhauer's books, it was these aspects of the German's philosophy that he underscored, as he had in Alger's book. For example, on page 120 of the introduction to *Wisdom of Life* Melville scored "...the more a man leaves to posterity, in other words to humanity in general, the more of an alien he is to his contemporaries; since his work is not meant for them as such." Interestingly, both Schopenhauer and Melville left almost unmarked graves. On Melville's grave in the Woodlawn cemetery in New York there is only his name and a blank scroll ("full of meaning") and Schopenhauer's grave site in the Friedhof Cemetery.

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329 ibid: 271.
330 In a letter to Hawthorne, November 17th, 1851 Melville wrote, "Appreciation! Recognition! Is love appreciated? Why, ever since Adam, who has got the meaning of his great allegory – the world? Then we pygmies must be content to have our paper allegories but ill comprehended." Leyda, 1952, op. cit.: 452.
331 Schopenhauer, 1969, op. cit.: 310.
332 Leyda, 1951, op. cit.: 832.
in Frankfurt has only the philosopher's name, no date, nor epitaph. "They will find me," he is quoted as saying.\(^{333}\)

Another major similarity between the two writers is the respect they had for Eastern beliefs such as Hinduism and Buddhism. At a time when the *Upanishads* were hardly heard of in Europe, Schopenhauer read every night from a Latin translation of a Persian translation of the *Upanishads* (he called the *Oupnekhat*). Magee writes: "To this day Schopenhauer remains the only great Western philosopher to have been genuinely well versed in Eastern thought and to have related it to his own work."\(^{334}\) As writers such as Mani and Kulkhani have argued, Melville too investigated Eastern thought, and *Moby-Dick* demonstrated this legacy.\(^{335}\) In Mani's word's, "Melville fuses symbols from East and West and creates new archetypes to portray pessimism."\(^{336}\)

Schopenhauer was convinced his metaphysics could explain all aspects of the world, probably to the detriment of his later reception. Regardless of the flaws in his theory, he did propose a metaphysical explanation for morality, something few philosophers had managed. Unlike many philosophers, he did not hide from society or shun the arts, and as a result, he also proposed a metaphysical explanation for the fields of architecture, painting, poetry and music. Borrowing from Plato the concept of fundamental 'Ideas', he proposes that art was what gave a person knowledge of "the *Ideas* … the immediate and adequate objectivity of the thing-in-itself, of the will [...]."\(^{337}\)

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\(^{334}\) Magee, 1997, op. cit.: 15.


\(^{336}\) ibid: xi. Mani notes, "Walter Sutton surmises that Melville's interest in Buddhism must have begun during his journey to the Mediterranean countries and the Near East in 1857-1858, and developed later when he read Schopenhauer… See 'Melville and the Great God Budd,' Prairie Schooner, XXXIV (1960), pp 128-133." ibid: 315.

\(^{337}\) Schopenhauer, 1969, op. cit.: 184.
For Schopenhauer, there were few ways a person could directly apprehend the 'Ideas'. He claimed that it was possible to access the 'will' by a contemplation of the sublime (see pages 42, 185-6) and more importantly, through aesthetic contemplation. Such contemplation allowed dissociation from the self, allowing an understanding of the holistic character of reality, which could lead to metaphysical awareness. For his period, as it is now, this empowering of aesthetic experience over scientific truth is unusual. His belief in the power of both tragedy and music (which he thought gave direct access to the 'will') was to influence Wagner greatly. For Schopenhauer:

The life of man, as often seen in the world of reality, is like the water as seen often in pond and river; but in the epic, the romance, and the tragedy, selected characters are placed in those circumstances in which all their characteristics are unfolded, the depths of the human mind are revealed and become visible in extraordinary and significant actions.338

Like Shakespeare and Melville, Schopenhauer understands that the nature of life is tragic: "the demand for so called poetic justice rests on an entire misconception of the nature of tragedy, indeed the nature of the world."339 For many, the unrelenting pessimism of his metaphysics and personal misanthropy (and misogyny), make his theories unpalatable. Perhaps he does describe the human condition in bleaker terms than the other two. This may be because he was a philosopher, not a creative writer, and was thus obligated to follow concepts through to logical conclusions whereas Shakespeare and Melville could describe, allude, ironise and symbolise. Normal life, for

338 ibid: 252.
Schopenhauer, is 'willing'. Martha Nussbaum describes this 'willing' as "brutish, unformed, [and] undisciplined."\textsuperscript{340} This alternation between a relentless (usually unsatisfied) craving, striving against obstacles, boredom and ennui, leads to a life of endless suffering. Schopenhauer claims that the purpose of tragedy:

> is the description of the terrible side of life. The unspeakable pain, the wretchedness and misery of mankind, the triumph of wickedness, and the scornful mastery of chance, and the inevitable fall of the just and the innocent are all here presented to us; and here to be found a significant hint as to the nature of the world and of existence."\textsuperscript{341}

Melville may well have been aware of Schopenhauer's philosophy earlier, however, regardless of his lack of proven or direct exposure to the work of the German writer at the time of its composition, \textit{Moby-Dick} exhibits many affinities with Schopenhauer's thought and it is possible to examine the book through such a reading. It is to this Schopenhaurean denial that I will turn in the conclusion; however, first it is necessary to consider modern texts on whales and whaling to ascertain what changes have been made in the way whales are described, and to determine the legacy of \textit{Moby-Dick}.


\textsuperscript{341} Schopenhauer, 1969, op. cit.: 253.
Chapter 5: Modern attitudes to whales

i. Shallows: Tim Winton's novel on Australian whaling

For ecocritical literary theory to be credible, it needs to apply to all cultural texts. It is not enough to show that ancient texts pictured an opposition between the natural world and humanity, or that there are aspects of Melville's *Moby-Dick* that can be construed as both ecological in nature and environmentalist in spirit. Melville's novel is now more than one-hundred and fifty years old. What, if anything, has changed in that century and a half, with regard to the way Western cultures refer to, and conceptualise, the natural world? Given the focus of this thesis, in what ways has Western thinking changed? And further, how can the ecocritical study of literature influence the way in which humanity relates to the natural world? I suggest that many in Western cultures have changed their attitudes to the natural world, and this is reflected in many texts. However, much of the dominant discourse of Western cultures remains in terms of economics and neither governments nor most individuals are prepared to make necessary changes to their luxurious lifestyles. Ecocriticism of texts can aid in the apprehension of the way in which the dominant discourse is still one of opposition. At a pedagogic level, the ecocritical study of texts can lead to a greater appreciation for the natural world.

There have been many environmentally conscious texts produced in Western countries in the last three decades, ranging from environmental histories to children's books and quite a few of these have the whale as a central component. While I argue that
responses to the whale are an indication of our attitudes to the environment, it does not mean that attitudinal changes to the environment are necessarily reflected in whaling texts, nor does it follow that an attitudinal change to whales is reflected in a greater respect for the natural world in Western culture.

This chapter examines a number of texts on whales and whaling written in the last fifty years, including fiction, a 'new age' website, and pro- and anti- whaling material. As Australia has been a non-whaling nation since 1978 (prior to the Whale Protection Act of 1980), this chapter also looks at the history of Australian whaling, and examines an example of Australian fiction that deals with whales, Tim Winton's *Shallows*. In this section I also examine a number of historical Australian whaling texts to demonstrate the context for Winton's novel.

The history of whaling in Australia is entwined inextricably with the history of the white invaders, and was extremely important in the survival of the colony. It is said that Australia rose to prosperity on the sheep's back but a whale's back is closer to the truth. It was colonial Australia's first industry and resulted in its first exports. Whalers were responsible for much of the coastal exploration and settlement, and the supplies of whaleships often kept the tenuous colonies and settlements alive. Ishmael suggests, "in the infancy of the first Australian settlement, the emigrants were several times saved from starvation by the benevolent biscuit of the whale-ship luckily dropping an anchor in their waters" (MD108). According to whaling historian Max Colwell:

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2 Its first imports being convicts. Colwell notes "when the First Fleet sailed along the southern coast of Australia, with its cargo of convicts for Botany Bay, the sight of whales blowing their spouts of vapour seemed to promise at least one industry for the infant colony. And, in fact, whaling was to be Australia's first industry, and was in full swing long before anyone had any idea of the nation's vast mineral resources, or had made anything but the most tentative attempts at agricultural and pastoral pursuits." Colwell, 1969, op. cit.: 2-3.
Whaling figured largely in the economy of New South Wales, put Hobart Town on the map as a deep sea port, provided South Australia with its first exports, became an escape route for convicts and cover for smugglers, turned seamen into explorers, and gave Australia its first taste of big business.3

In this context, Ishmael's claims for whaling do not seem overstated. Of the ships bringing convicts to Australia in the Third Fleet in 1791, five were whalers: the Britannia (an Enderby ship under the command of a Thomas Melville), the William and Ann (captained by Ebor Bunker), the Mary Ann, the Matilda and the Salamander.4 Thomas Melville wrote of seeing "sperm whales in great plenty" off Port Jackson: "In fact I saw very great prospects of making our fishery upon this coast and establishing a fishery here. Our people was in the highest spirits at so great a sight and I was determined, as soon as I got rid of my live lumber, to make all possible despatch on the fishery on this coast."5 He convinced Governor Phillip that he should be allowed to undertake whaling immediately, and eleven days after arrival, the Britannia and the William and Ann did just that, though with little success. Phillip writes:

The great number of spermaceti whales seen along this coast give reason to hope that a fishery may be established here, and several of those ships intended for the north-west part of America are gone to the southward in search of fish, the master of the Britannia having

3 ibid: 3.  
5 Thomas Melville quoted in Colwell, 1969, op. cit.: 16.
declared that he saw more spermaceti whales between the south cape and this harbour than he saw in six years on the Brazil coast.⁶

Over the next seventy years the seas surrounding Australia became the frequent haunt of English, French, American and local whalers. In 1804, a letter from New South Wales stated, "five ships had left the colony with cargoes of sperm oil averaging £13,500 each in value."⁷ The faith in the whale 'fishery' was beginning to pay off.

G. Miller, a young Seaman aboard a sperm whaler that left Hobart on the 15ᵗʰ November 1810, described whaling in his *A Trip to Sea 1810-1815*:

It is a beautiful and exciting scene to chase these huge monsters, as they tear along and spout the water up: and it requires great coolness and dexterity to escape from destruction when too near them.

The second mate's boat was the first to strike the whale … whilst we pulled alongside the whale, he took a lance and planted a well-aimed blow between the second and third ribs, which penetrating about three feet made the blood rush out like water from a pump. The whale in a short time began to spin round, and then turned belly upwards and died. We were the last fast, but the first dead….

To see the whales as they appear out of the water, it is no wonder they are called 'the monsters of the deep:' they are really tremendous, and there seemed plenty of room within their jaws to stow the boat and all hands. No person can form any idea of their size, unless they have been among them.⁸

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⁶ In a letter to Secretary Stephens on the 16ᵗʰ November 1791. ibid: 17.
⁷ Dakin, 1938, op. cit.: 21.
Miller repeats many of the themes that appear in American whaling texts; the excitement of the hunt, the bloodiness, the monstrous nature of the whale, and the awe the animal induces.

The influence of the whalers on the European development of southern Australia is inestimable. In the period 1832-34, whaling ships visited the coast where Adelaide now stands and the areas of Victor Harbour (Encounter Bay), Kangaroo Island and Portland were all frequented by whalers and sealers before other settlers. Pioneers of Port Fairy, Charles and John Mills, were whaling in Portland Bay in 1833, and by 1837 there were eight parties whaling in Portland Bay, so many that "the business from that year declined and became unprofitable." Major Thomas Mitchell was most surprised to find whalers (the Hentys) at Portland on his exploration of Western Victoria in 1836. The industry at this period of Australian history took the form of exploitative shore or bay whaling. Oswald Brierly set down a brief account of one such whale hunt at Ben Boyd's Eden, where the Davidson family were aided by orcas in their pursuit of whales:

Nothing can be more exciting than to join the pursuit and be in at the death of one of these Enormous animals … there was a call from the Lookout under which we lay, after about three quarters of an hour hard pulling we … first caught sight of the whale – a large Black one – There! it has struck one of the headsmen and knocked him out of the Boat in an instant he was hauled in again and sends a Lance deep into his side – it spurts Blood mingled with water which was now in its last agonies. Blood pouring from the gashes in its sides and Back and discolouring the water around – what a scene the shouts and men the splash of the Whale the more Languid motions where the Fish comes up to Blow becomes exhausted …

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10 George Dunderdale quoted by ibid: 96.
sometimes a sudden rush to rid itself of its pursuers the boat flying along with terrific rapidity…. all the boats tailing away after him to fasten if he should get loose.\textsuperscript{11}

Brierly does not hide his excitement for the hunt. Nor is he at all concerned by the death of the whale. Bay whaling was not sustainable, however. As Bennett rightly noticed, "It is to be regretted, that [the] method of fishing from the shore involves almost solely the destruction of female whales and their calves, and must tend greatly to diminish the number of the species, without any compensating advantage to the whaler."\textsuperscript{12} Australian bay whaling was doomed to be a short-lived affair for the same reasons bay whaling had failed in Biscay, Greenland, Newfoundland and everywhere else it had been practised. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Southern right whale was close to extinction (not surprisingly, as they were hunted while in their calving grounds).\textsuperscript{13} A 1988 Department of Conservation Forests and Lands report observes, "the consequences of the uncontrolled slaughter should have been obvious even in those days when the wild was for conquering. By 1843 the number of right whales wintering in Victoria was on a decline, and 1847 saw the complete failure of whaling in Portland Bay."\textsuperscript{14} Since this period, the numbers of whales have slowly increased and they now thrill whale watchers at Warrnambool and Portland.


\textsuperscript{12} Bennett, 1840, op. cit.: Vol. 2, 230.

\textsuperscript{13} 1988, "Whales in Victorian Waters," Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands: 5. See also Dakin, 1938, op. cit.: 60.

\textsuperscript{14} 1988, "Whales in Victorian Waters," op. cit.: "Ten years later there were still so many whale skeletons littering the beaches around Portland that an industry operated, for a time, shipping them back to Melbourne to be ground up for fertiliser."
When Eyre and Wylie arrived at what is now Cape Le Grand National Park, after their epic walk west across the Great Australian Bight and past the Bunda Cliffs, they found a French whaling ship and its 'shore gang', who were able to give them some supplies.\textsuperscript{15} As Dakin writes:

In 1841, it is said there were nearly 300 American and French whalers along the southern coast of Australia, and as far west as Leeuwin, but Bay whaling and deep-water whaling were both mixed up in these ventures. Western Australia was still little more than terra incognito. Yet United States whalers working off that coast secured at least £30,000 worth of oil in 1837, and there must have been many isolated stations of which we know nothing today.\textsuperscript{16}

Augusta, on the southwestern tip of W.A., was a popular place for American whalers, and they were also active at Fremantle, Geographe Bay, Doubtful Bay, and around Albany.\textsuperscript{17} Whaling in Albany's King George's Sound and Two Peoples Bay has occurred at least since the 1840s.\textsuperscript{18} In 1952, the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company began "exploratory sperm whale operations" from a harbour on the convoluted King George's Sound.\textsuperscript{19} The company built a station at the beach "improvised from old mining equipment and an unused wheat distillation plant from Collie."\textsuperscript{20} This Cheynes Beach station is the model for Winton's Paris Beach whaling station.

\textsuperscript{16} Dakin, 1938, op. cit.: 58.
\textsuperscript{17} ibid: 59-60.
\textsuperscript{18} ibid: 59, 189-202.
\textsuperscript{19} Colwell, 1969, op. cit. 156.
\textsuperscript{20} ibid: 162.
The landscape and history of the Albany region are evoked by Winton in his novel *Shallows*. Romand Coles (discussing Barry Lopez) writes of borders or 'ecotones', the edges where ecosystems meet, and Winton's shallows are such a region. Coles, as if describing Winton's writing, writes that ecotones "evoke an image of the fertility and pregnancy of dwelling at the edge of the tension between different people, beings, landscapes." The dust-jacket blurb of Winton’s book (attributed to Carolyn See of the *Los Angeles Times*) says, "the prose and learning may even stand up to Melville himself … the elegance of language, the grandeur of nature being described – all this is dazzling, dazzling. It makes the heart pound." Australian reviewers were less favourable. The 'shallows' in Tim Winton's book operate as a multi-faceted metaphor. They are the waters in which the conclusion of the novel takes place, but equally the waters in which the characters founder throughout the novel. The term also describes the nature of most of the characters' interactions. Winton has woven Australian whaling history, the history of Albany in the seventies (towards the end of whaling there), and his memories of living in Albany, into his tale of the Coupar family – a family whose "family vice" is voiced by one member as "watching whales" (S135). *Shallows* is as passionless as the sexual relationship between Marion Lowell and her employer Des Pustling; she doesn't hate him, but "she can not find another word for the emotion she feels." Winton's main characters are only living in memory of passion, and the text parodies and ridicules any pretence of passion in its minor characters.

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23 Winton, T.: 1993, *Shallows*. McPhee Gribble – Penguin, Ringwood, Victoria: 54. All references in this work (S**) are from this text.
The narrative of *Shallows* is situated in different historical periods and focuses on the successive generations of the central Coupar family: from Nathaniel Coupar who first came to the area in 1829 on the ironically named American whaler, the *Family of Man*, to the youngest Queenie Cookson (nee Coupar).24 The novel is replete with whales and sharks, both human (metaphorically) and animal.25 The events of the mid 1800s are accessed through the diaries of Nathaniel Coupar, which Queenie's lover Cleveland Cookson reads and which the other main character, Queenie's grandfather Daniel Coupar, has also read. The present in the narrative is 1978, when environmentalists descended on Albany in an attempt to close the Cheynes Beach whaling station, the last such station operational in Australia. Most of the action concerning the environmentalists is derived from Robert Hunter's book, *The Greenpeace Chronicles* (albeit with character name changes), which relates events in Albany in 1977. Historical events described by Winton include the continual mechanical trouble of the Zodiac boats, Albany's famed sharks and the group's concern about them while at sea, the arrival of the Deputy Prime Minister, the arrival of the dolphins, the rainbow, the hunger strike of the "big woman" Sally Miles, and the fragility of the zodiacs at sea.26 The farcical ending of the campaign in *Shallows*, where the protesters rescue the shark

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24 Like Melville, Winton is keen to trick as much meaning out of his characters names as possible. Hence the biblical allusions of Daniel and the etymological allusions in Cleve (in its similarity to cleave) and Pustling (like pus).

25 The character Des Pustling is portrayed as a human shark, complete with continually forming teeth (S51ff), and this metaphor works both ways, attributing to sharks his insensitive, rapacious, greedy, and evil characteristics of Pustling.

26 Hunter, R.: 1980, *The Greenpeace Chronicle*. Picador – Pan Books, London. In reality Dr Jim Cairns did go to Albany whereas Winton has 'the deputy prime minister' not arriving. ibid: 423-8. The arrival of the dolphins (S170) is turned into a joke whereas The Whale and Dolphin Coalition saw this as a good omen. The hunger strike is another event turned ridiculous in the novel ("reporters nudge each other knowingly. Sally Miles weighs fourteen stone and they find it ironic"), whereas Pat Farrington's 'real' hunger strike lasted a month. ibid: 428.
fisherman Baer (S237), is not in Hunter's book and adds to the mockery of the protest group.

Winton's town is called Angelus, where "all the concrete whales … are smiling," a name similar to that of the real Albany, but with the added biblical overtones (S43). Angelus is the Latin for angel, and the first word of a "Prayer to the Virgin Mary; the Annunciation." Turner observes that the name is a reference to the metaphorical function of whales as "annunciators" of change (seasonal) and bringers of a message (apocalyptic).27 There are many references in the book to the prophetic nature of the whales, outside of the traditional view of the monster as harbinger. For example, when Daniel Coupar "sat out on the veranda again and saw the hill and heard the whales from far below and his body ached as it did with the change of season" (S17). The coming of the whales is associated with another important event in the structure of the novel (one that also functions at metaphorical levels and is associated with the blood of dying whales), Queenie's menarche (S13). The whales prefigure this event, and they later precede Daniel Coupar's death.

Winton's Angelus was founded on the second of January 1829 by the Onan (S37), and has prevailed "against all odds, all human sense, by some unknown grace" (Sxi). The conception of a god that might have granted such grace informs a large part of the book, but it is one that sits ambiguously in the writing. There are many references to a god, to the need of forgiveness from such a god,28 and to whales as part of God's

28 For example, Nathaniel writes in his journal, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" (My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? – S254) from "Mathew" 47:26. Also, Daniel Coupar says, "To know that I beg for mercy for you and for me and ours" (S256).
design, but there is little sign of any god. Many of Winton's characters feel a need for a god, or at least to question such a god, and the novel is peppered with biblical allusions (one of the major characters is the priest William Pell). One of the possible readings of the novel's "elusively unsatisfactory" conclusion (with its last paragraph that subverts much of the book's earlier messages) is that all pontificating about grace, God and forgiveness is senseless, as there are no gods, and whales are only whales, nothing more.

Winton's book is fragmented like Moby Dick, achieving a similarly suitable postmodern edge with ambiguity, water-based metaphors, and texts within texts. There are also many metafictional guides to the reading. Winton, like Melville, offers a plurality of voices and varying attitudes to whales. Though offering different attitudes to whales, the narrative voice in Shallows wavers in the way it understands and portrays them. For the whalers of the ship, The Family of Man and of Angelus, they are only something to kill, their killing merely a necessary task (although the reader has no access to the minds of Nathaniel Coupar's shipmates). For most of the Coupars, the whales are not animals but signs of something transcendent, something mystical (with the exception perhaps of Cleve). The parody of Greenpeace that is Winton's Cachalot and Company members, still allows Marks and Fleurier a sympathetic attitude to the whales. The majority of the whales in Shallows correspond to Moby Dick in that they are a metaphor

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29 Although several of the characters maintain a belief in a god, they are aware of the absence of answers. For example, Nathaniel writes, "Smash these very ideas smash this very God and other…. Had God the power to judge you innocent He would have done so" (S255).

30 It is Mathews who refers to the conclusion of the novel as "elusively unsatisfactory." 1986, op. cit.: 87.


32 Cleve refers to them as a "Mickey Mouse show" (S57). Ernie Easton describes them as a "circus" (S39). The anti-whaling group, The Whale and Dolphin Coalition, was a separate group, set up by Frenchman Jean-Paul-Fortom Gouin, which was keen to use Greenpeace expertise. Hunter, 1980, op. cit.: 416.
for all the author's meanings. Like Melville, Winton has his paper whales, his historical
whales, his biblical whales, and his whale remains. He extends these by investigating as
many possible ('fictional') attitudes to whales, from those of the early whalers, modern
day whalers, local Whites, the Cachalot members, Queenie, Cleve and Daniel Coupar,
and the local Aboriginal people.

The journals of Nathaniel Coupar play an important part in the novel. They
describe his life in a miserable shore-whaling station, where the crew wait for the re-
appearance of their ship, the *Family of Man*. Nathaniel kept very much to himself, wrote
his journal, and remained detached from and in denial of the rape and bastardisation of
the young Churling, the rape and murder of local Aboriginal people, and other
depravities. It is this naivety (though alluded to as deliberate non-recognition and hence
culpable condoning) that becomes the family's secret 'sin'. Nathaniel spent the rest of his
life considering the need for forgiveness and forty-four years later, he wrote, "[a] man is
not responsible for his company. I suffered in resisting barbarity. I did not participate. I
am innocent" (S158). He was also accused of the sin of deserting, which raises the
question of why he never described to anyone the final days of the whaling camp (even
if he could not mention the circumstances of Churling's death). He does concede that
desertion "of such a party as this can be no sin" (S125). What Coupar really craves is
forgiveness for his killing of whales (particularly the more impressive sperm whale),
killing that is described in pathetic terms: "I woke to the light and the low sounds of
groaning and snorting … the crippled and dying whale, its great back clear of the water,
flukes flopping up and down idly. Its groans were pitiful and each breath showered me
with pink vapours of blood and spittle from its blowhole" (S147). Nathaniel prefigures
this 'sin' with his plea: "Deliver me, Lord! I do not want to eat of Leviathan." He thus alludes to the whales' sacred status as part of God's creation, and thus the act of hunting and eating the whale is blasphemy.\(^{33}\) Nathaniel survives his Jonah-like immersion in the whale, surviving (by the grace of God) to preach his lesson. Yet, like Jonah, he cannot understand God's failure to expunge the guilty. This time, however, God is absent.

Edelson suggests that Winton's book fulfils George Lukacs' requirements for historical fiction, in that it shows "a clear understanding of history as process, of history as the pre-condition of the present," and incorporates "the past right into the novelistic present."\(^{34}\) For Edelson, *Shallows* "portray[s] moral struggles which pit a humane system of values against exploitation, cruelty and the irresponsible exercise of power."\(^{35}\) Nathaniel Coupar's experience fits this description; his 'humane system' is definitely contrasted with those of the other whalers, and he is even vaguely opposed to the killing of whales ("whales do not interest me" S146). If *Shallows* is read as an anti-whaling text then perhaps the 'humane system of values' that is the anti-whaling stance suggests this description. Although the cruelty of killing whales is generally described in graphic detail, it is not enough simply to describe the process to show its barbarity. Whaling writers have described the process well without being opposed to whaling. Despite Nathaniel's obvious abhorrence at the death of the sperm whale, it is the sins against Churling that are foregrounded, and Nathaniel's failure to resist or reprove. Daniel Coupar perceives that these sins are repeated in his failure to stand up to the rapacious Des Pustling, and in the circumstances of his wife's death. For Daniel, punishment is his

\(^{33}\) Unlike fellow crewmember Hale who perceived the sperm whale as the avatar of Satan (S111, S154). Nathaniel considers this when in tow of the whale: "Had I truly begun to think of this beast as the Beast himself" (S154).

\(^{34}\) Lukacs quoted by Edelson, 1989, op. cit.: 64.

\(^{35}\) Edelson, 1989, op. cit.: 64
self-imposed exile to Wirrup. His belief that reading the journals might 'teach' a moral lesson is strangely unreal, in that Cleve is morally unaffected by them, and without the last page they are at best a fake (and dislocated) version of historical truth. As Edelson notes, the "journal becomes the yardstick against which the chief characters will either measure themselves or be measured."36 In this measuring, Daniel Coupar fails, as does Cleve Cookson. Cleve is weak and passionless and yet, strangely affected by the Coupar journals and alcohol (mostly the latter), he embarks on a number of 'manhood' proving missions, his failed shark hunt (in what shark hunter Baer ironically describes as "bloody dangerous" waters near the whaling station) and the senseless harpooning of the kangaroo – a pathetic hunt-motif that echoes the larger whale hunts (S161-2). The journals are not all that Cleve reads, and his reading list is a study in sea literature intertextuality, including Malcolm Lowry's Ultramarine, Moby-Dick, Jack London's The Jacket and Joseph Conrad's Lord Jim (S96). His attitude to the whales is one of disinterest. In an argument with Queenie he says, "They're just animals, you know…. Some animals are killed so we survive" (S58).

Queenie Cookson is an enigmatic character, one of uncertain origins and beliefs. Her opposition to the killing of the whales seems to occur at a purely emotional level with the rational reasons only supplied later, and then with an almost disbelieving attitude. She is constructed metaphorically as whale, or at least she is similarly water dwelling. There are many references to her ability to swim and she is described as "an amphibian-child, skinny, shiny-skinned, swimming through bodies of water and vegetation" (S67) who "ought not have been born a land mammal" (S4). In a palimpsest of historical and mythological whale allusions, Queenie's swimming invades her dreams

36 ibid: 64.
and associates her with the Jonah myth, as does her imagined submersion in whale entrails: she dreams that she is swimming through "an ultramarine haze," past "a long fence of ivory," "a cavity" full of "viscous wetness" and the "stench of bile" (S121-2). She is in the belly of the whale, along with people she has known, who are now decomposing. She contemplates "mouth or anus" as a way out, and in the real world the "piercing screech of a truck braking" permeates her dream, mirrored by the third exit option and in a primal birth scene she is evicted back into "myriads of light." This scene recalls an earlier one (S34) where Queenie sits in the "pink slush" of a 'real' whale's stomach on the flensing deck at Paris Bay. Her suggested link with whales is a metaphorical reversal of the way in which whales are often humanised to foster sympathy.

Winton's whales, like Melville's, are mythological and biblical. The tone of much of the novel, in its attitude to whales, is set early with Queenie's admission that when she was young she thought the sound of the whales was the voice of God calling her "poppa" (S3). This is in keeping with the idea of the 'monstrous' as herald. Winton employs whales as messenger throughout the novel, as prediction of something natural, such as seasons, and as (their biblical role) the medium through which God delivers his 'lesson' to the reluctant prophet Jonah. *Shallows* has several unwilling prophets. Winton refers to the sections in the *Bible* that relate to both prophecy and whales. The drought at Wirrup (excluding references to rain in Albany), has a surreal quality, especially when Daniel finds himself in the midst of all his dying stock – a Hieronymus Bosch scene (S257-8), also reminiscent of one of the *Bible* 'whale' books, the book of "Job." The whole description of drought conditions takes on a prophetic quality, as if it is a warning
or punishment, and Daniel Coupar quotes from the Bible's book of "Jeremiah" 12:4:

"How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither? For the wickedness of them that dwell in it the beasts and the birds are swept away" (S69). The prophetic book of "Jeremiah" addresses the problem of which prophet to believe (out of the many who clamoured for attention). According to Robert Davidson, it is also a book that associates the resumed worship of God in Jerusalem with the renewal of life in the countryside.37 The story of Jonah provides respectability and mythic qualities. Winton adds it to his biblical allusions and, like Melville, is not content to use the standard tale but has the Reverend William Pell remember variants (as Melville has his Father Mapple's sermon) that the "fiendish if sullen storyteller" Daniel Coupar used to tell as a boy: "he was a wonderful liar, Pell thinks. Always used the truth when it suited him though…. Always whales with these Coupars. And Jonah is a wretched vice with them" (S177-8). In his plea for release Churling quotes from "Jonah" 4.3 (the "favourite … of the whalemen"): "it is better to die than to live" (S112). Daniel's last words are from "Psalms" 42:7: "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." This psalm is another entreaty for an explanation of the absence of God, echoing Nathaniel's third last entry: "I have been deceived. God has deceived me. I have deceived myself: God is nothing, worse than evil" (S254).

Winton cites another biblical passage to set up the final act in his historical whaling saga, the description of the leviathan from "Isaiah" 27:1. This is the motto of Nathaniel's companions: "the ignorant fellows believe the sperm whale to be the Serpent, agent of the Evil One. No honest fish, they say, has lungs and teats and a

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member like a man's. Perhaps it is fortuitous that we concern ourselves only with the right and humpback, the sleepy giants" (S111). Nathaniel has an aversion to eating whale meat and embarks on his last whale hunt with extreme trepidation, with a "great feeling of doom in [his] bowels" (S147). What ensues is the first hidden section of the journal, and the longest sustained passage. The whale they fasten to is a sperm whale, and, like Moby Dick, this one is mythic and portentous. The fight to control the boat with the sweep oar is described as "a duel of steerage with the Evil One himself, that his soul was in the balance." This is Ahab's whale, a manifestation of transcendent power. As the boat is towed, "like a sleigh full of grim travellers right into the teeth of the approaching darkness," Nathaniel commits another sin, that of not going to the aid of the person attached to the fingers that grip the boat – "nails denting the wood" (S152-4). A later cryptic entry "July 29th Whose hand?" alludes to the possibility that the death of the whaler attached to the hand, and Nathaniel's complicity in this death, is the thing he dwells on most (S159). During the ride, the whale is "the monster," "this creature," "the sperm," "this tireless beast," "the furious Cachalot," "the Beast himself," and lastly "the crippled and dying whale" (S151-5). In perhaps the most reasoned entry in his journals, he writes: "I have done nothing wrong and what others do is their own sin, their salvation, their damnation" (S254). For Nathaniel, there is a 'Great Chain of Being', the scale of moral superiority from gods and angels down to animals. The worst insult for him is to accuse his companions of slipping down this scale: "We have become animals. No – they. Filth, and hopeless barbarity" (S146). Churling, too, alludes to the status of animals, referring to the other whalers' sexual use of him: "I am ther animal" (S112).38

38 The common, explicit power relations that often accompany human sexuality are also obvious in Nathaniel's description of a whale hunt: "The cow threw herself on top of her young to shield it, and while
The overt environmentalist statements in the book are made by the two leaders of the protest group Cachalot and Company, Marks and Fleurier. The latter claims, "our future lies in communication between species, co-existence with the environment. Not in the follies of the past" (S43). His justification for the defence of whales is that "they are the most amazing creatures alive. They have intelligence, wit, compassion. There is much that is mystical about the whale" (S141). Fleurier says that they "pre-date us. They are the biggest things in existence; there is nothing bigger than whales. We take all our measurements of size from them. They harbour secrets. I want Man to know them one day" (S141). He echoes Greg Gatenby's statement:

> God knows we have harmed enough things on this planet, but to remove the largest animals God ever made seems to declare an arrogance and shortsightedness that speak volumes more about the intelligence of *homo sapiens* than any great mathematical equation and work of art.\(^{39}\)

In the statement by Fleurier, the very use of the word 'things' puts the whales in opposition to 'non-things', of which the most non-thing-like thing is considered to be humans. This categorises whales along with rocks to be mined and trees to be harvested. Fleurier's idea that whales harbour secrets is not so problematic, since there are many things about whales we do not understand, and in all likeliness there are many things it is impossible to understand. Marks' statement is perhaps more reassuring: "I want my children to grow up to see whales; I want them to know their place. An ocean without whales is like a wilderness without trees" (S137). 'To know their place' arguably alludes she was thus exposed Cain reared up and sank his harpoon deep into her" (S145).

\(^{39}\) Gatenby, 1977, op. cit.: 8.
to ecological understanding, though there is an ambiguity here. Does Marks want his children to know their place, or the whales?

Despite parodying the protesters, Winton exposes environmental leanings. His description of the record shark that Ted Baer catches, though gruesome, shows more sympathy for the animal than for its hunter. The writer also hints at an environmental ethic when he compares the girth of the shark to that of a "middle-aged jarrah tree," another thing that is exploited in Western Australia (S172).

In the closing paragraphs the whales are portrayed as huge automatons that operate purely on instinct, no smarter than the sheep of Daniel Coupar:

The first small group of humpback whales rounds the western capes of the continent, instinctively moving southwards and eastwards…. The land stays at their left and moves slowly past. Each humpback, flanks tough with barnacles and tiny parasites and old weed, sounds shallowly, surfaces, spouts and cruises on the surface for a time before repeating the motion almost without volition, following the flukes of the tail ahead. (S240)

The outcome of the novel is suggested when the eponymous shallows are again mentioned: "Labouring in the midst of the storm that sweeps towards the coast gathering force as it comes, the pod of humpbacks move in closer to the coast, shunted by the wind, barrelled along by the swell, sensing the outer frontiers of the shallows" (S259). It is in the final pages of the book that many of the major players die, their deaths perhaps predicted by the arrival again of the humpbacks. The whales strand themselves: "huge, stricken bodies lurching in the shallows…. Masses of flesh and barnacles covered the sand, creeping up, floundering, suffocating under their own weight. A pink vapour from
the spiracles descended" (S260).

The ambiguous nature of Winton's whales is compounded by the conclusion of the novel, which alludes to another biblical passage, Revelation 8:8-9. The possibility of stranding is hinted at earlier in the novel (S42), and in later passages (such as when Marks explains strandings to Queenie, and again at the hotel in Angelus when she reads the files – S136-7, S190), that point to the function "shallows" have in these strandings. Yet, Marks (like Winton) does not mention that it is predominantly toothed whales species that strand.

The whale expert Lyall Watson says, "Humpbacks rarely strand." Certainly in the storm conditions of the novel's finale it may be possible, but humpback herds survive storms regularly and the whole situation has an air of implausibility. Arguably, though, that is what Winton is trying to portray.

For Edelson: "History, the conclusion of this novel suggests, properly read, can be a source of explanation, instruction and possible renewal." The possible 'real' victory in the Albany protests is excised from Winton's novel. The novel suggests that any hope of renewal, of change, is merely an illusion caused by taking a too shallow view of the world.

In the novel, the protests are abandoned (supposedly) because of the irony of the whale-savers saving a shark killer (S230-7). Robert Hunter is only slightly more optimistic in his appraisal of the historically 'real' situation:

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40 In death, Daniel quotes yet another biblical passage, "Psalms" 42:7: "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me" (S260).
41 Revelations 8.8: "and the third part of the sea became blood", 8.9: "And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died." Tyas refers to the conclusion as "dramatic but inevitable." Tyas, G. M.: 1995, *Transformations: Landscape in Recent Australian Fiction*. PhD. Deakin. 227.
43 Watson, L.: 1981, *Sea Guide to Whales of the World*. Hutchinson and Co., London: 97. Having noted this, it is interesting that the humpback's scientific name, *Megaptera novaeangliae*, was given by Gray in 1846 after he studied a whale stranded at the mouth of the River Elbe. ibid: 95. Lone dead whales do wash ashore occasionally but Winton's whales (note the plural) were supposedly well.
44 Edelson, 1989, op. cit.: 66.
when we left Albany we felt depressed, let down, exhausted. It wasn't until months later that the federal government bowed to the pressure that had been generated by all the media coverage of the event, and ordered an inquiry into whaling in Australia, the first such inquiry ever called. Public-opinion polls had shown that feeling against whaling was running at something like seventy percent nationwide. We had not directly saved a single whale – yet, indirectly, we had precipitated a strong movement in that direction.\textsuperscript{45}

The last words of the novel refer to the dying whales as "dying monuments" (S259). If they are monuments, then it is interesting to reflect on for what the novel suggests they are monuments. In the microcosm of the American shore whalers, and in the vulture-plagued world of modern Angelus, is reflected all the barbarity of humanity.\textsuperscript{46} The relationships between Daniel, Queenie and Cleve mirror a gulf of understanding similar to that between self and other, nature and culture, and epistemology and ontology. The ecocritical prophecy in \textit{Shallows}, which the whales fulfil with their arrival and subsequent death, is that whales can expect no mercy while humans treat each other poorly. Winton does not fully investigate the inverse of this prophecy, that humans cannot expect to treat each other fairly while they continue their brutal exploitation of other animals.

Winton's utilisation of biblical references, and his employment of the idea of whales as portentous, appears to align his work with older discourses on the natural world. His characters construct nature in Augustinian or Romantic terms, as a place in which the 'nature' of God can be studied. The conclusion of the novel cannot undo this

\textsuperscript{45} Hunter, 1980, op. cit.: 428.

\textsuperscript{46} Ironically noted in the journal entry: "We are not so barbarous as that to sever Nowles' fingers rather than the whale rope; we are Americans" (S27).
impression, even though it can be read as demonstrating nature as unrelated to humanity. The continual intimations of the absence of any gods, however, subvert this construction. In the end, *Shallow* is about the struggles of people in an Existential world, where the responsibility for meaning and morality is theirs, and nature and the whales are only minor characters.

ii. The Modern Age: large-scale butchery

In the last fifty years, there has been a noticeable change in attitudes to whales in most Western countries. The change has resulted partly from the obvious reduction of whale numbers, making commercial exploitation economically unsustainable. The resulting bans and moratoriums, though ignored in some countries, have fostered a cultural introspection in Western countries on the issue of whaling. This is not to say that there has been a uniform attitudinal swing against whaling. Modern attitudes to whales include most historical perceptions of whales and nature, with several additional modern views (which are, however, largely a transformation of old perspectives). Virtually all conceptions of whales are situated in a discourse that positions humans as the privileged species on the planet, and relegates the whale to spectacle, resource or worse.

In the period from 1789 until the First World War, sperm whalers ranged far and wide over the oceans of the world in pursuit of whales. According to Spence, the "golden age of American whaling" lasted twenty-five years, from 1835 until 1860.

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47 The main pro-whaling nations are Japan, Iceland and Norway, the last two of which are considered Western nations.
(during which time there were some 652 vessels sailing out of thirty American ports).\(^{48}\)

When one area was hunted out, the ships would move on to others.\(^ {49}\) An expedition to the Antarctic to catch right whales in 1892 was unsuccessful, but the ships came back with reports of numerous rorquals.\(^ {50}\) Such southern excursions ushered in the last and most devastating period of whaling. The first attempt to set up a whaling station in southern seas came from the industrious Enderby family. In 1849, Charles Enderby tried to establish a permanent whaling settlement on Auckland Island and by 1851 had nine ships there ready to whale. The endeavour's subsequent failure also meant the end of British whaling. However, as Mawer writes, the "American whale industry was a long time a-dying, not least because no one wanted to write its obituary."\(^ {51}\) In 1907, the whalebone market collapsed and increased use of mined oil and gas as alternatives reduced the demand for whale products. Robertson writes that Thomas Alva Edison, by throwing the switch on the Pearl Street power station in New York in 1882, "blew out the sperm-oil lanterns and candles for ever and so ended the old whaling industry of New Bedford and Dundee."\(^ {52}\) The move to longer voyages had also meant an increase in the size of ships, and this in turn meant the end of Nantucket as a whaling port, as the larger ships could not get over the bar into the harbour (despite several innovative schemes to get around this problem).\(^ {53}\) San Francisco's proximity to the Pacific led to it

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\(^{48}\) Spence sets the date of the start of the 'Golden Age' as when the *Ganges*, of Nantucket, caught a right whale off North America in the Kodiak ground. Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 99.

\(^{49}\) ibid: 131.

\(^{50}\) Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 135. The Tay Whale Fishing Company of Dundee sent four ships in 1892.

\(^{51}\) Mawer, 1999, op. cit.: 322.

\(^{52}\) Robertson, 1956, op. cit.: 33.

\(^{53}\) Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 99-100. "Camels" or floating dry-docks were made to help ships across, the first being the *Peru* – "Bells were rung, guns fired and a great concourse of citizens greeted her arrival." Starbuck, 1989, op. cit.: 357.
replacing the New England ports as the main home of the American fleet, but it was
New Bedford that would be the home of the last wooden whaleships:

In 1904 the *Wanderer* returned to New Bedford after twenty years on the west coast, and
over the next few years she was rejoined by the *Alice Knowles* and the *Charles W. Morgan*.
These three, and another half-dozen assorted barques, brigs and schooners, were all that
could sail in 1908 of a New Bedford fleet that 50 years earlier had boasted 320 vessels.54

The whaler that was sent in 1891 into the Pacific from New Bedford was the last from
that port, although the claim to be the last old style wooden whaler goes to the *John R
Manta* which tried to go whaling in 1927, but was forced to return to port shortly
afterwards without lowering for a whale.55 Open boat shore whaling still occurs, in a
limited fashion, in such diverse places as Lamalera in Indonesia and the Azores, and
Native Americans maintain their right to kill bowheads and narwhal in Alaska.56

Many of the whales in the Antarctic were rorquals, a group of whales (including
the fin, sei, Bryde's and blue whales), which because of their strength and speed, largely
had been exempt from the attacks of whalers.57 Their sheer size posed problems to small
wooden whaleboats and whaleships, and even if they were killed, they sank. A number
of technological advances were needed before these species could be targeted profitably.
The new 'craft' whalers began to threaten the existence of whale species. The resulting

54 Mawer, 1999, op. cit.: 332.
Morgan, L.: 1973, "Ocean Mammals are to us What the Buffalo was to the Plains Indian." *National
57 Robertson writes, "the old-timers would never have dared to attack blue and fin whales even if they
came up alongside, for these two species fight in a way no monster sperm ever did." 1956, op. cit.: 81.
wholesale slaughter of whales lacked much of the mystique that had accompanied the wooden whaleships, and few writers found that they could describe it in the mythic fashion that had been possible with sperm whaling. It could not be described in terms of Saint George versus the Dragon, or Beowulf versus Grendel, instead becoming just another occupation, just another industry in a very industrial world. Most writers found it hard to describe at all except in scientific language, though the First World War had provided new metaphors for the activity, those of slaughter and blood. The writers who described modern whaling lacked the poetry and compassion of not just Melville, but also Bennett and Bullen. For example, Robertson's 1956 *Of Whales and Men* is more interesting for what it describes than in the way it is described.

Sven Foyn, born in 1809, in Tonsberg, Norway, invented the harpoon gun that enabled whales to be killed more easily, away from the thrashing tail. He was also responsible for three of the five technological advancements that were necessary to hunt the rorquals.\(^{58}\) He also introduced the fast steam catcher, and the spring winch.\(^{59}\) When he patented his whale "bomb," he wrote in his diary, "I thank Thee, O Lord. Thou alone hast done all."\(^{60}\) This suggests he believed he had God's mandate to kill whales. Bombguns were in use already to dispatch unruly whales, and there had been attempts to supersede the hand thrown dart, or at least improve on its efficiency. A number of harpoon guns (related to shotguns) were tested, the first by Captain Robert Brown of New London in the late 1840s.\(^{61}\) Another invention was the Pierce darting gun, which had a bomb lance piggy-backed on a conventional harpoon, and was fired from a

\(^{58}\) The five advances were the harpoon gun, the steam catcher, the spring winch, the slipway and the modern boilers.

\(^{59}\) Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 127.


shoulder gun. The impact of the harpoon hitting the whale would slide the bomb lance down the shaft and into the whale. It was hoped that this invention would do away with the need to close on a whale to lance it.62 Amongst the more conservative whalers, there was a certain reluctance to use these more sophisticated killing techniques. As J. Ross Browne wrote in 1846: "There was, besides, a repugnance, on the old and experienced whalemen, to any infringement upon their established method of capturing the whale. Its hazards had no terrors for them; they had become accustomed to the harpoon and the lance, and preferred these instruments to all scientific contrivances."63

Partly because of this determination to keep the old methods, the whaling industry virtually died out in America. Because of its enthusiasm in adopting the new methods of Foyn, his native Norway became one of the big whaling nations of the following century. In 1864, he started to use steam catchers to hunt rorquals in Varanger Fjord on the Norwegian coast. The ships were armed with a muzzle-loading swivel-gun (with a range of ten to twenty fathoms), which carried a two metre long explosive harpoon.64 The harpoon guns that had been tried before were too large for the small whaleboats and the steam catchers overcame this problem. Because of the size of the harpoon, it was able to carry a stronger rope, and thus, when the whale sank it could be winched up to the boat and towed ashore for processing. A large spring contraption on the winch could handle the exertions of the whale, negating the need for fathoms of rope.65 The steam catchers no longer needed stealth, for they could outrun or outlast the

63 J. Ross Browne quoted in ibid: 318.
64 Mawer, 1999, op. cit.: 319.
65 Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 127.
fastest whales and, as Mawer notes, the "balance of advantage in the contest between man and whale had shifted unequivocally and irretrievably in favour of the hunter."66

There were other developments that altered the process of whaling. These included the invention of the modern 'try-works', a pressure cooker that could boil down the whale, and the installation of slipways, which meant the whole whale could be winched on board and processed. The latter was a necessary invention as whalers soon realised that blue whales were too large to hoist aboard.67 The slipway gave birth to the modern whaling factory-ship, with its fleet of catchers, buoy boats and tow boats. On the factory-ships the whale was boiled down for oil and everything else minced up for animal food and fertiliser.68 The Western industrial nations were finding that the substitutes for whale-oil and whalebone were often better, and whalers were forced to find new markets for their 'product'. Though attempts to market whalemeat for food did not succeed in Europe, other markets thrived. After 1871 whales were utilised as fertiliser. By 1956, Robertson could claim that the whole industry, English ships employing Norwegian crews, "was ultimately financed by the British margarine consumer."69 At the end of his year as a doctor on a whaleship in the Antarctic, he wrote:

I started to draw up another balance sheet for our expedition … on the credit side, [it]
showed not only the huge exchange of sterling between the British housewives, the Ministry of Food, and whaleship owners. I also had on my sheet an entry showing the thirty-thousand-

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67 In 1926 the Narvik company built, to the design of Captain Peter Sorelle, a stern slipway into their ship, the SS Lancing. Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 158.
68 Later whale meat would become more profitable. Japanese factory ships would also have a freezer ship accompanying them to take home the meat. Mathews, 1968, op. cit.: 201-7.
69 Robertson, 1956, op. cit.: 37.
odd tons of protein we had taken from the sea – enough, when it had been dealt with in various ways, to feed half a million children and keep them in vitamins, many medicines, soap, and a hundred other necessities of life until whaling recommenced the following year and men set off again to the other side of the world to bring them more. My balance sheet mentioned also a more intangible credit – the benefit to the human race, in this age of softness, resulting from a battle successfully fought by six hundred and fifty men, not against other men, nor against any office-devised quotas, but against the worst that nature could devise in her warfare on mankind.70

From this quotation, it is possible to see that the description of whaling in terms of the heroic did not completely die out with the wooden ships. One of the men described by Robertson, however, had a much more prosaic attitude to the business he was engaged in:

'As yon fellow Melville pointed out' (Hamish, like nearly every other modern whaleman, had read the whaling classics) 'we're nae mair than butchers on a gran' scale. The butcher selects his beast for size and kills it with a humane killer; then cuts it into convenient pieces for cooking. And that's exactly what we're doing on this deck here. D'ye know the Norwegian name for a factory ship, doctor? They call it a *Flotten Kokerie*, and, though it's kinda unromantic an' no' a very glamorous name, it describes the whaling business better nor the sentimental writers about whaling do. If I were writing a book about whaling, doctor, like some of us suspects you're goin' to do, I'd start off with a description of the butcher's shop in Petershead, and tak' some coloured pictures o' Andy MacTavish, oor village butcher, killin' and sawin' up a cattle beast; then I'd show by further photographs and illustration that there's

70 ibid: 225.
Another doctor who went south on a British factory ship was H. R. Lillie. He reported that the "method still used in killing whales today is antiquated and horrible…. In one extreme case I witnessed, five hours and nine harpoons were required to kill a Blue Whale in advanced pregnancy."  

The Japanese were still using nets to catch whales in 1891, when a visit by Tsar Nicholas II of Russia introduced them to modern whaling methods. The Tsar saw enough whales in the Sea of Japan to prompt him to form the Russian Pacific Whaling Company, which commenced whaling in 1898 using the more modern Norwegian methods. The Japanese saw the advantages of such techniques and the Japan Ocean Whaling Company, founded by Jyuro Oka, started whaling with one catcher in 1899.  

The Russo-Japanese war stopped Russian whaling in the Sea of Japan but they continued to be a major whaling nation for most of last century. After World War II, the Americans allowed (and encouraged) the Japanese to rebuild their whaling fleet to combat domestic food shortages, and they sent two factory ships to the Antarctic in 1945-46. This ensured that whale killing became firmly entrenched in Japanese culture. Norway sent the first pelagic factory ship to the Southern Ocean in 1903 and also 'profitably' hunted humpbacks off the northwest coast of Australia from 1912 to

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71 ibid: 123.  
72 Quoted by Scheffer, 1969, op. cit.: 167.  
73 Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 137.  
74 ibid: 167.
The focus during this period of whaling was humpbacks but as their numbers dropped whalers looked to the larger rorquals. Compared to those killed by the old wooden whaleships, the number killed in the Antarctic with the new technologies was incredible: more than 10,000 in 1924-25, more than 40,000 in 1930-31.76

One of the few novels about modern whaling is The Hunter and the Whale by Laurens van der Post, which describes sperm whale hunting in South Africa in the 1920s, before the full use of factory ships. The narrator, Peter "Bright-eyes," describes the first whale death he witnesses:

It was a wonderful shot at that distance and unfortunate only in that it did not hit the whale higher up…. None the less, the results were distressing. As the harpoon struck there was an instant explosion. White spray and mist shot up from the water against its flank, followed by bits and pieces from the whale's inside, like lumps of clay thrown up by a mortar bomb exploding in damp earth.

Shattered as it was inside now, in great agony and terror the whale made a desperate effort to escape the death that was within by dashing straight ahead…. the whale went into its 'flurry' as whalers so aptly call the last heaving convulsions of the great mammal…. Its fluked tail, those delicate, elegant products of the most experienced and loving technology of the Seven Seas, rose to smack the water as if knocking for shelter at the door of a home from which it was locked out.

Then suddenly it went still, turned over and lay on its back, the great yellow-white corrugated stomach … at the same time, the last of its warm blood, crimson in the sun, spread itself shining like a mantle of silk far and wide around it.77

76 ibid.
As more people became aware of such killing practices, and as the number of whales began dwindling noticeably, the movement to stop whaling began to build momentum. Prohibitions in domestic waters, such as those by Iceland and Norway, were supplemented by general controls, such as a British ban on females with calves. People were also beginning to speak out against whaling in the post-war world; however, perhaps the real reason for the slowing down of Antarctic whaling was not public outcry, but instead the old reason that as so many whaling areas failed, the whales were no longer there in sufficient numbers. As Mathews wrote in 1968: "The days of Antarctic whaling expeditions are drawing to an end, for whales are becoming so scarce that it is increasingly difficult to make a catch that is profitable." 78

In 1937, delegates from Norway, Great Britain, South Africa, the United States, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and Ireland met and signed the first International Convention, which proposed to close Antarctic whaling from mid December to mid March every year and to ban the hunting of right and grey whales (and others below a minimum size). 79 The regulations were next to useless as there was no way of enforcing them. Japan did not sign and disregarded the regulations. In 1939, on the brink of war, only the United States, Germany, Japan, Norway and Great Britain ratified the convention. In 1944 eight nations met (Germany and Japan had rejected the convention), Ireland, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa returned to the table, and Canada also signed. 80 In 1946, fifteen whaling nations met in Washington D.C. and

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79 Pelagic hunting of humpbacks was banned the following year. Spence, 1980, op. cit.: 163.
80 Misaki writes: "Towards the end of the war in 1944, the seven whaling nations of those days, Great Britain, Norway, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, met in London to plan regulated whaling in order to prepare for the demand for oil foreseen for the post-war period." Misaki, 1993, op. cit.
agreed on the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). This was ratified in 1948 and the International Whaling Commission (IWC) was formed to administer the convention. The Preamble of the ICRW embodies the aims of this Convention and the problem, from a pro-whale perspective, is manifest. It states that the objectives of the Commission were to be met by the whaling nations:

Recognizing the interest of the nations of the world in safeguarding for future generations the great natural resources represented by the whale stocks;

Considering that the history of whaling has seen over-fishing of one area after another and of one species of whale after another to such a degree that it is essential to protect all species of whales from further over-fishing;

Recognizing that the whale stocks are susceptible of natural increases if whaling is properly regulated, and that increases in the size of whale stocks will permit increases in the number of whales which may be captured without endangering these natural resources;

Recognizing that it is in the common interest to achieve the optimum level of whale stocks as rapidly as possible without causing widespread economic and nutritional distress;

Recognizing that in the course of achieving these objectives, whaling operations should be confined to those species best able to sustain exploitation in order to give an interval for recovery to certain species of whales now depleted in numbers;

Desiring to establish a system of international regulation for the whale fisheries to ensure proper and effective conservation and development of whale stocks on the basis of the principles.\[81\] [my emphasis]
The ICRW is written within a trope of whales as a resource and operates only at this level. As Shigeko Misaki writes, the Japanese position in the IWC is "in keeping with the objectives of the Convention, in that whales are resources and not a symbol so long as the Convention remains unrevised."82 The signatory nations to the Convention were almost all whaling nations and the interests of the whaling industry outweighed 'conservation' of whales for another two decades. After the 1972 United Nations Conference on Environment in Stockholm and lobbying by anti-whaling groups, the composition of the IWC changed to the point that there were more non-whaling nations represented than whaling nations. The Convention remains in effect, however, forcing the issue to be regarded within an ideology of resourcism, and allowing the Japanese to exploit a loophole. Daniel Day refers to the IWC as a "big game shooting club" that has a "gentleman's agreement" to abide by sporting rules: "the trouble was that none of the gentlemen stuck to the agreement; and under the IWC direction more whales were killed than before its controls and regulations were set."83 What little regulation there was on whaling nations was largely disregarded. To circumvent the whaling Convention, entrepreneurs such as Aristotle Onassis built pirate whaling fleets, flying flags of convenience and plundered the world's oceans. According to Day, Onassis "violated every conceivable regulation and international law relating to whales" in his pursuit of money.

In the 1970s, the activities of environmental groups, such as Greenpeace and the Sea Shepherds, brought the issue into the media spotlight, with the latter group actively tackling the pirate whalers. Greenpeace actions, such as those described in Shallows,

83 Day, 1987, op. cit.: 1, 27.
including the harassing and filming of whalers by small fast zodiac inflatables, were the most dramatic of the increasing activities of various conservation groups under the banner of "Save the Whales." The death in 1985 of a Greenpeace member in the sinking of their flagship *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland harbour by French security agents did much to provoke world condemnation and gather support for the movement.\(^{84}\) The Sea Shepherds, founded by the "direct and uncompromising" Paul Watson, had used their ship the *Sea Shepherd* to ram and disable the pirate whaler *Sierra* and the group was later implicated in the February 1980 bombing of the same ship in Lisbon harbour, and the subsequent sinking in April 1980 of whalers *Ibsa I* and *Ibsa II*.\(^{85}\) Anti-whaling groups continued with acts of sabotage and increased political pressure, and in 1982, the IWC voted for a ten-year moratorium on commercial whaling. This moratorium continues but various whaling countries continue to operate in disregard of the IWC or within the loopholes of the Convention.

Australian anti-whaling history played an important part in the larger world trend. In 1977, partly from the publicity generated by the Project Jonah group, seventy percent of Australians in polls registered their opposition to whaling. Despite the efforts of Fortom-Gouin of Albany, it was perhaps the pro-whale support of Project Jonah by Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's (then 11 year old) daughter Phoebe that led to an independent inquiry by Sir Sydney Frost and the subsequent implementation of his recommendations, the outlawing of whaling within the limits of Australia's 200 mile territorial waters. Day claims that Australia was the first country to state publicly that whaling was morally wrong, and quotes Malcolm Fraser as saying that: "The harpooning

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\(^{84}\) Admittedly, the French blew up the *Rainbow Warrior* because of its anti-French-nuclear activities, not its whale actions.

\(^{85}\) Day, 1987, op. cit.
of these animals is offensive to many people who regard killing these special and intelligent animals as inconsistent with the ideals of mankind, and without any valid economic purpose in mitigation.  

Since this period, the anti- and pro-whaling debate continues, not always at rational or intelligent levels. The discourse on whales varies depending on people's attitudes to the natural world and roughly separates into the divisions of: ship owners/company heads, governments, whalers, consumers, scientists, ecologists, commercial whale watchers, believers in whale intelligence, New Age adherents, whaling historians, and others. At one extreme of the discourse, there are those who believe it is right to make money from the environment, regardless of any moral, ethical or even legal considerations. Fox's threefold division of instrumental value categorises this group as those who believe in "unrestrained exploitation and expansionism." In this category, there are the owners of large factory ships and global companies who utilise whale products, and are only interested in profit. Next are those who act as if there were no constraints on their behaviour – who hold beliefs in either a god-given or cultural mandate to hunt whales. This perceived mandate is often expressed in terms of the resources metaphor, which itself implicitly derives from such a mandate. Then there are those who whale from complete indifference. To them, the whale is inert and whaling no more an issue than mining. Whale product consumers, primarily of food, propose a number of justifications, including resource metaphors and cultural beliefs (though probably no more than people who argue for the use of beef). Scientists, though striving to maintain a neutral and supposedly 'objective' view, bring personal

86 ibid: 19
87 Fox, 1995, op. cit.: 151.
assumptions to their discourse and operate within a framework that partitions the world into things, subjects and objects, further compounding the tendency to see whales as replaceable components in an ecological machine. Many ecologists, however, operate within a holistic understanding of the world. Recreational whale watchers include those who view whales as no different from a work of art or a tourist landscape – something to be consumed, commodified, photographed and forgotten. Their desire to 'experience' the 'real' whales obscures for them the unreality of the ecotour situation. The idea of whale intelligence is crucial for many people who cannot conceive of moral consideration for whales without crediting them with sentience, rationality or (human-like or better) intelligence. These beliefs are anthropocentric because explicit in this idea is the belief that humans are worthy of moral consideration, and that for anything else to gain such consideration it must be like humans in some respect. Finally, there are those people whose beliefs are often categorised as ‘New Age’, who bring a number of spiritual or mystical beliefs to their ideas of whales, imbuing the whale with special powers. For those who refuse to believe that god is dead, whales appear to possess attributes that make them the vehicle for such spirituality. Again, there is an implicit anthropocentric arrogance in their beliefs, because the major reasons for attribution of 'special-ness' are the whale's social nature (like that of humans), large brain (more than human) and their songs (like human culture). Recent studies on the aggressiveness of whales and dolphin species are largely ignored. Most of these positions still construct the whale, and by extension the natural world, as something to be acted upon by humans, and this is confirmed by resultant human actions.

Since the peak of open boat whaling in the mid to late nineteenth century, the production of whaling literature has changed in form. With the advent of factory ships and their increased decimation of whale stocks, few writers dare to approach whaling as a subject of fiction. For most of the early twentieth century, the writers of texts tried to attain a scientific and objective account of whales and whaling. In the last thirty years, there have been a number of books that deal with whale-watching, whale-facts and even whale aesthetics, with many taking an anti-whaling stance. However, those who advocate whaling also produce a steady stream of pro-whaling texts.89

In Australia, whale watching has become a popular tourist industry with two species, the right whale and humpback the focus of attention. Stephen Martin suggests the prevailing human attitude towards humpback whales is now one of affection and respect. The whale is a symbol of human concern for the environments, plants and animals of the world. However, people have not always been so protective and this perception has only recently emerged as a dominant world view.90

Martin's claim that this is a dominant world view needs to be substantiated, but certainly the popularity of whale watching in Australia, and for Western tourists in places like the Caribbean and New Zealand's Kaikoura, is proof of a more benign attitude to whales in Western cultures at least. While this popularity is focussed, as Martin indicates, on what is considered to be a symbol of environmental concern, there is the possibility that such focus, on the trophy animals of environmentalism, obscures from people the true

environmental problems. For at least the last three decades, much of Western society has been happy to feign environmental concerns, often focusing on single species, without tackling either serious environmental problems or social justice.

iii. Pro-whaling advocates

The most vocal advocates for whaling come from the nations that are whaling (Japan, Norway and some indigenous groups throughout the world), but it is probable some other countries would resume whaling if the moratoriums were lifted. It is equally probable that the same sort of opportunistic entrepreneurs and corporations that made so much money from whaling in the middle of last century would be happy to resume whaling. In modern Japanese and Norwegian whaling, Foyn's harpoon gun has been replaced by a laser-sighted cannon that fires a harpoon tipped with a penthrite thermal grenade. The tip burns at five thousand degrees and the shock waves from the supersonic rate of combustion stun and kill (hopefully) the whales, mostly smaller minkes.91

The pro-whaling advocates use a number of arguments to push their case. These include claims that, it is a 'wise' use of natural resources, and that studies show that the health of populations who eat fish is better than that of beef consuming nations (In this argument, whales are again equated with fish). The argument that the consumption of whale meat is an integral part of cultural heritage is often used. This argument is usually extended by the observation that countries such as the United States and Australia would

91 There is speculation that the whales are merely concussed, a theory enforced by a minke whale that revived while being hauled in by a Norwegian boat. Chadwick, D. H. and Nicklin, F.: 2001, "Pursuing the Minke." National Geographic, April: 58-71.
not like to be told not to eat beef (by India for example) and by the claim, that beef production is more environmentally harmful than wild whale catching. Accusations of racism often accompany this argument. It has been argued that smaller whale species (such as minke) are growing in numbers and are competing with blue whales, and affecting the ability of this species to build up its severely depleted numbers. Similarly, whales are said to compete with humans for limited marine food resources. The figure suggested is that whales "are eating 3 to 5 times of marine living resources than fisheries catch by humans." It is suggested it is better to eat whales that eat krill because it is a more efficient way of converting plankton into humans, in that it skips many links in the food chain, and that it is morally better to kill an animal in the wild (free–range) than raise a domestic animal for food. Whale meat is dubbed "whale bacon" to associate it with what is perceived as acceptable domestic meat. The 'resource' metaphor is carefully negotiated with the claim that whales are not endangered, especially not the commercially hunted species, and that scientific research (whaling) is needed if countries are to practise sustainable whaling. Darwinian theories surface in the idea that it is not immoral to kill whales but merely a case of "survival of the fittest." Legality is invoked, with the claim that by the conditions of the IWC, the Japanese are not doing anything "illegal." Finally, there is the argument that whales taste good, and that it is humans' right to hunt because they are omnivores. These arguments are noted by an anonymous writer on the Whaling Library website, who adds:

92 These arguments, or variations, are used in a number of pro-whaling texts, which are kept at The Institute of Cetacean Research website http://www.whalesci.org/ and at the Whaling Library website at http://luna.pos.to/whale/. All quotes are from this page. Accessed 21.5.01. Also see Day, 1987, op. cit.: 112.
As a summary, my support to the whaling is a kind of resistance activity against a movement which is based on poor and biased knowledge, and is a mixture of inconsistent attitudes to the harvest of wild fauna, cultural prejudice or cultural imperialism, and denial of cultural diversity. Also my support to the whaling is an activity as a consumer to keep the freedom of choice of what to eat for food.93

Though even a cursory glance through the list will show some factors that are debatable, others are perhaps more defensible. It is possible to see in this list the recurrence of older attitudes: whales as fish (and therefore marine resources), that humanity is at the end of a chain (in this case food chain) of being, and that humans have the 'right' to utilise nature. The International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling from Washington, 2nd December, 1946 states:

1. Notwithstanding anything contained in this Convention any Contracting Government may grant to any of its nationals a special permit authorizing that national to kill, take and treat whales for purposes of scientific research subject to such restrictions as to number and subject to such other conditions as the Contracting Government thinks fit, and the killing, taking, and treating of whales in accordance with the provisions of this Article shall be exempt from the operation of this Convention.

2. Any whales taken under these special permits shall so far as practicable be processed and the proceeds shall be dealt with in accordance with directions issued by the Government by which the permit was granted.94

93 The same writer also uses the argument that killing whales for food is not immoral, and that anti-whaling protesters often forget how many insects are killed to grow vegetables. Whaling Library, 2000, op. cit. Note the expression "my support to the whaling" is as published.

94 IWC: 1946, op. cit.
The Japanese object to being accused of using the provisions of point two to conduct whaling and are equally displeased when dubbed insincere. It is not, however, the function of this work to criticise the validity of such arguments, but to interrogate the ideological assumption behind them.

As noted above, the single most overriding ideological standpoint (regarding whales) in pro-whaling texts is the idea that whales are a resource. Article V of the ICRW concerns "the conservation and utilization of whale resources," and notes that amendments may be "necessary to carry out the objectives and purposes of this Convention and to provide for the conservation, development, and optimum utilization of the whale resources … based on scientific findings … [and should] take into consideration the interests of the consumers of whale products and the whaling industry." The language from this section of the ICRW is almost tautological; 'conservation' implies 'resources', and 'utilisation' implies 'resources'. At the base of all these words is the idea of a divine mandate for humans to treat nature in any way they see fit. This idea is stated explicitly by Dennis Tafe (marine biologist), when he writes that the minke whales "are not only abundant, but are increasing in numbers, possibly as a result of the demise of the blue whale. As carers of the earth we are in the privileged position of keeping a check on the balance of nature, being mindful that we can dramatically influence the survival of a species." For Dr. Fukuzo Nagasaki, Director-General of Japan's Institute of Cetacean Research, the choices come down to 'wise use'.

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95 From the article by Misaki: The letter from Mr. Shiramizu to the Yomiuri Shimbun pointed out that in spite of the financial aid that Japan gives to the world, nobody appreciates it, "because Japan is regarded as insincere." Misaki, 1993, op. cit.


or 'non-use', in which the qualitative adjective 'wise' is surreptitiously slipped into the equation.\(^98\) Obviously, to object to 'wise' use would make a person 'un-wise'. In his defence of whaling, Shigeko Misaki puts a similar constraint on what he sees as the parameters of the debate:

One opinion is that whales should not be commercially harvested because utilisation would inevitably lead to depletion of the whale population. Another opinion is that whale science has developed to the level by which some whale stocks can be safely managed for sustainable harvesting without harm to the whale population, and therefore some catches should be allowed. There is yet another opinion which seems to be gaining power with the animal rights believers: That is regardless of reliability of the science to safely manage the whale population, it is unethical or immoral to kill whales. And of course, there are mixtures of these three opinions.\(^99\)

Shigeko Misaki has chosen his words carefully, dividing the discourse into two parts; those who contemplate sensible scientific management (whether for or against) and those who allow irrational non-scientific 'beliefs' to enter their thinking.\(^100\) This tactic, of limiting the discourse to the parameters of one's argument is effective in silencing and denigrating opposition.

Milton Freeman notes the tendency of the anti-whaling groups to combat such discourse manipulation with their own tactics. He suggests that the goal of animal rights


activists is, "to reduce emotional distance between their public and an animal on a far-off ice floe, by making the animal 'almost human'. Making it 'cute and cuddly' helps; making it intelligent helps more." Freeman lists ways in which myth has embellished the power of symbols used by the anti-whaling lobby:

Pleasurable information inputs about whales include such television programs as *Flipper*, the distribution of a recording of humpback whale songs by the *National Geographic*, and a host of coffee-table books with pictures of people interacting with whales, of free-swimming whales, mother-calf pairs, and the reassuring message that as whales are also intelligent beings, we humans are not alone in this world.

Anxiety-provoking images show the ocean turning red, whalers using large knives to butcher whales, or whales beached and in distress….

[And their] immense appeal, from the jaw configuration with its appearance of a fixed smile, to the tricks they have been taught to perform. For people who believe their pet dog is intelligent if they can teach it a few simple tricks, it is easy to believe dolphins must be really smart to unfailingly execute such complicated performances.\(^{101}\)

Thus, there remain two competing ideologies, with no intersecting space for compromise.

These arguments were repeated by the Japanese representatives interviewed on two separate Australian television reports in 2001, one by the ABC's *Foreign*

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Correspondent program and the other by Channel Nine's Sixty Minutes. In the ABC program, Masayuki Komatsu, the director of the Japanese Fisheries Agency, gave the reasons for advocating whaling including that it is a cultural right, that the whale numbers were now such that they were a risk to shipping, and that Japan is a fish eating culture whose DNA is more suited to eating fish than livestock. He described the minke whale as "the cockroach of the ocean" (because it bred so quickly), and brought up the argument that whales compete with humans for fish (and prawns). His subordinate, Yoshi Morishita, when interviewed by Richard Carlton of Sixty Minutes, used similar arguments, claiming that the anti-whaling group was now a minority. He suggested that Japan was "fighting for the respect of science and international law."

As I have only examined the English language in this thesis, my claims, by necessity, have been about the Western countries where this language predominates. The fact that the Japanese pro-whaling lobby uses similarly anthropocentric terms, leads to three possible conclusions. Japanese culture may have developed along similar anthropocentric lines, or it may have been influenced heavily by Western culture since the Second World War. Another probability is that the Japanese whaling writers are aware of these aspects in the language of Western culture, and use this to frame their arguments. Clearly, there needs to be ecolinguistic examination of languages other than English.

iv. Whale watching: consuming the whale in language and ecotours

In recent years whale watching has become one of the more popular eco-tourist activities with those who wish to 'experience' nature. Even in the supposedly pro-whaling nation, Japan, it is popular.\textsuperscript{103} A Geo Australia article claims that an estimated 300,000 people went whale watching (by boat) in 1997, spending some ten million dollars on ecotourism.\textsuperscript{104} The 'blubberneck tourists' mostly still hold, or at least are involved in a discourse relationship that involves, anthropocentric viewpoints. The utilitarian view of whales as a resource for consumption has changed to that of a resource for entertainment, still a consumption. This commodification and utilisation of whales continues ashore with the purchase of whale iconography such as T-shirts, tea-towels, fridge magnets and a plethora of 'whale' souvenirs. In their review of whale watching ecotours on Fraser Island, linguists Peter Mühlhäusler and Ade Peace note that the discourse of the tours stresses the "exceptional" nature of the experience, symbolising nature "in its most striking, untamed and authentic form." They observe that the whale watching tours promulgate this idea of "the awesome big-ness of Nature in its authentic state."\textsuperscript{105} This attitude to nature reinforces the idea of nature as separate and other, as big, and possibly dangerous. Rather than point to the mundane aspects of nature, such whale watching tours reiterate the difference found in the opposition of nature and culture.

\textsuperscript{104} Jarrett, I.: 1998, from "In Defence of Whales", Geo Australia, August.
Most opinion suggests that whale watching positively influences people's attitude to the environment. For example, Martin suggests, "[e]xperienced operators of whale watching enterprises encourage an understanding of humpback whale behaviour that continues to build the public perception of humpback whales and foster the wider issues of concern for the earth's environments." In their recent study of the way in which outdoor recreation influenced environmental attitudes, Teisl and O'Brien found that wildlife watching had a significantly greater effect on changing environmental attitudes (to that of more concern) than other activities like ATV riding, camping, boating and hiking. Whale watching is very different from other wildlife watching experiences in that the whale environment is not as visibly diverse as other ecosystems such as forests. Mühlhäusler and Peace note, however, that, although many of the ecotourism brochures emphasise teaching, interpreting and changing attitudes, "these objectives are neither met nor is there much evidence that a serious attempt has been made to achieve them." There is no evidence to show that the people running the tours perceive the whales in any way different from those paying. Mühlhäusler and Peace emphasise the use of the word "endangered" in brochures, a subtle ploy to make clients believe that not only are they being educated about whales but that their contribution to the whale watching industry in some ways contributes to conserving them.

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107 ATV = All terrain vehicle.
109 Taking a large diesel powered boat out to an area of sea is a very different experience to walking through a rainforest, for example, though perhaps not that different to seeing lions from the safety of a landrover in Africa.
The entertaining aspect of viewing whales is hammered home in ads for whale watching and photographs in newspapers. If the whales are not breaching, jumping or performing in some way they are deemed unworthy of a story by journalists. The flurry of articles from Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* that resulted from whales visiting that city in 2000 show this quite clearly. For a piece entitled "Boys being boys" by Kate Minogue, the sub-heading is "Whales perform off city beaches" and the opening paragraph reads: "Jumping, twisting and splashing, two whales put on a performance off Sydney yesterday." Minogue repeatedly uses words and expressions that stress a performance aspect: "their antics," "lucky spectators," "thinks he is Nureyev," "a performance," "a show like that," "playful performance," and "showing off." To highlight the otherness of the whale, the piece includes an information panel that illustrates the whale as the size of a Bondi bus, and also quotes a body boarder who was in the water with the whales and was "quite scared."\(^{111}\) It ends with an advertisement for copies of the "amazing images." Other newspaper pieces from the same period are similar. "The Alex Follies" by Will Temple is sub-headed "Gasps of delight as whale puts on a star turn," and describes the whale as a "60 tonne spectacle" that "gambolled." Such was the "spectacle" that *Mr Nice Cream* (Peter Reeve) followed the whale about selling ice-creams.\(^{112}\) The idea of whales as entertainment is crucial to the whale-watching industry because this is what they sell, whales as spectacle. The extension of the entertainment, like seeing a performance of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical "Cats," is the numerous consumer items available after the tours, a cornucopia of souvenirs.

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The third aspect of whale-watching that conforms to traditional views of nature is that of anthropomorphism. The whales can only be thought benign if they are converted into pets or quasi-humans. This attitude is endemic in accounts of whales, forcing them (metaphorically) into human social structures. For example, Mimi MacPherson describes the Hervey Bay area as "a sort of nightclub for whales," for "bachelor" whales.113 Jack Pollard describes their "courtship" process as "the dance of love."114 Mühlhäusler and Peace also observed this on the Fraser Island whale tours:

The fact that whales have migrated this far north and into warmer waters to procreate holds out special promise in anthropocentric terms. The relations between male whales gets readily translated into being the basic qualities of a 'macho' culture in which the primary concern is to establish dominance over one another in order to gain control over females and their offspring.115

Males are described as boisterous, protective, "sturdy and stalwart," While females are "loving, caring, affectionate, training, socialising, understanding, teaching and protecting."116

A similar case of anthropomorphism was evident in the Daily Telegraph descriptions of the whale that entered Sydney harbour in 2000. Though this whale was originally dubbed 'Alex', there was some discussion over whether or not this animal was in fact baby 'Dennis' who had been born (to 'Glenys') in Sydney in 1993. The newspaper piece that disclosed this fact was headed "He'll be gone before we get to know him," and

113 1998, Geo Australia, op. cit.
116 ibid.
could only refer to the "12 metre 40 tonne" visitor in similarly anthropocentric terms.\textsuperscript{117} The need to frame whales in human terms masks the corresponding inability to conceive of whales on their own terms, as whales. This inability to think about whales (and all nature) in anything other than seemingly ingrained human terms, also constrains discourse on environmental ethics, restricting it to the anthropocentric end of the spectrum. There are those, however, who conceive of whales in non-anthropocentric terms, not because they are animals but because they are something completely other.

v. New Age adherents: talking to whales?

7:30 – 8am Morning Meditation to begin the day with gratitude, peace and to send love and light to the whales (upper deck) Giving of gifts to the whales: in a sacred circle we will offer gifts of nature or energy to the whales and their home the sea (lower deck)

The itinerary of the Animals in Our Hearts whale-watching tour, Dominican Republic\textsuperscript{118}

The New Age category is slightly ambiguous. While originally used by late nineteenth-century writer Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (co-founder of the Theosophical Society), who announced a coming "New Age," it was later used to describe the belief that technology could accompany and advance the search for solutions to the world's problems, ecological or otherwise. However, the term is now used to describe a disparate group of modern spiritual beliefs. Although it is difficult to define what beliefs

\textsuperscript{117} Hilferty, T.: 2000, 27 August, "He'll Be Gone Before We Get to Know Him," in Daily Telegraph, Sydney: 5.

fall under the heading of 'New Age', loosely speaking there is a variety of holistic, ecological, mystical and supernatural notions, a rejection of traditional western religious dogma combined with an eclectic appropriation of various Eastern and older mythologies. Whales, dolphins, crystals, plants and auras all feature heavily. The whale's perceived social harmony, its large brain size and its beautiful 'songs' have all led to beliefs that whales have an intelligence equal to and different from that of humans.  

Joan MacIntyre's book is typical of this view:

Then what is this other mind, the mind that is in the waters? These enormous alien brains that flow in the oceans – giving rise to songs, dreaming, catching at the thin web of memory, instructing each other in manners and morals – what is the mind world of a creature with a brain bigger and possibly more complex than ours, who cannot act out its will to change the world, if only for the simple reason that it hasn't any hands.

Such passages raise more questions than they answer. Is it possible that the large cetacean brain is needed just to process sensory information and move about a three-dimensional medium? Why assume that another social being would act like humanity? Moreover, why assume that the will to change the world is any sign of intelligence?

119 Carl Sagan, in *Cosmic Connection* (1973) argues, "it is possible that the intelligence of Cetaceans is channelled into the equivalent of epic poetry, history, and elaborate codes of social interaction. Are whales and dolphins like human Homers before the invention of writing, telling of great deeds done in years gone by in the depths and far reaches of the sea. Is there a kind of *Moby-Dick* in reverse – a tragedy, from the point of view of the whale, of a compulsive and implacable enemy, of unprovoked attacks by strange wooden and metal beasts plying the seas and laden with humans." Quoted in McIntyre, 1974, op. cit.: 88.
120 McIntyre, 1974, op. cit.: 94.
121 In my opinion, there is a great deal of arrogance in Western society about the rationality and relative intelligence of humanity. However, it can be argued that human intelligence is largely a result of culture, and language. Although the large brain of early hominids obviously offered an evolutionary advantage, it was through language and social behaviour that they truly prospered. Even Iron Age society relied on complex social and trading systems. How many people have the knowledge needed to swim from
Many people who profess to like cetaceans appear to operate at a level similar to those who dote on their pets. Indeed one site on the internet makes a connection between these two animal interactions. Teresa Wagner’s website, "Animals in Our Hearts," offers amongst other things, *Legacies of Love*, a Pet Loss AudioBook and advice on "How to Effectively Support Someone Grieving the Loss of Their Animal." The centrepiece of the website is the five day Caribbean cruise, where "interaction with the Whales: Physical, Emotional & Spiritual" is possible. The *Bottom Time II* operates out of Puerta Plata in the Dominican Republic and offers clients the experience of swimming with humpbacks:

This is a trip of unsurpassed physical proximity to whales, while also being in the company of fellow humans with deeply held spiritual values about life and animals … and who seek spiritual communion and communication with whales. This is not merely a trip for physical adventure and fantastic photo opportunities, though that exists. It is an opportunity for interspecies communication, interspecies exchange of love, healing and understanding, and personal transformation.122

All this on a dive boat that is "fully air-conditioned and sun-screened to protect you from the heat and sun," as well as having "plenty of fresh water" and "three decks with a large dining and VCR/TV area." Wagner claims to be able to communicate with whales and will send and receive customers' messages of "love and light" to the whales. She claims that though she has "great respect and admiration for the scientists and naturalists who study whales in order to help them, their perspective often seems to preclude even the

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possibility of telepathic or spiritual connection."123 Her first animal communication experiences were apparently with her childhood cat, Catnip, but it was not until an epiphany on swimming with whales for the first time that she gave up her corporate lifestyle and took up whale watching and communicating as her life. As Wagner tells the story: "over time, [she] remembered having many lives as a humpback, and that [her] first lives on earth were as a humpback." For her, "helping other humans hear what the whales want to tell them, passing on the guidance the whales have for participants' individual life journeys, is one of the greatest privileges of [her] life." She writes of her first whale experience, in 1988 off Provincetown, Cape Cod:

I knew I was with family. I knew I was somehow home, but I didn't yet understand why. I also knew I was in the presence of a great being. Every hair on my scalp tingled and there were chills running down my spine. I was at one with this whale, a profound oneness I never before experienced with anyone, any species, anywhere. As I cried soft tears of ecstasy, telling him over and over, "I love you, and thank you for coming," I distinctly heard him speak to me. He gently and very knowingly offered detailed, loving guidance on very personal issues in my life, and said he would be honored to continue to be available to assist and guide me through my life. It felt as natural as talking with a wise, close friend.124

This style of writing fills her website. It is replete with words such as "sacred," "magical," "mystical" and "spiritual," giving an indication of the way in which the whales are being conceptualised. Wagner is not alone in her beliefs. Leona, a "two time

trip participant" is reported as writing "God reached me through the whales. He knew
the humpbacks meant the world to me and I would listen to them." To recognise the
possibility of "oneness" is not to experience the same. Furthermore, to believe that
whales are spiritual beings removes them from the concerns of the corporeal world. If
they are god-like, or harking back to older ideas, messengers or symbols of gods, then
they are immune to terrestrial problems such as explosive harpoons, ecosystem
degradation (from global warming, industrial chemicals, over-fishing) or noise pollution
from "a high tech, high strength, ninety foot catamaran." Such beliefs are merely a
repackaged form of the Romantic reading of God's message from nature and do not
concede that whales, as with all of nature, could be indifferent to and at the same time
inclusive of humanity.

vi. Pro-whale fiction

In the last three decades (concomitant with changing attitudes to them), whales
have been slightly fashionable as a subject for fictional literature and film. Amos and
Boris by William Steig, Rainbow Fish and the Big Blue Whale by Swiss writer Marcus
Psister,125 and Whale is Stuck by Fuge and Hayles are just three examples of the popular
trend to include whales in children's picture books.126 Jeannie Baker's book Hidden
Forest uses collages of 'natural' images (including that of a whale's eye) to propose an

125 In Rainbow Fish and the Big Blue Whale, the whale is described at first by the other fish as "sinister"
and "dangerous" before becoming friends. It can be read as an allegory of xenophobia. Pfister, Marcus:
environmental ethic. However, it is possible to read in this picture book the idea that nature is only appealing when it is harmless. The recent film, *Finding Nemo*, portrays the whale as a large, benevolent (yet largely indifferent) animal, and reflects the idea common in modern texts that whales are spiritual creatures unconcerned by the trivial aspects of life.

In Colin Theile's *Wendy's Whale*, the whale is personified and portrayed as the victim of human greed and stupidity. In the climax of the novel, the whale calf Snorky is inadvertently driven ashore by whale watchers in boats and helicopters, and then rescued. However, in an emotional conclusion, the calf's mother is harpooned by whalers in the southern ocean: "[h]er blood poured from the wound and reddened the water in the growing light." This event is psychologically (and supernaturally) experienced by the girl Wendy. The story concludes with an environmentally pessimistic exchange between Wendy and the ranger; however, in keeping with the book's intended readership, the baby whale is safe in the end, protected by his "wise old" grandmother.

Ruth Park's *My Sister Sif* imagines a world where there are human sea-people who swim and communicate with dolphins, and whales (as well as *menehune*, a dwarf-like race). The narrator Rikoriko describes whales as "angels … holy creatures that during their long majestic lives, do nothing except what their Creator planned for them. Their world is the Garden of Eden, unless man enters it." Although the order has slightly changed, in that humans have gone down a rung, this reflects the old ideas of the Great Chain of Being. Park's world is one in which, at first, whales and dolphins are dying because of

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130 ibid: 159.
environmental degradation. As the narrative progresses, the environmental problems affect all the earth. Park's environmental vision is bleak, however, she suggests that humanity can learn: "There's nothing more powerful than the idea whose time has come."  

Park has her characters telepathically communicating with whales and dolphins. The technique of voicing the whale's supposed thoughts is a common one in contemporary whale fiction. Victor Scheffer's 1969 work, The Year of the Whale, presumes to show the world from a whale's point of view. As does a recent novel by Alison Baird, White as the waves: A Novel of Moby Dick, which professes to be a retelling of Moby-Dick, from the whale's perspective. A similar tactic is employed by Australian writer Tess Williams in her novel The Sea as a Mirror, when she invents a language and culture (complete with spirituality) for her whales. As Whitehead observes, such fictions are connected to the idea that because whales have large brains, they are necessarily intelligent. Whitehead is hesitant in his conclusions as to sperm whale intelligence, but suggests the complex social nature of sperm whales is a sign of substantial intelligence, of a kind. The need, evident in some writers' work, to ascribe intelligence to animals other than humans, is an interesting phenomenon, one that is often concomitant with the similar need for spiritual metaphysical explanations.

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132 ibid: 171.
135 After looking at the physiology of sperm whales, Whitehead writes: "So what have we got? A highly intelligent animal, with varied personalities and great hearing, but unemotional, with very little athletic ability or sense of smell? Such conclusions have to be taken very cautiously." ibid: 322-5.
136 I am not denying that whales are intelligent, merely noting this trend in whale fiction.
Many pro-whale texts are accounts of the wonder of the whale. As discussed earlier (page 200), Reed suggests that an environmental ethic in the idea of nature as wholly other than humanity can be based on awe, attributing intrinsic value to nature. This feeling of awe, in the presence of the whale, is a common description of the experience by whale watchers. One of the more notable novels that describes this awe is the Canadian writer Farley Mowatt's *A Whale for the Killing*, a bleak account of the killing of a trapped whale at the hands of the local Newfoundlander. I will return to this novel.

John Gordon Davis' *Leviathan*, is a 1970s action thriller/romance in which a young Jacques Cousteau-like adventurer launches an eco-terrorist attack upon a Russian factory ship in the Antarctic. Davis' book is similar to Scheffer's, in that it prefaces six of its eight sections with a (third person) whale's eye view of the world. The book ends on this note as well, wringing as much emotion from the situation as possible:

> The blue whale calf was swimming, alone, feeding on plankton, his big mouth open and his eyes alert, watching for danger. And as he swam he was making his calling noises, calling calling for other blue whales, but he did not hear any answers. The blue whale calf was very frightened, and very lonely, and he knew very well about death now…. and all the time his heart was crying out.\(^{137}\)

(L318-19)

By representing the whale and calf as mother and son, and with a continuing reiteration of anthropomorphic terminology, Davis hopes to evoke in readers the same moral

\(^{137}\) Davis, J. G.: 1977, *Leviathan*. Book Club Associates, London. Page numbers in parentheses in the text (L**) refer to this edition. A dominant theme in *Leviathan* is the rarity of blue whales in a large ocean, and the possibility that their inability to find each other will lead to population collapse.
sentiments that would accompany such treatment of human characters. The book is replete with such anthropomorphism. The whales are described as: "all beautiful and friendly" and "waiting for you" (L28); "grandfathers and grandmothers and calves" (L70); "with a smile on his knobbly face" (L70); "amorous bulls"; "amorous cows"; "midwives," and "happy whales" inhabiting "nursery coves" (L104). The most blatantly anthropomorphic passage comes after Katherine swims with the whales for the first time:

all the time this fabulous friendly animal so big he could have killed me with one flick of his tail, but instead there was this wonderful feeling between us! And he knew it and I knew it, and he was being kind to me like a huge grown man to a little child, giving me a ride on his tail because he knew I was loving it and he was understanding me; he understood and he was loving me hanging on. Oh God, it was the most beautiful feeling of kinship and – love! Sort of brotherly love. (L73)

The views of Justin, the main protagonist, on whales are similar and he repeats this passage almost word for word when arguing with the sceptical Max, the chief foil. Earlier he proposes his view of why whales should be saved from hunting: "Probably the most wondrous animal the world has ever seen. Some as big as thirty elephants, the biggest creature ever to have lived on the earth. With minds possibly the equal to man's. And the kindest and most gentle of creatures" (L37). Justin's conception of whales is manifest in this passage. They, and nature, are awesome and other, though their minds are only possibly equal, not in any way different or better.
Most of Davis' moralising, with respect to the world of whaling, is spelt out by his eco-warrior characters, with prompting from the 'love interest' and a couple of characters as counterpoints. There is nothing subtle in the characters' or narrator's dialogues and soliloquies: "the stench of red blood, and the oil fumes belching from the pot holes, as mighty whales were turned into oil for lipsticks and shoe polish" (L259). Justin's solution to the problem is simple: "Sinking that goddamn ship is the only way to stop the bastards from killing the last of the whales" (L37). In his argument with Max, he resorts to a traditional ploy, analogy with pets, domestic or cute animals – in this case the horse:

Imagine killing a horse, Max. Imagine this is the way we kill horses: By shooting it with an arrow from a heavy truck. And the arrowhead explodes inside the horse's guts and blows half his guts to bits. But of course, this doesn't kill the horse. It doesn't kill the horse because the arrow's pretty small compared to the size of the horse, [sic] And the weight of the explosives in the arrow head is only enough to blow half his guts to bits! And now the horse begins to drag us and the heavy truck through the streets, Max. By the arrow that is buried in its shattered guts. With all the butchers riding in the truck. The horse drags us through the streets by its guts, and all the time it is bucking in agony. And then it falls down exhausted, spewing blood all over the place … (L113-14)

While he offers a vivid metaphorical argument, it is one that subscribes to the aforementioned association of whales with friendly domestic horses. The belief that the world is still created or evolved for humanity is nowhere more evident than in the following passage:
And I'm going to do it, Max … And I have a good clear conscience about it. Because it's morally right! Right to save a miraculous creation! Right to stop savage cruelty! Right by the laws of humanity! Right by the laws of nature! What right have they got to destroy a magnificent part of nature, which belongs to the whole world. Whales belong to the whole earth. To everybody. Not just to them. What right do those bastards have? None! They're fucking outlaws! (L118)

Justin argues from within the traditional discourse, even though at some level he senses its essential contradictions. 'Rights' implies subscription to the same meta-ethical system that allows utilitarianism to be termed an ethic. It is a construct of the Lockean world where all rights belong to humans and, in this world, for Justin whales too are property, belonging to everybody, obviously not the whales themselves. His condemnation of international sea-law shows he is conscious of the constructed state of the human concept of morality: "International fucking law! That's not law, it's a bunch of essays written by some ancient Roman and Dutchmen. Nobody applies it except when it damned well suits them" (L118-19).

Despite its passion, the ecowarrior stance of the novel is subverted by its ending. The crew, although they try not to be 'terrorists', kill people, and themselves. Though it is tempting to read this in the same way as *Shallows*, in that humans are incapable of escape from their own qualities (and thus the world in general is doomed), there are clues to a different meaning conveyed in the final pages. Justin's "triumphant awe" turns to "horrified remorse," when he realises he has killed the crew on the Russian factory ship. Instead of allowing a justification of this in the interests of the whales, the humanised calf whale is shown to be just as alone and endangered, and the actions of the
eco-warriors are reduced to vanity: "Oh God, why did I use the thermal bombs – just to impress them. Oh God …" (L318). The ending is prefigured by an earlier section of the book when Katherine, in her mind accusing him of "schoolboy agnosticism," argues with Justin in favour of God's power to stop the killing of whales, and against taking matters into his hands: "There is God's law and it's very clear, not only in the Bible but in all the experience of mankind. Nothing but bad comes of choosing evil means to achieve a goal, no matter how worthwhile the goal is" (L173). This, in the end, is the message of the novel.

Mowatt's novel A Whale for the Killing is a supposedly autobiographical, realistic and historical account of a large fin whale being trapped by the tide in a shallow basin on Newfoundland's coast, and the eventual death of the whale at the hands of locals and their guns. It is a novel in which all the actions of those trying to save the whale are ineffectual, futile, and in the end damaging to social cohesion. Mowatt had settled on the island because he was comfortable with the community and lifestyle. He tries harder than anyone to keep the whale protected until it can get free on the next spring tide, however, his efforts to save the trapped whale alienate him from many in the local community, he is ostracised and chooses to leave.138 Though he admits to liking some of the islanders, his experience only accentuates his disgust with humanity as a species. While at times slipping into familiar tropes, Mowatt's book is a rare creation

138 In words he describes as bitter and unfair, but perhaps truer than he realises, he writes, "they are essentially good people. I know that, but what sickens me in their simple failure to resist the impulse of savagery … I admired them so much because I saw them as natural people, living in at least some degree of harmony with the natural world. Now they seem nauseatingly anxious to renounce all that and throw themselves into the stinking quagmire of our society that has perverted everything natural within itself, and is now destroying everything natural outside itself" (AW114).
indeed, one that offers sympathy for the whales, not because they have been humanised or via this process of humanisation, but for the being that is the whale.

In his discussion of *Moby-Dick*, D. H. Lawrence writes:

Melville is like a Viking going home to sea, encumbered with age and memories, and a sort of accomplished despair, almost madness. For he cannot accept humanity. He can't belong to humanity. Cannot. 139

…

Never man instinctively hated human life, our human life, as we have it, more than Melville did. And never was a man so passionately filled with the sense of vastness and mystery of life which is non-human. 140

These two quotations could be a description of Mowatt's character in *A Whale for the Killing*. Callicott has written, "the extent of misanthropy in modern environmentalism thus may be taken as a measure of the degree to which it is biocentric." 141 Mowatt's character is misanthropic, to a degree, and explicitly espouses a bio-centric ethic.

Mowatt 's character Uncle Art says:

'And I'll tell you a quare thing. So long as they were on the fishing grounds along of we, I never was afeared of anything; no, nor never felt lonely neither. But after times, when the whales was all done to death, I'd be on the Penguin grounds with nothing livin' to be seen

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139 Lawrence, 1973, op. cit.: 364.
140 ibid: 366.
141 Callicott, J. B.: 1980, "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," *Environmental Ethics* 2: 326. Fox concurs, claiming that the "extent to which people in general are ready to equate being opposed to human-centeredness with being opposed to humans per se is itself a function of the dominance of the anthropocentric frame of reference in our society." Fox, 1995, op. cit.: 19.
and I'd get a feeling in my belly, like the world was empty. Yiss, me son, I missed them
whales when they were gone.
'Tis strange. Some folks say whales is only fish. No, bye! They're too smart for fish. I don't
say as what they're not the smartest creatures in God's ocean.'
He paused for a long moment, picked up the telescope and gazed through it.
'Aye … and maybe out of it as well.' (AW27)

Uncle Art echoes the opinions of the narrator Mowatt, who states his own beliefs
plainly, calling the whales the "most stupendous animals that ever lived" (AW29), and
describing how: "As [he] grew older and became more and more fascinated by non-
human forms of life, the whale became a symbol of the ultimate secrets which have not
yet been revealed to us by the 'other' animals" (AW50). Mowatt resorts, at times, to the
traditional comparisons to elephants or dinosaurs, as well as describing whales in human
terms, for example, as ballet dancers (AW62). He struggles to find superlatives for the
whales. They are "paragons of grace," "exquisitely streamlined," "something more subtle
and responsive than ordinary flesh and bone," and they exhibit both "sinuosity" and
"absolute fidelity to some powerful but unheard aquatic rhythm." He claims they achieve
"a harmonious relationship to the world of waters such as man will never know in air or
on land, in nature or in art" (AW62-3). He is, however, aware of their animal-ness and
the way in which they have evolved:

So whales and me diverged from the common ancestry, one to become the most lordly form
of life in the oceans, and the other to become the dominant animal on land. The day came
when the two would meet. The meeting was not a peaceful one, in mutual recognition of
each other's worth. As usual, it was man who set the terms – and he chose battle. It was a
one sided battle where man wielded the weapons, and the whales did the dying. (AW31)

He writes of fin whales "sliding down a long, unseen chute leading to the privacy of the
abyssal depths" (AW63). In these depths whales become the awesome other, and
Mowatt realises that there they are exempt from language.

As Johnson notes, "tactical reasons" are often necessary when dealing with
politicians and the general public. By this, he means that it is often useful to adopt
anthropocentric language, to place arguments in the language that is accepted.142

As narrator, Mowatt consciously subscribes to the terms of the dominant discourse to argue
for the whale's survival. He can only translate his feelings into the language of resources,
in this case of tourism and science, if he wants others to understand him and agree to
save the whale. He uses the familiar defences of whales, emphasising gentleness, loyalty
and intelligence. Mowatt asserts, "the more advanced whales have brains comparable to
and perhaps even superior to ours, both in complexity and capacity. It is clear that their
power to think has steadily increased, even as ours has, over the millennia" (AW31). He
occasionally slips into anthropomorphisms, presuming to offer the whale (her) thought
processes (AW78). Humanisation of the whales is also evident in the other characters'
discussion of the "Guardian" (another large whale, presumed male and spouse, which
keeps up a supposed vigil outside the pond, only leaving when the female whale dies –
AW86ff). Mowatt begins to treat "the lady whale" as a person, obvious in his frequent
use of 'she' and 'her', though when the whale dies he writes: "The whale is gone … the
whale is dead," before saying "She's dead" (AW174).

For Mowatt, the whale is 'monstrous' in the word's etymological sense. He describes the whale shortly before it dies as looking like a "monstrous lump of flotsam," and perceives her fetid breath to be an omen (AW164). It is not only an omen of the death of the whale, but of Mowatt's disillusionment with Newfoundlanders, and eventually of humanity's own demise, facing destruction just as stupid as the narrative's whale. As he says, after the whale dies:

I wept, because I knew that fleeting opportunity to bridge, no matter how tenuously, the ever widening chasm that is isolating mankind from the totality of life, had perished in a welter of human stupidity and arrogance.

I wept, not for the loneliness which would now be Claire's and mine as aliens among people we had grown to love, but for the inexpressibly greater loneliness which Man, having made himself the ultimate stranger on his own planet, has doomed himself to carry into the silence of his final hour. (AW179)

Mowatt writes an epitaph for both humanity and the whale when he says: "From a being of transcendental grace she had been changed into an abomination; grotesque, deformed and horrible" (AW183).

*A Whale for the Killing* is far more didactic in tone than *Moby-Dick*, and lacks the symbolic possibilities. It does not offer as many alternative ways to conceive of the world, but does suggest that humanity needs to find a more bio-centric ethic to use in its dealings with the natural world. *A Whale for the Killing* is a document of barbarism, a document of humanity's bleak future.143 Mowatt offers his prediction for humanity's

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143 I am referring here to Walter Benjamin's statement, that "there is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism." Benjamin, W.: "Theses on the Philosophy
future: "Like imbecile children loose in a candy store, we may well come to a sticky end in a belch of indigestion but, if we do not, then we assuredly die of hunger when the sweets run out" (AW59). It is also a document of sadness. There are characters in the book, as in all life, who aspire to be all and achieve all that the moral narratives our culture claim is attainable. The sadness is that such achievements are often only sporadic, isolated, solitary and ephemeral. They are not indicated in culture as a whole. If existential angst is the mental torment produced by the realisation that people alone are responsible for their lives in a godless universe, then existential sorrow is the realisation that some aspects of humanity are outside of individual responsibility.
vii. The hand of God\textsuperscript{144}

In Western countries, since the Second World War there has been a change in attitudes to whales. They are no longer the object of industry and the mythopoesis of the whale hunt has lost its appeal. This does not, however, mean they are safe from humanity. Stoett suggests, "the greatest threat to today's whales is not the resumption of large scale whaling" but is instead "problems associated with industrial, agricultural, and marine activities that impinge on the ecological health of the oceans themselves."\textsuperscript{145} Whitehead lists the new threats to sperm whale populations as Japanese Whaling Industry (who have resumed killing sperm whales), collisions with ships, marine debris (such as plastics), interaction with fisheries, noise, chemical pollution and global warming.\textsuperscript{146} Peter Gill and Margie Morrice, who study blue whales in the Bonney Upwelling off the western Victorian coast, suggest there is potential for "global climate change to cause a complete system crash," which could devastate the whale population and other marine species in the area.\textsuperscript{147} While governments such as Australia and the United States have been proud of their 'environmental' stand on whales, they have not acted with such vigour on other environmental problems that affect not only whales but also the whole biosphere.

The Japanese whaling industry suggests the population of whales has increased in size enough to allow limited hunting or 'resource management'. Which introduces an ethical dimension to the argument, and the conflict between 'conservationists', who can

\textsuperscript{144} The 'hand of god' was a whaler's metaphor for the sight of the whale's tail disappearing into the water.
\textsuperscript{145} Stoett, 1997, op. cit.: 5.
\textsuperscript{146} Whitehead, 2003, op. cit.: 362-8.
see no reason against limited utilisation of resources, and preservationists, who suggest whaling in itself is unethical. If it is wrong to kill two hundred whales, why is it not wrong to kill one? What is it about whales that make them different from cows, for example? Many would argue that humane killing practices separate the two. The Japanese, Norwegians and Icelanders accuse countries such as America of cultural imperialism. How can the United States allow the Makah to hunt for cultural reasons, and criticise the Norwegians? Indigenous whaling is a contentious point in any ethical argument. Currently indigenous people hunt whales in several countries: the Inuit hunt endangered bowheads in the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Sea, Russian Aleuts hunt grey whale, there is a minke hunt in Greenland and limited humpback hunting in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Portuguese, who still whale in the Azores and allow the Faroe slaughter claim such whaling is subsistence and cultural. The major reason that people evoke for not killing whales at all, even in limited indigenous situations, is their supposed intelligence and sentience. This is a major theme in much contemporary whale fiction. Would it be all right to hunt them if it were proven that they were only as intelligent as cattle?

Novels such as *A Whale for the Killing* or *Leviathan* are avowedly environmentalist in leaning. Some try to humanise the whale and evoke sympathy. The discourse of the contemporary whaling argument is a linguistic battlefield, with 'resources' on one side and 'gentle intelligent creatures' on the other. The world of Western fiction has largely aligned itself with the latter, and, in doing so, has abnegated

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148 The Makah in Alaska have a treaty signed in 1885, which guarantees whaling rights, but are still trying to get the right to whale. They argue that the resumption of the traditional hunt is needed to restore their cultural identity. Stoett, 1997, op. cit.: x. See also Morgan, 1973, op. cit.: 354-355.
149 Stoett, 1997, op. cit.: 69.
the mythology of humanity as existing in opposition to nature. It is a denial of the previously dominant discourse that is not as evident in the workings of governments, economists and scientists. The question remains, therefore, that although fiction can foreground environmental concerns, what role can such literature, and the ecocritical study of all texts, play in influencing readers and society in general to act positively towards the biosphere?
Conclusion: "The tail is not yet cooked …"\textsuperscript{150}

This thesis has focussed on two subjects, the whale and the role of ecocriticism. By examining classic whaling literature and modern whale texts, I have plotted the changes in Western attitudes to the whale throughout history. Examination of \textit{Moby-Dick} produces several important conclusions regarding ecocriticism and environmental thought. The first is the value of this mode of scrutiny of an 'historical' text for the refinement of contemporary understanding. Second, the strong similarities between Melville's ideas of redemption through 'government' of 'sharkishness' and Schopenhauer's ideal of the 'Will'-less person, suggest an environmentally harmonious and non-harmful way to approach the world. Both writers suggest that humanity and nature are not in opposition but interconnected (in Schopenhauer's conception at the level of the 'will'), but that the base level of reality is perceived by sensitive humans as 'evil'. For both writers the solution is to deny the 'willing' impulse. In my opinion, an environmental ethic can be founded on this denial.

The whale has played an important role in human conceptions of nature throughout history. For most of recorded history, the whale was unknown, awesome, monstrous and portentous. Even now, with the whole weight of modern scientific research (including Japanese 'scientific' experiments), there is much that is not known about whales. In the industrial age, the whale was coveted by the Western world as a 'resource'. In this period, from the fifteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, there were many who questioned the treatment of animals and the processes of environmental damage, although the whale was either not considered, or not considered to be under

\textsuperscript{150} From Melville's letter to Hawthorne (June 29, 1851) Leyda, 1952, op. cit.: 435.
threat. In this instance, Ishmael was perhaps in error when he deemed the whale "immortal in his species." Some scientific writers, for example Marsh, did consider the implications of over-hunting and marine environmental damage. Many of the whaling writers could see the all too obvious problems of bay whaling, of killing whales in their calving grounds. These concerns were largely ignored by governments and 'entrepreneurs'. In the last fifty years, the status of the whale has again changed. It is again awesome and, for many, aligned with spiritual beliefs. It is again 'monstrous', in the sense of an omen. The causes of environmental damage are deeply complex and for many people in the West, the whale symbolises the problems modern humanity is having with its 'environment'. Many people see the fate of cetaceans as connected to that of the bio-sphere as a whole. While a large change in Western attitudes to whales and whaling appears to have occurred, there has not been a concomitant change in attitudes to the environment in general. The prevalence of advertising campaigns suggesting environmental care programs, such as re-cycling, have convinced many that steps are being made towards an environmentally friendly culture. Sustainability is the buzz word of this decade. Older attitudes that put humanity in an antagonistic relationship with nature exist mostly, in contemporary Western society, in reports of 'natural' disasters (fire, storms, flood, lightning, volcanoes), viral and bacteriological disease outbreaks, and with respect to the last few predator species (sharks and crocodiles in Australia, bears in America). Although there is much attention to environmental thought, by far the most prevalent attitude to the natural world in Western society is the idea of a mandate to govern, steward or use the world, as humanity deems fit, an attitude framed in terms of capitalism and economics, 'development', 'resource' and 'growth'. In a television news
interview in 2003, Liberal Senator Robert Hill, minister for the environment, on television claimed that Australia does not need people like Senator Bob Brown (leader of the Greens) because "nowadays everyone is an environmentalist." Clearly, a large percentage of the population is concerned with environmental issues; however, it is extremely difficult to sustain the argument that everyone is an environmentalist. There is also a great difference between concern and action. This is the danger of focussing care for the natural world on large species like elephants and whales. There is more to environmental concern than caring about a few species, or recycling overly packaged products. The new construction of nature, as something the Western world cares about, obscures the fact that largely it doesn't. Even people who are well educated in environmental problems do not always change their habits in necessary ways.

Given that there are pressing environmental problems, and that they may be partly a result of the way in which Western culture conceptualises the natural world, what role can the study of literature play in addressing these issues? In my opinion, as a field, the study of literature has an important role to play in environmental thought. Literature has always been a site in which the play of ideas has offered possibilities that more rigorous fields, such as philosophy, have been unable to provide. The combination of the production of literature and its associated criticism combines both the necessary functions of the creative and the analytical. Western societies, if not all societies, need an ecocritical theory and praxis for the same reason they need feminist theory, Marxist theory, and post-colonial theory. These are proselytising critical theories. And they are all interconnected. They all derive authenticity from the assumption that human rationality can improve the conditions of the disempowered, whether they are women,

151 I realise that the concept of what constitutes 'literature' is still contested.
the poor, the colonised or the environment. The hegemony of the centre is under siege. As with postcolonial studies, ecocriticism needs to be both the critical examination of texts, and the production of environmentally positive work.

In a postmodern world, it is not just fictional literature that needs to be scrutinised, but all cultural texts, including print media, art (in all disciplines), film, television, radio, games, and the internet. Although this thesis is focused upon literature, it necessarily devolves to cultural studies. The linguistic and philosophical aspects of this thesis apply to all cultural texts. Studies of the construction of nature in reality TV programs or pop videos would be worthwhile projects. It is crucial to realise, with regard to modern texts, that there is very little that escapes the constraints of the dominant discourse. A Kuhnian paradigm change is necessary before alternative ethical systems can be assimilated into mainstream text production and culture. I would like to think that the necessary heat on the system, in the sense that heat agitates particles and increases the intensity of the Brownian motion in liquids, is occurring as environmental problems become increasingly pertinent. I have argued that the perceived opposition between nature and culture (though they are both contested territories), manifest as an antagonistic one-sided relationship, is ingrained in the language of Western culture. Eco-linguistic and literary studies can foreground and deconstruct this opposition and can contribute, thereby, to an appreciation of the earth's environmental problems.

First, this thesis examines the way language is involved in our relationship with the world and the way the historical conception of 'nature' has influenced language. It suggests that it is possible that the opposition between humanity and other, nature and culture, is innate in our psychological processes. If not, it is at least deeply entrenched in
the cultural history of the Western world. Since this same cultural history is constructed by, and constructs, language the opposition is reflected in language at many levels. It is possible to discern the way language reflects/refracts our attitudes to the natural world by questioning grammar, lexicon, metaphor and other tropes, intonation, presuppositions, omissions, and ideology. The deeply ingrained processes in language that I have discussed are, in all likelihood, unchangeable. Nevertheless, the shallower aspects of language, the way in which it is influenced by, and acts upon, cultural ideologies are definitely mutable. Behaviour is relative to language, not determined by it, and therefore can be changed.

The perceived opposition to nature has an ancestry as old as recorded language. The second part of this thesis looks at traces of this opposition throughout history. Older metaphors include those related to a teleological conception of the world, hierarchical structures such as the 'Great Chain of Being', the concept of senescence in nature, and the effect of different environments on cultures. Concatenated with the last three millennia of religious belief is the belief in a designed earth and the corresponding notion of human dominion over nature. In recent centuries, these ideas have been complemented by the idea of utilitarianism (where the idea of the greatest 'good' has been seen as human 'good'). There has also been a counter swing, with writers investigating the biblical sources of a contrasting mandate that views humans as stewards of nature. The last two centuries have also seen the growing popularity of conceptions of the world (and our relationship with it) that are opposed to the idea of domination, such as animal rights, the 'land ethic', ecocentric and biocentric ethics, (including deep ecology). While Spinoza is often cited as the antecedent of deep
ecology, I argue that Schopenhauer shows the way that it is necessary to live in the world. Given the affinities between Schopenhauer's philosophy and *Moby-Dick* (and later work by Melville), I suggest that Melville subscribed to a similar view.

One of the aspects of a lot of environmental thought is, as Peter Hay asserts, that the ecological imperative lacks any rational basis: "the wellsprings of a green commitment – at both the activist and more passive levels of identification – are not, in the first instance, theoretical; nor even intellectual. They are, rather, pre-rational."¹⁵² This is a conundrum for which there is possibly no solution. For many in philosophy, David Hume's proof of the 'naturalistic fallacy', the separation of is/ought, (see page 156) is irrefutable.¹⁵³ One of the strengths of the critical study of literature is that it is not as constrained by the rigorous logic of Western philosophy, particularly the strict type practised in America. As a field, (in its modern incarnations) it tends to eschew universalisms, deny the existence of absolute truths and celebrate pluralities. In this, it is paralleled by *Moby-Dick*. We should ignore the theoretical elitism that denounces ecocriticism for being insufficiently rigorous, and praise ecocritical writers such as Barry Lopez, Annie Dillard, and Leslie Marmon Silko who celebrate wild nature. Feminist theorists such as Kristeva and Cixous have argued for the rejection of the patriarchal and androcentric aspects of Western language. Arrogant in its claims to the authority of logic and scientific method, the anthropocentric aspects of Western language should also be rejected. Language that represents the natural world as an integral part of human life, not as antipathetic, should be applauded.

¹⁵³ It is possible that the is/ought conundrum is merely a problem of language, not 'truth'.

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Amongst others, Heidegger suggests that art is a realm where reflection upon technology is possible (if art did "not shut its eyes to the constellation of truth, concerning which we are questioning").\textsuperscript{154} The ability for people to modify their cultural practices by openness to our embeddedness in technological practices, offers a way through literature to an ecological consciousness and resultant environmental ethic. Ecocriticism can play an important role in this process. However, reflecting Melville's embrace of the comic, it is not enough just to analyse all texts, there must be a celebration of the work that consciously embraces the more radical environmental thought. Max Oelschlaeger writes of "an ecology of language … running wild" in books:

\begin{quote}
We are caught between a failed story, the past that yet overdetermines us, and another that is powerless to be born, the future that is not yet but might come to be. I find the new story – that we are of and about the earth – in gestation all around me. I hear again and again the earth-talk of ecologists and mountaineers, activists and defenders of wildlife, organizers and wild-life caretakers, who sing and celebrate the earth, who lay down the illusion of the ego cogito and accept themselves as the flesh of the earth.\textsuperscript{155}
\end{quote}

\textit{Moby-Dick} is such a book, a paean to wild nature replete with ecological concepts. This thesis has brought these aspects of the novel to light. In his 1821 \textit{A Defence of Poetry}, Shelley claimed that poets are "the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts
upon the present" and "the unacknowledged legislators of the world.\textsuperscript{156} Ecocritical writing, whether analytical or creative, can resume this role.

Melville skilfully crafted \textit{Moby-Dick} not just to be a jeremiad, his lament of contemporary America, but to include possible solutions. He manages to do this without the didactic tone of many later novels on whaling. If the opposition between nature and culture, between the noumenal realm and human construction of the phenomenal world can be conceived in terms of the Schopenhauerian 'will' then to deny the 'will' is also to deny the opposition. \textit{Moby-Dick} shows us how this might be possible. It offers the perfect example of how a writer, aware of and exploiting the nature/culture opposition, can subvert the opposition. In the same way, Western cultures must 'deny' ideologically and historically based motivations to exploit nature.

"So ends"\textsuperscript{157}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{157} Heffernan, T. F.: 2002, \textit{Mutiny on the Globe}. Bloomsbury, London: 215: "The old whaling logs had a formula for closing every day's entry: 'So ends.' The two words descend like a curtain on the brutal, thrilling, tedious, satisfying, unsatisfying, perilous, tragic, unpredictable days of the whaleship."
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Appendix A
Glossary of Whaling Terms

camel
A large barge (or floating dry-dock) used to move a whale ship over the Nantucket sandbar towards the end of that harbour's whaling period.

craft
As well as the general nautical meanings of the word 'craft' (in the sense of watercraft), in whaling it had the extra meaning of the tools of the trade, particularly the ironware such as harpoons and lances.\textsuperscript{158}

drugged
"All whaleboats carry certain curious contrivances, originally invented by the Nantucket Indians, called druggs. Two thick squares of wood of equal size are stoutly clenched together, so that they cross each other's grain at right angles; a line of considerable length is then attached to the middle of this block, and the other end of the line being looped, it can in a moment be fastened to a harpoon. It is chiefly among gallied whales that this drugg is used. For then, more whales are close round you than you can possibly chase at one time. But Sperm Whales are not every day encountered; while you may, then, you must kill all you can. And if you cannot kill them all at once, you must wing them, so that they can be afterwards killed at your leisure. Hence it is, that at times like these the drugg comes into requisition. Our boat was furnished with three of them" (MD396).

fathom
A measure of nautical distance, normally the measure of depth and equal to six feet (1.83m).

flense
To cut up the blubber of a whale, using a large flensing knife.

gallied
Melville writes, "a general pausing commotion among the whales gave animating token that they were now at last under the influence of that strange perplexity of inert irresolution, which, when the fishermen perceive it in the whale, they say he is gallied" (MD394). In Tony Tanner's notes to Moby-Dick he writes that gallied (to gally, or gallow) is an old Saxon word, which occurs in Shakespeare.

gam
"GAM. Noun -- A social meeting of two (or more) Whale-ships, generally on a cruising-ground; when, after exchanging hails, they exchange visits by boats' crews: the two captains remaining, for the time, on board of one ship, and the two chief mates on the other" (MD247). Melville's description is adapted from that of Henry T. Cheever from The Whale and his Captors (MD590).

\textsuperscript{158} See Mawer, 1999, op. cit.: 349.
irons
Metal whaling implements, especially the harpoons and lances.

lay
A sailor's share in the profits of the cruise.

lee
"Shoar against which the Wind blows."\textsuperscript{159}

round out
The appearance of the whale's back as it surfaces and then dives in one fluid motion.

trying
The process of rendering the whale blubber into oil, by boiling in a large boiler (try-pots).

try-pots
The large pots in which the whale blubber is boiled obtain the oil and the combination of boilers and fire.

try-works
The apparatus for trying, consisting of furnace and try-pots.

the yard
Yards are the horizontal poles, which cross the mast and support the sails on a square-rigged vessel.

Bibliography