



THE GAVEL

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Volume 22 Issue 10

"The Oldest Masonic Lodge in the Rockies" Organized May 8, 1851

October 2022

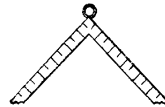
From the East...



From the East

November is Thanksgiving Month. So in celebration Brother AJ has promised us a traditional Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings. We are all familiar with the story of the "Pilgrims and Indians" celebrating the "First Thanksgiving". However, we may be less familiar that it was Brother George Washington who first declared November 26 to be set aside to give thanks for the newly adopted constitution. I had never read the original Thanksgiving Proclamation. It is educational and worth reading. Although celebrated off-and-on usually unofficially, from that time forward, Thanksgiving did not become a permanent US holiday until Brother Franklin D. Roosevelt officially proclaimed the holiday in 1939.

Fraternally,
Charles Hannaford
Worshipful Master



Thanksgiving Proclamation

Issued by President George Washington, at the request of Congress, on October 3, 1789

By the President of the United States of America, a Proclamation "Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and—Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me 'to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:'

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favor, able interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war;

Continued on Page 3

2023 DUES

Brethren: Please take note that 2023 dues are now due and payable. They are now **\$130.00** (\$75 + Grand Lodge per-capita).

Regular Meetings

RECURRENCE

First Monday
Fourth Wednesday
Second Tuesday
Third Tuesday
Second Wednesday
First Thursday

EVENT

Regular Communication at 7:00 PM, Dinner at 6:00 PM
Property Management Board at 6:00 PM
Regular Communication at 7:30 PM
Regular Communication at 5:30 PM
Regular Communication at 7:30 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM
Regular Communication at 7:00 PM, Dinner at 5:30 PM

ORGANIZATION

Montezuma Lodge No. 1
Montezuma Lodge No. 1
York Rite Bodies
Santa Fe Shrine Club
Cerrillos Lodge No. 19
Santa Fe No. 19 Eastern Star

We have been holding our Quest meetings every Saturday morning at 10:00 AM. Quest Club is a forum for everyone. Mason and non-Mason alike can voice ideas and discuss any topic.



Special Notices And Events

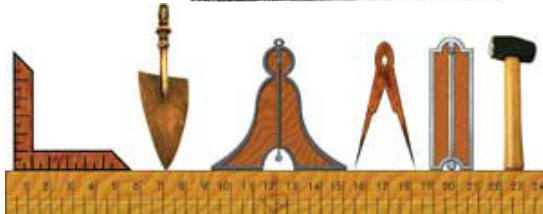
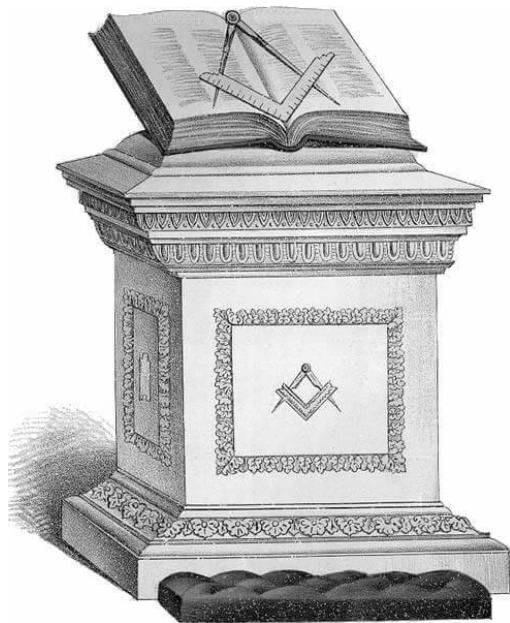
Property Management Board

The next monthly meeting of the Property Management Board will be held on **Wednesday, October 28th** at 6:00 PM. in the library.

Degrees Conferred

On Friday, October 21, 2022 the degree of Entered Apprentice was conferred on Hamza Altheyab.

On Friday, October 28, 2022 Brother William Frederick Koch was passed to the degree of Fellowcraft using the lodge hall of Cerrillos #19.

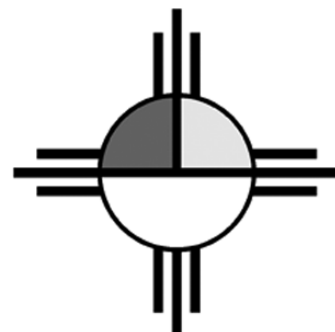


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for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally, to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.

Go. Washington



Brother Hamza Altheyab. , our newest obligated
Entered Apprentice



Brother William Federich Kock, our newest
Fellowcraft

Southern California Research Lodge

Fraternal Review

July 2022



MOBY DICK and Freemasonry

OUR CONNECTION TO THE CLASSIC NOVEL

GUEST EDITOR'S WORD



The Classic Novel & The Fraternity

You are likely asking yourself what in the wild blue sea *Moby-Dick* has to do with Freemasonry? Whether you have read the book or not, you likely know the story of *Moby-Dick*. Although, if you have read the story, it was probably long before you were a Mason.

We promise you that if you read it again, or for the very first time, the connections that you make to our ritual will be meaningful. To prove this, we asked a handful of Brothers to undertake just that task. The chapters in the novel are short and self-contained. With this in mind, we asked them to concentrate on one aspect or chapter and to

compare it with our ritual. This will allow you to read a small portion of the book to understand the context, although we expect that once you start you won't stop there.

Mark Pearrow contemplated Chapter 78, "Cisterns and Buckets." Baruti Kmt-Sisouvong examined Chapter 86, "The Tail," and Patrick Dey analyzed Chapter 94, "A Squeeze of the Hand." Adam Pimental wrote about the novel's connections to Freemasonry in New Bedford, and in his Lodge in particular. Lastly, I wrote an article exploring why Melville referenced Freemasonry and another exploring his broader esoteric references. To top this off, as a special treat, we asked Dashmesh Singh to record an amazing original musical track titled "The Whale" to serve as a soundtrack of sorts for the issue. Please consider playing the track as you read the first article to set the mood.

"We promise you that if you read it again, or for the very first time, the connections that you make to our ritual will be meaningful."

I want to thank these Brothers for going way outside their comfort zones to help us create this unique offering. Our hope is that, inspired by the meaningful connections made by our authors, you will reread the novel in part or its entirety and continue to make your own connections to our ritual.

Dashmesh's original *Moby-Dick* inspired composition can be found at <https://open.spotify.com/show/1T3JkcXgbshkjbvOtXU56m>. (Dashmesh's other original music can be found on Spotify, Apple Music, and several other streaming services or at <https://dashmesh.bandcamp.com/music>.)

Fraternally and Sincerely,

R.W. Michael Jarzabek

Michael Jarzabek is a Past Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and is currently serving as the Chairman of the Massachusetts Masonic Education and Training Committee and Master of the Massachusetts Lodge of Research. He is also a Past Master of Brigham Lodge in Ludlow, Massachusetts and a member of Ezekiel Bates and the Meadows Lodge.

©2022 SCRL FRATERNAL REVIEW: *Moby Dick & Freemasonry*

NOTICE: SCRL invites Masonic Lodges to reprint *Fraternal Review* articles for such uses as their Trestle Boards; however, we ask that you refrain from distributing entire issues to non-subscribers.

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SCRL *Fraternal Review*

July 2022

Volume 63 Number 06

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COVER STORY

HERMAN MELVILLE AND FREEMASORY

BY BRO. MICHAEL JARZABEK

In 1851, Herman Melville wrote to novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, saying that, "...the Problem of the Universe is like Freemason's mighty secret, so terrible to all children. It turns out, at last, to consist in a triangle, a mallet, and an apron—nothing more!" (Melville, 1989) Melville was not a Freemason. So why is his writing (particularly *Moby-Dick*) so replete with Masonic references?

While born into a family filled with prestigious Freemasons, including several Grand Masters (Cohen, 1997), there is no record of Melville ever joining the Craft himself. We know that he had some interest in Freemasonry from his notes, made while writing an essay on Hawthorne's short story collection *Mosses*. These notes include references to and symbols such as "Squares, compasses [sic], levels, trowels" and King Solomon's Temple (Melville, 1989).

However, we do not know whether these references are due to his interest in allegory or whether he was genuinely interested in Freemasonry itself. If *Moby-Dick* is a reflection of Melville's actual views, then his attraction to Brotherhood, at least, becomes clearer. In Chapter 82 (The Honor and Glory of Whaling), he proclaims, "I am transported with the reflection that I myself belong, though but subordinately, to so emblazoned a fraternity" (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 2003).

He imagines his fraternity of whalers as embodying the qualities and nature of mythic figures who wrestled with primordial forces. "Nor do heroes, saints, demigods, and prophets alone comprise the whole roll of our order," he says. "Our grand master is still to be named; for like royal kings of old times, we find the head waters of our fraternity in nothing short of the great gods themselves." "Perseus, St. George, Hercules, Jonah, and Vishnoo! there's a member-roll for you! What club but the whaleman's can head off like that?" (Melville, *Moby-Dick*).

While these passages are full of hyperbole, brotherhood played a large role in the fishing industry during Melville's time. George Brown Goode states that, "Many fishermen

belong to such organizations as the Masonic fraternity, the Odd-Fellows, and the Knights of Pythias; and in some communities the systems of assurance and mutual help thus provided are called into much activity." (Goode, 1884)

Goode goes on to mention Masonic Lodges in Gloucester, Provincetown, and Boothbay, Maine. These references are included in a chapter on the prevalence of benevolent and mutual aid societies in fishing communities. It is no surprise that an organization proclaiming to care for widows and orphans would find such a strong foothold among these men.

In fact, there is convincing evidence that the maritime industry, specifically that of whaling, directly contributed to the spread of Freemasonry. Peter T. Young explains that, "On April 8, 1843, during the reign of King Kamehameha III, Freemasonry was formally established in Hawai'i by Joseph Marie Le Tellier, Captain of the French whaling barque "Ajax" when he warranted Lodge Le Progres de l'Océanie No. 124, of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of the Supreme Council of France." (Young, 2020)

Likewise, Jock Phillips states that, "The first New Zealand Masonic meeting was in 1837 at Port Levy, Banks Peninsula, with a gathering of French masons on board the whaling ship *Le Comte de Paris*. (Phillips, 2022)

In his *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, Albert Mackey reinforces this idea by saying, "Freemasonry also, ever since as a world-wide Speculative Fraternity it escaped out of the cocoon of the Time Immemorial Lodges, has been afloat on the merchant ships and with the navies, and has with its Lodges followed them, or has waited for them in more than 3 thousand ports." (Mackey, 1889)

Mackey continues, "If ever a truly complete history of Freemasonry is written, omitting nothing important enough to have a chapter of its own, it will tell the story of how seamen of Britain, America, and the maritime countries of Europe carried Masonry around the world; so that if they had no share in its antiquity they had a large share in that other Landmark, its universality."

“IF EVER A TRULY COMPLETE HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY IS WRITTEN, OMITTING NOTHING IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO HAVE A CHAPTER OF ITS OWN, IT WILL TELL THE STORY OF HOW SEAMEN OF BRITAIN, AMERICA, AND THE MARITIME COUNTRIES OF EUROPE CARRIED MASONRY AROUND THE WORLD...”

other Landmark, its universality.”

Perhaps Melville was faithfully recording the world around him by including these references in his *magnum opus*. Maybe, like many celebrities in modern times, he was simply flirting with society by dropping subtle hints, signs, and symbols of the mysterious order to create intrigue. Possibly he was trying to understand something that was a mystery to him. Outside the few operative allusions to Brotherhood, Melville provided numerous examples of the more speculative nature of Freemasonry.

Does Ahab’s soliloquy in Chapter 70 (The Sphinx) give us a glimpse into the author’s motivations?

“... speak, mighty head, and tell us the secret thing that is in thee... Where unrecorded names and navies rust, and untold hopes and anchors rot; where in her murderous hold this frigate earth is ballasted with bones of millions of the drowned; there, in that awful water-land, there was thy most familiar home.” (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 2003)

Here, instead of embracing the common meaning, Melville turns a familiar Masonic emblem on its head by saying “(where)...untold hopes and anchors rot.” Dripping with existential dread, this passage denies the allusion of hope to this ancient symbol, which according to Mackey, was first found in the Christian catacombs of Rome. Melville’s use of irony challenges the idea of immortality itself, which inspires one to ask if he was questioning Freemasonry or the Christian faith. With Queequeg’s declaration “it’s a wicked world in all meridians; I’ll die a pagan” in Chapter 12 (Biographical) Melville hints that it is the latter.

A letter to Hawthorne written in November of 1851 shows us the mindset of Melville in regard to the book. In it he writes, “I have written a wicked book, and feel spotless as the lamb.” (Herman Melville, 1993) It seems that in the aftermath of the Morgan Affair, Melville knowingly used allusions to Freemasonry, paganism, and other “sinful” things to shock his primarily Christian readers.

The Mason trying to find sincere Masonic meaning in *Moby-Dick* is left wanting just like the crew of the Rachel in the last sentence of the novel. “It was the devious-

cruising Rachel, that in her retracing search after her missing children, only found another orphan.” (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 1851) While there may be something there to find, even in this last bit of allegorical prose, it is not that for which they are searching.

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Masonic Thoughts on Moby-Dick and New Bedford

BY ADAM PIMENTAL

The opening chapters of Herman Melville's classic novel *Moby-Dick* take place in the seaside port of New Bedford, Massachusetts. In great part due to the whaling industry, this New England fishing village became, at one time, the richest city in America. It still looks to the sea for its commerce as the most valuable seaport in the country. In the past it was also a hub of the textile industry. And, at this moment, it is positioning itself for a future in the wind energy industry. But it all started with whaling.

Ishmael gives us a glimpse of some of New Bedford's wealth commenting, "nowhere in all America will you find more patrician-like houses; parks and gardens more opulent, than in New Bedford." Of course, the whaling industry was not merely made up of sailors, harpooners, and captains. There were hosts of other businesses that developed from and facilitated these years-long journeys. And with this commerce there grew a class of men, many of whom would become Freemasons.

The first Masonic lodge to be chartered in New Bedford was Washington Remembered Lodge, in 1803. New Bedford had not yet reached maturity in whaling by this period and unfortunately, Washington Remembered only survived until 1814. The closure of this lodge was due in part to the transient nature of seafaring men, and then the War of 1812 took more of the town's men away. A sufficient number of members simply could not be kept; however, New Bedford would not be without Freemasonry for long.

Melville's God-fearing and pious Quakers of the Pequod and Nantucket, notably Peleg, Bildad and Starbuck, were one and the same with the Quaker whaling captains and merchants who populated New Bedford. Joseph Rotch was a Quaker merchant who brought his fortune and business acumen from Nantucket to New Bedford to take advantage of New Bedford's location. Its naturally deep harbor made it ideal as a seaport, and being on the mainland made it a better location than Nantucket to distribute whale oil once it got back to land.

Another example of a Nantucket Quaker transplanted to New Bedford was Timothy Coffin, of the celebrated Coffin family of Nantucket, referenced in *Moby-Dick*. He moved to New Bedford and became a very successful

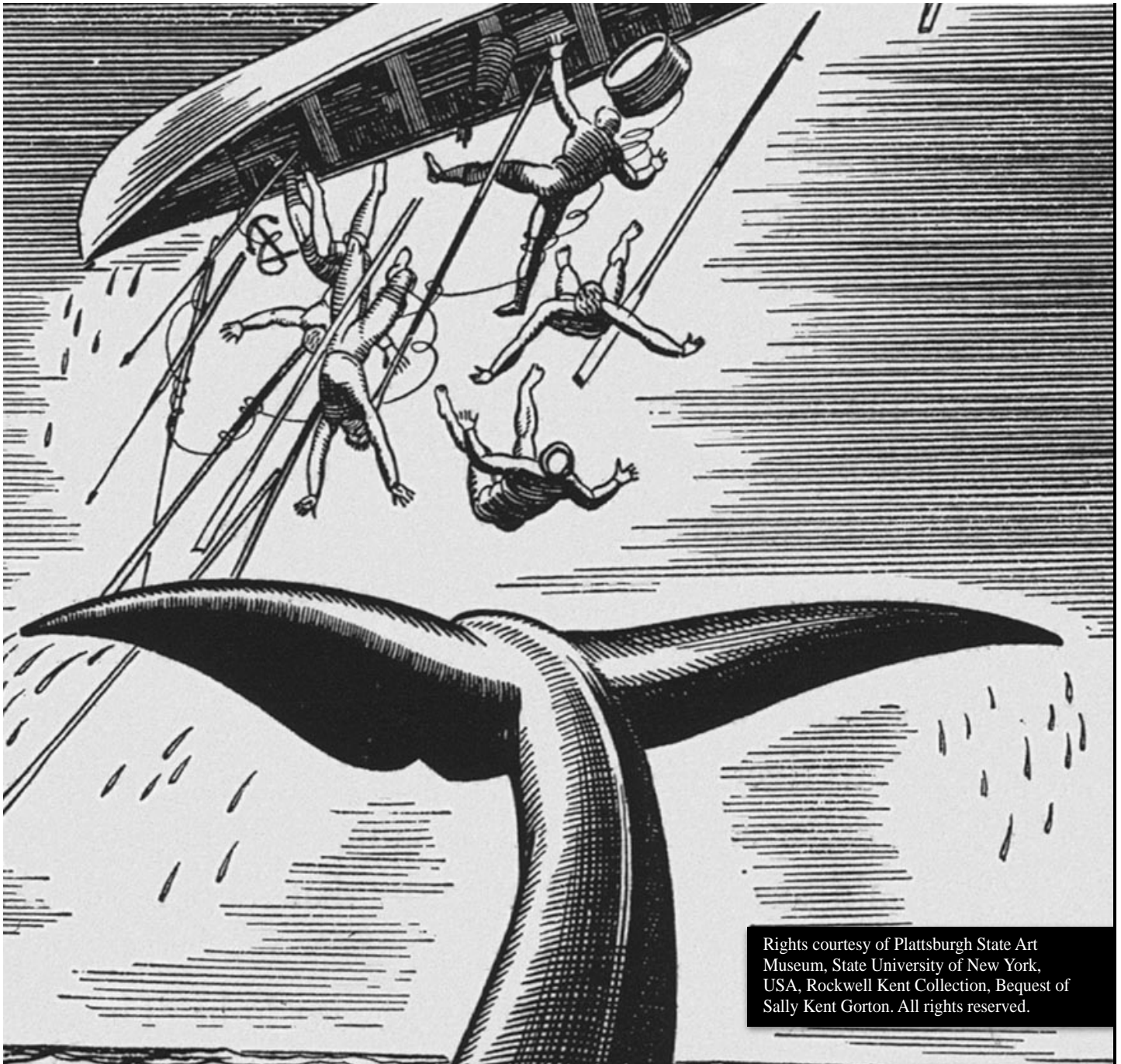
lawyer as well as a distinguished member of the community. As such, in 1823, he and 34 other men petitioned the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts to charter a new lodge in New Bedford, to be called Star in the East. Coffin was a charter member and served as Master of this lodge from 1840-1841.

The novel actually includes two characters with family names that were among the charter members of Star in the East. Peter Coffin is the proprietor of "The Spouter Inn." And Nathan Swain is mentioned as having killed fifteen whales in a single day. The real-life Oliver Swain of New Bedford was the third Master of Star in the East Lodge in 1826 and was its last surviving charter member. Star in the East lodge is still in existence today in New Bedford.

A long-standing, religiously-dictated tolerance and acceptance of all humankind ran deep among the Quakers and could not help but influence the areas in which they lived. Although, speaking of Nantucket, the same sentiment would apply to New Bedford, as Ishmael stated, "to this day its inhabitants in general retain in an uncommon measure the peculiarities of the Quaker." The ideas of Brotherhood and equality in the eyes of God were so ingrained among New Bedford's Quakers that you could hardly say it was taught. It was as natural to them as the coming and going of the tides.

Indeed, New Bedford's tolerance of all people made it a well-known center for the abolitionist movement and a stop on the Underground Railroad during the 19th century. Its reputation was such that it became the chosen home of famed abolitionist Frederick Douglas upon his escape from slavery.

Throughout *Moby-Dick*, particularly in the chapters in New Bedford and Nantucket, the social structure and class system that existed in the United States in that time is erased if not turned on its head. In 1851, when the novel was published, the US was still a decade away from the Civil War. In how many other towns in America at that time could Ismael have walked into a thriving Black church with a hundred people in it, or have been made to share a bed with Queequeg, the tattooed pagan? In what other industry at the time would Black and Native American harpooners, or experienced Azorean and Cape Verdean whalers, have been deemed more valuable, or



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of higher status, or received greater pay than a “green” White man? By religious virtues, this Quaker-dominated industry became the ultimate meritocracy and a great leveler of mankind.

This is the invaluable lesson in the opening chapters of *Moby-Dick*; and it is one of the invaluable lessons of Freemasonry as well. Look upon all men as your Brother, regardless of where he is from, the hue of his skin, or the God he prays to. The bond instantly struck at The Spouter-Inn by Queequeg and Ismael is the type of relationship that can be had by any two men, even of such dramatically contrasting lineages, if only they look past the externalities of the other individual and into his heart and mind. This has been and continues to be the practice of the citizens, and more especially the Freemasons, of the Whaling City of New Bedford, Massachusetts.

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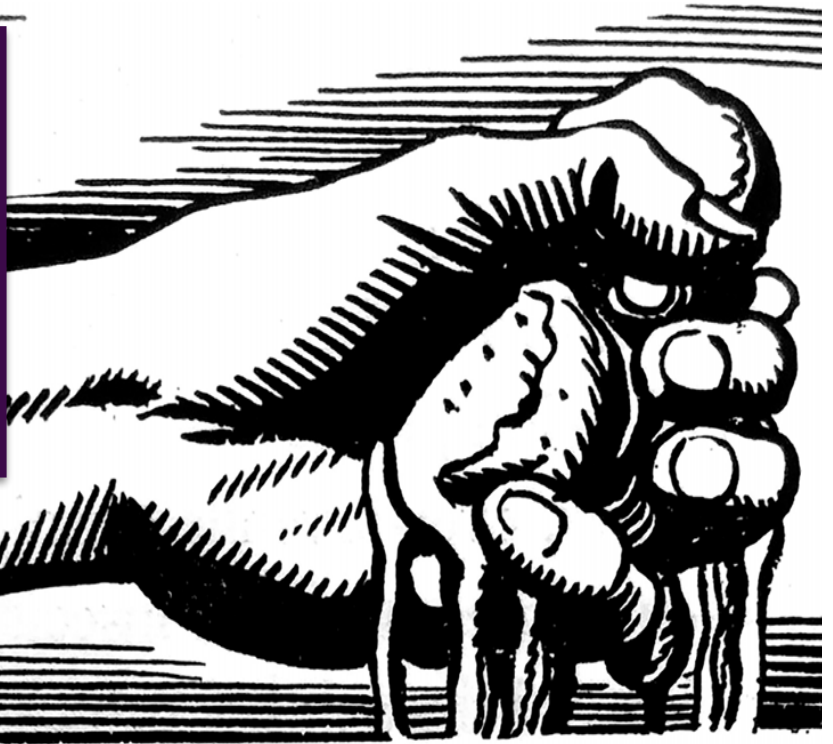
<http://masonicgenealogy.com/MediaWiki/index.php?title=StarEast1>

BIO:

Bro. Adam Pimentel followed his grandfather and uncle into Freemasonry in 2014. He enjoys Masonic history and exploring the teachings of Masonic symbology. As a newly-elected Master, he looks forward to leading Star in the East Lodge, AF&AM, when it celebrates its 200th anniversary in 2023.

A SQUEEZE OF THE HAND

BY PATRICK DAY



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**“HE DESCRIBES THE BREAKING OF THE GLOBULES AS
BURSTING OPEN ‘FULLY RIPE GRAPES AND THEIR WINE,’
WHICH MAY BE COMPARED TO THE MASON’S WAGE OF
‘WINE OF REFRESHMENT.’”**

If there were any chapter in *Moby-Dick* that truly encapsulates the essence of friendship and brotherly love by way of a certain grip, it would be Chapter 94 “A Squeeze of the Hand.” This is personally my second favorite chapter in the book, just after Chapter 78 (“Cistern and Buckets”).

Ishmael, the novel’s narrator, is something of a nihilistic absurdist, as defined by Albert Camus. He is a bit of an “over-thinker” who seeks meaning in a meaningless world. It is part of the reason he over-explains whales and the whaling industry in general. The amount of detail spent on describing these things tends to be a common complaint among readers, though it is essential to understand, not just the functional plot of the novel, but also Ishmael himself. To quote Ishmael, while he observes from the masthead:

“Let me make a clean breast of it here, and frankly admit that I kept but sorry guard. With the problem of the universe revolving in me, how could I—being left

completely to myself at such a thought-engendering altitude—how could I but lightly hold my obligations to observe all whale-ships’ standing orders...?” (Chapter 35, “The Mast-Head”)

We should not expect anything different with how the spermaceti is processed after it is extracted from the whale in “A Squeeze of the Hand.” Ishmael describes how, once the whale has been captured and killed (Chapter 61, “Stubb Kills a Whale”), and beheaded (Chapters 74-75, “The Sperm Whale’s Head”), its head is then secured to the side of the ship. Next, they cut a hole in the head, into the spermaceti organ (Chapter 78, “Cistern and Buckets”), which is a giant case filled with that precious, sweet-smelling, milky oil used for perfumes, lamp oil, candles, et cetera. Once the spermaceti has been removed, it will begin to cool and oxidize, which results in it congealing into globules. To disrupt this congealing, members of the crew sit around vats of spermaceti and break up the globules by hand.

“A SQUEEZE OF THE HAND IS A NON-MASONIC PIECE OF LITERATURE THAT PERFECTLY ENCAPSULATES A MASONIC IDEA: A GRIP OF FRIENDSHIP AND BROTHERLY LOVE...”

For Ishmael, this is a beautiful and delightful task to perform. “A sweet and unctuous task!” he proclaims. As he sits on the ship’s deck with several other of his fellow crewmen, he begins to describe how his hands would bump into everyone else’s hands, sometimes even grabbing their hands by mistake. He forgets about the terrible oath (Chapter 36, “The Quarter-Deck”), a pact all the crew made with Captain Ahab to capture the white whale. The pact they make is a bit Faustian, and Ahab himself is a rather Faustian character. Chapter 73 (“The Right Whale Killed”) in particular gives us a sense of Ahab’s obsession with vengeance, as Stubb and Flask gossip about Ahab having sold his soul to the Devil to capture the whale, and that the Devil himself is on the ship (a secret mercenary hired by Ahab is stowed away on the Pequod, a Zoroastrian named Fedallah). In fact, Ahab’s name itself is an homage to King Ahab in 1 Kings 21:20, in which Elijah states, “Thou hast sold thyself to work evil.”

Ishmael forgets all of this; he forgets all the hate and animosity, the secret pacts, the violence and vengeance, and mellows gently in the perfume of spermaceti. Then he no longer cares, he starts grabbing the hands of his companions in that sweet oil and feels a strong sense of friendship with these men, and wishes all of the human race to embrace each other in such sweetness.

“Squeeze! squeeze! squeeze! all the morning long, 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...”

[N]ow that I have perceived all this, I am ready to squeeze case eternally. In thoughts of the visions of the night, I saw long rows of angels in paradise, each with

his hands in a jar of spermaceti.”

Though Herman Melville was not a Freemason, he does make some allusions to the Fraternity in his writings (e.g. Chapter 86, “The Tail”). That said, it is difficult to escape how well this chapter, and even this passage alone, is compatible with Masonic philosophy and symbolism. He describes the breaking of the globules as bursting open “fully ripe grapes and their wine,” which may be compared to the Mason’s wage of “wine of refreshment.” The spermaceti is an oily substance, and the fact that Ishmael gets an overwhelming sense of love and friendship while immersing his hands in the spermaceti, is comparable, not only to the Mason’s “oil of joy,” but as well to Psalm 133 that is recited in Masonic ritual.

Psalm 133 is emphatically comparable to Ishmael’s experience in squeezing hands in the spermaceti. This Psalm in particular compares the blessings and fortunes of friendship as being like the holy anointing oil, which is also sweet smelling, especially with the bright mellow scent of myrrh in the substance, along with sweet grass and hints of cinnamon. Further, Ishmael perceives this beautiful experience of handling the spermaceti as being something akin to the divine, whereby he envisions angels with their hands in jars of spermaceti. This is also comparable to the symbolism in Psalm 133, where the blessing of friendship is compared to, not just holy oil, which is sacred, but also to the divine blessing of the dew that accumulate on Mount Hermon, which feeds the waters of the Jordan River.

“A Squeeze of the Hand” is a non-Masonic piece of literature that perfectly encapsulates a Masonic idea: a grip of friendship and brotherly love, friendship found in holding hands in the oil of joy, which is not only a blessing, but also holy and divine.

BIO:

Bro. Patrick M. Dey is a Past Master of Nevada Lodge No. 4, Colorado’s ghost town lodge, as well as of Research Lodge of Colorado. He is the editor and regular contributor of the Rocky Mountain Mason magazine. He currently serves on the Grand Lodge of Colorado’s Library and Museum Association board of directors.

MOBY-DICK, NATURE, FREEMASONRY, AND THE QUEST TO BECOME A BETTER HUMAN

BY BRO. BARUTI KMT-SISOUVONG, PH.D(1)

Penned over the course of eighteen months at the beginning of 1850 and subsequently published both in London and the United States during October and November, respectively, of 1851, *Moby-Dick* was inspired by the destruction of the Essex whaling ship on 20 November 1820 by a Sperm Whale and Melville's time as a "common sailor" between 1841 to 1844. Narrated by Ishmael and centered on Captain Ahab, who relentlessly pursues the whale responsible for him losing his leg and being consigned to wear, in a twist of irony, a prosthesis fabricated using a whale jawbone, *Moby-Dick* remains an indisputable classic for not only its beautifully evocative prose but also for Melville's extensive and artful use of symbols.

While some have decried such use, as argued by author David Gilbert in an August 2013 Atlantic interview where he opines "There are so many symbols as to render symbols meaningless." From the perspective of this writer, readers are encouraged to simultaneously read and contemplate *Moby-Dick* as an opportunity to observe and act upon the common beauty present within all humans to the point of eventually celebrating both the beauty of Nature's designs as well as one's triumph over seeming adversity to become an even better human via what may have been initially regarded as a slight from Nature. There are several chapters where Nature's wisdom, strength, and beauty are evident but the eighty-sixth chapter, titled *The Tail*, is of particular interest to us.

In reading Melville's taxonomic description of the whale's tail, he makes several keen observations, not only as related to the tail's thunderous strength and sublime beauty of its composition, but also of the wisdom of its functioning along strict guidelines as designed by Nature. Of the tail, Melville highlights three strata or a "triune structure" e.g., "upper, middle, and lower" that, "as much as anything else, imparts power to the tail" and the five "great motions" or characteristics peculiar to it. Of these five, Melville writes, "First, when used as a fin for progression; Second, when used as a mace in battle; Third, in sweeping; Fourth, in lobtailing; Fifth, in peaking flukes."

In considering the tail's "truine structure," as well as these five "great motions" or characteristics, one cannot help but consider the tripartite nature of the human being as posited by many great cultures and their respective thinkers throughout human history and as is embedded within the ritual of the Craft using the numbers three and five. With respect to the "triune" or tripartite aspect of our very beingness, such allows us to not only exist but also possess the ability to *know thyself*. Additionally, it is with the *Five Orders of Architecture* and our five human senses that we come to know what is *original* or *a priori* and are thus able to navigate the world in an upright manner due to said knowledge with ours, ideally, being akin to the whale's tail that never wriggles, for as Melville posits, "In man or fish, wriggling is a sign of inferiority."

Juxtaposing Melville's description of the whale's tail with its tremendous strength alongside the Craft of Freemasonry with its profound symbols for contemplation, we posit that readers who are also Freemasons may come to understand the tail, serving as the whale's foundation and force for movement through that liquid terrain, as being similar to one possessing deep knowledge of Self whilst trekking the earthly realm with its trials, tribulations, and occasional triumphs to eventually arrive at possessing a real strength—mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—that ". . . never impairs beauty or harmony; but it often bestows it."

While not a Freemason himself, Melville's use of Masonic symbolism appears to result from the time of his writing and the emerging ideals of the as still developing nation. On this point, from Michael Brunckhorst, University of Queensland scholar, we learn, "Herman Melville not only wrote about America, but to America. Melville's literary pursuit of the democratic ideal, and his complementary articulation of the notion of brotherhood, may be read as effectively scrutinizing the many polarities in nineteenth-century American society . . ." (Ph.D Dissertation, 2011).

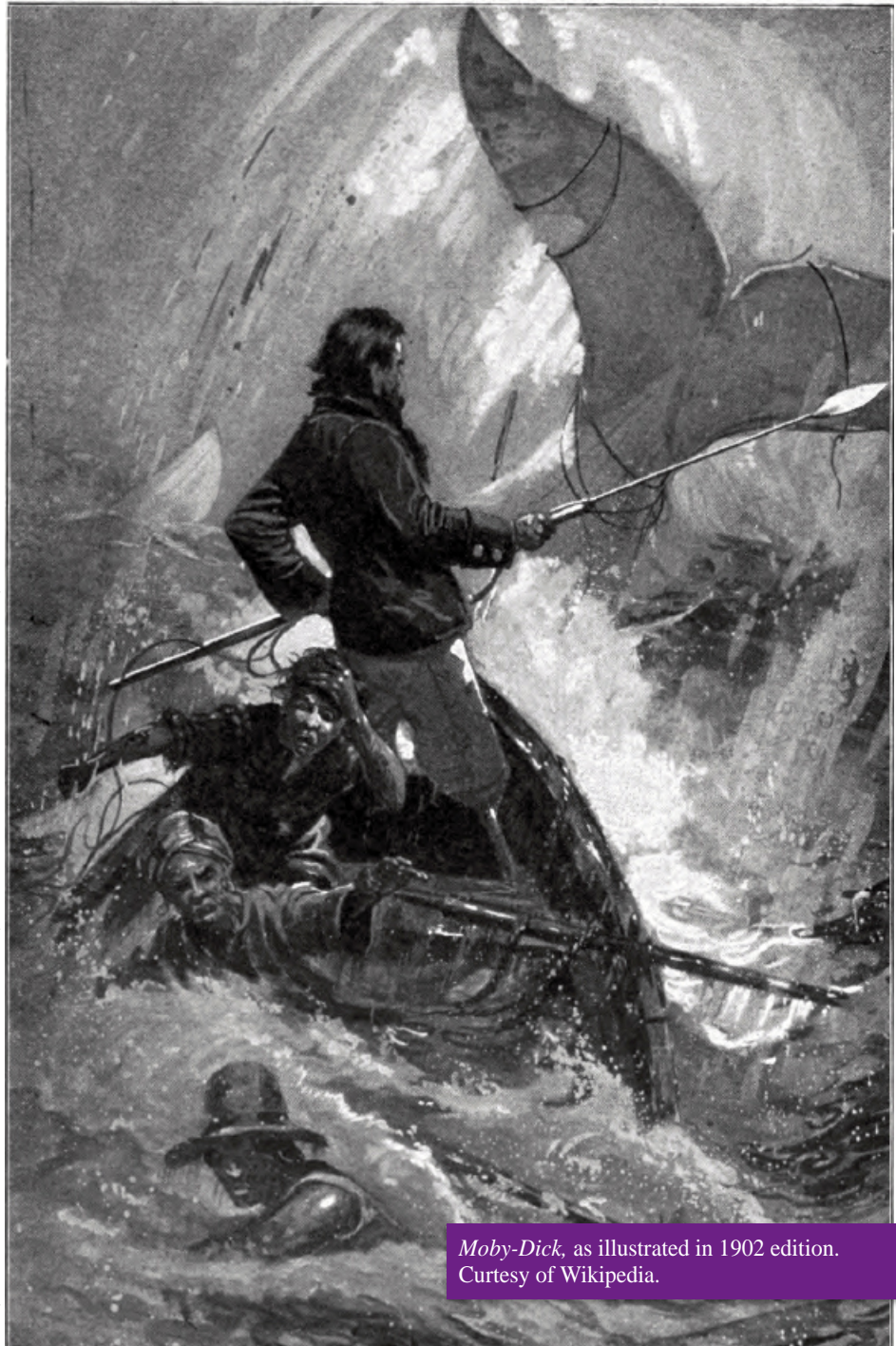
In an effort to better understand Melville's *Moby-Dick* and one's self, one need only to study the *Book of Nature* as proffered by Galileo to note, despite social constructs and cultural conventions arguing the opposite, we are part

“While not a Freemason himself, Melville’s use of Masonic symbolism appears to result from the time of his writing and the emerging ideals of the as still developing nation.”

of Nature itself and, upon turning our attention to the inner landscape, one comes to intimately know that we have always been part of the Great Cosmic composition as composed by Nature herself. On this point, Foster Bailey says in *The Spirit of Masonry*:

“The rites, ceremonies and initiations of Masonry may be regarded (and are so regarded by many) as being faint representations and symbolic rehearsals of those major spiritual initiations through which every human being must pass before achieving his goal of manifested divinity and can enter finally within the veil, leaving behind him an example of fortitude and self-control which his fellow men can emulate.” (p. 21, 1957)

As we come to recognize the obvious perfection and balance in Nature after contemplating both the seen and unseen aspects of the whale’s tail as well as our own physiology, may each of us ever endeavour to emulate Nature in our thoughts, words, and deeds so as to become an even better, more complete, and contributive human within our several stations in life; all the while remaining ever mindful that, as the tile of the mosaic pavement highlights both light and dark as related to our path, we will have good and not so good moments; despite such, let us ever seek to be and do better by learning from both sets of experiences so as to maintain an equanimous mindset. Be the moments good or not so good, they, too, shall pass. Yet what shall ever remain



Moby-Dick, as illustrated in 1902 edition.
Curtesy of Wikipedia.

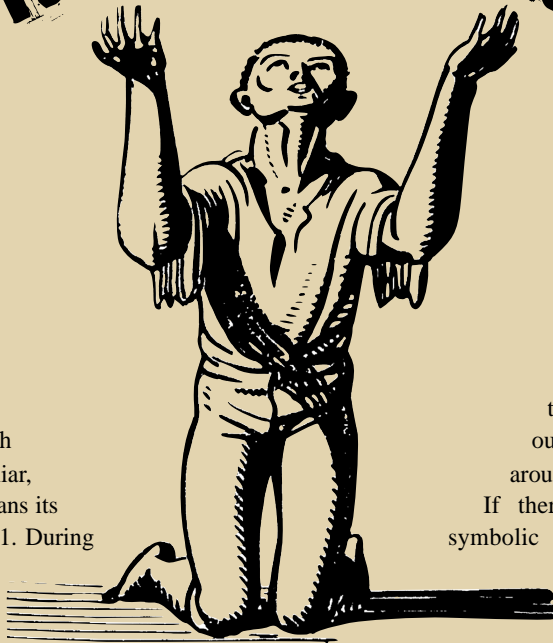
is the beauty of Nature’s design as is evidenced by both the whale’s tail and our human physiology. Let the journey begin!

BIO:

Wor. Baruti KMT-Sisouvong (pronounced buh-ROO-tee KE-met-SEE-soo-VAWNG) is a Ph.D. Candidate researching Mystical Experiences among Freemasons and Rosicrucians. He was Raised in Clinton Lodge No. 15 in Fairfield, Iowa during Graduate School and has held many positions focusing on Leadership Development and Education both in Iowa and now Massachusetts. He is also a Scottish Rite 32° Mason (SJ).

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CISTERNS AND BUCKETS



Chapter 78, “Cistern and Buckets,” picks up after the brief exposition of Chapter 77, in which we learn about the Heidelburgh Tun—an immense wine vat kept in the cellar of its namesake’s castle. The Tun that still exists today, and with which Melville would have been familiar, was built in 1751, but it was by no means its first incarnation; the first dates to 1591. During much of the history of Heidelberg, taxes were paid in the form of goods. Given that the region was a great producer of wine, the Tun was

needed, ostensibly, to store these liquid taxes—in what one can only imagine to be a rather odd and probably dreadfully flavored admixture. Still, Melville—through the voice of Ishmael—writes wistfully of the Tun, noting that it was “always replenished with the most excellent of the wines of the Rhenish valleys.”

The chapter opens with Tashtego precariously and deftly positioning himself on top of the decapitated head of a sperm whale—a “Platonian,” as we learn earlier in Chapter 75 (but more on that in a bit). Tashtego calls the crew to duty by a vivacious cry that is likened to the call to prayer one might hear from a Turkish Muezzin (and after all, what great or important undertaking should not be preceded by an invocation to Deity?). His appeal to the Divine seemingly granted, Tashtego sees many buckets brimming with the precious oil fetched from the cistern of the whale’s head. Alas, though, he slips, falling headlong into the “honeycombed” interior of the whale’s head, which itself becomes dislodged from the ship in a spectacular splash—and so he begins the journey to Death as he sinks into the ocean. His fall evokes the Biblical scenarios of people being thrown into

cisterns as a means of slow execution.

Fortunately for Tashtego, Queequeg comes to the rescue, diving into the water with a sword, cutting open the bottom of the whale’s head, and pulling “Tash” out by his head—after turning him around from his initial breech position.

If there was any question about the symbolic death and birth theme of this dramatic episode, it is helpfully cleared up by Ishmael who called it the “delivery” of Tashtego, and who notes that midwifery should

be taught in the same course as boxing. What follows is a contemplation of the potential death of Tashtego in that slick sarcophagus. He muses that Tashtego would have been “coffined, hearsed, and tombed” in the “sanctum sanctorum” of the whale. We also learn of the peculiar death of the Ohio honey-hunter, who fell headlong into a hollow tree and became embalmed in honey. Finally, we are asked the rhetorical question—how many have fallen into Plato’s honey head and—sweetly—perished there?

There is a “tun” of symbolism to unpack in this tiny chapter and its various callbacks to previous ones. First, let’s look at the strange comparison of the sperm whale to Plato. We read in Chapter 75 that “This right whale I take to have been a Stoic; the sperm whale, a Platonian, who might have taken up Spinoza in his latter years.” At this point in the story, two severed heads dangled from the sides of the ship: a right whale’s (the “stoic”) and the sperm whale’s (the “Platonist”). These two heads provide a sort of polarity, of a “low” and “high” of materialism and of “that which comes prior.” The crew of the Pequod were ensconced between these two heads,

emblematic of Mankind's position between these two philosophical ends. The sperm whale's likening to Plato stems partially from the honeycombed interior structure of its head, wherein the precious oil is stored. When Plato was an infant, so the legend goes, bees placed honey upon his lips as he napped. This was taken as an omen of his eventual prowess and sweetness in speaking. Bees themselves have played a role in various world mythologies, as does honey, which is not subject to spoilage and even exhibits antimicrobial properties. Thus, we have the parallels of the honeycomb of the bees and the interior structure of the head of the whale, and the honey and the whale oil. Here we derive the link to Plato and the great deal of apian symbolism surrounding his life and words.

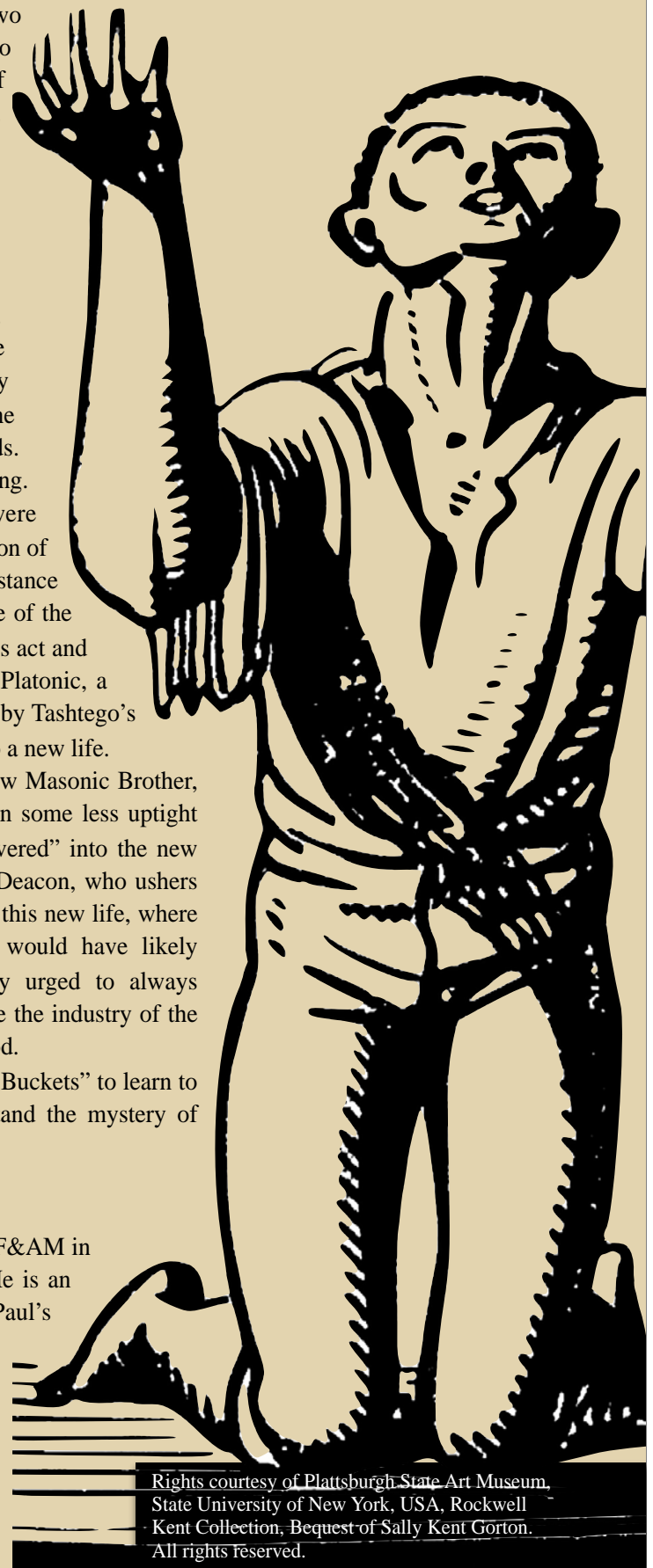
In antiquity, honey was even used in embalming. According to the *Bencao Gangmu*, some people were embalmed before they were dead. The willing mummification of a living being was thought to produce a sort of magical substance that could be used for healing and curing disease. Sacrifice of the self for the benefit of others is a powerful theme seen in this act and in the chapter at hand; for to move from the Stoic to the Platonic, a sort of ego death is required—a transformation symbolized by Tashtego's decent into the womb—tomb and his “delivery” from it into a new life.

We see this same metaphor in the initiation of a new Masonic Brother, who sits in lightless contemplation in the anteroom—or, in some less uptight jurisdictions, in a chamber of reflection. He is then “delivered” into the new world and the new life by his own Queequeg, the Senior Deacon, who ushers him past the threshold and into the Sanctum Sanctorum. In this new life, where all things are connected in a vast fabric that Spinoza would have likely recognized as his Nature/God, the initiate is eventually urged to always contribute the most excellent wine of his labors and imitate the industry of the beehive—a collective, working on behalf of a common Good.

As Masons, we can use the lessons of “Cistern and Buckets” to learn to divest ourselves of that illusion of self, to better understand the mystery of rebirth, and to embrace Plato's Form of the Good.

BIO:

Wor. Mark J. Pearrow is a Past Master of Norfolk Lodge AF&AM in Needham, Massachusetts, where he was raised in 2010. He is an officer in the Valley of Boston Consistory, an officer of St. Paul's Royal Arch Chapter in Boston, a VII° member of the Massachusetts College of S.R.I.C.F., an officer in the Massachusetts Lodge of Research, a Past Master of the Massachusetts 5th District Lodge of Instruction, a member of the Kansas Lodge of Research, and a contributor to a variety of Masonic magazines and publications.



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MELVILLE'S SEMI-MASONIC CLUB

BY R.W. BRO. MICHAEL JARZABEK



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When we look closely at the work of Herman Melville, it becomes clear that he was well-versed in esotericism. In his book *The Esoteric Origins of the American Renaissance*, Arthur Versluis says that, “In his fiction, in his poems, and in his letters, we find Melville alluding or referring to such traditions as Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, Neoplatonism, and perhaps most notably of all, Gnosticism.” (Versluis, 2001)

Similarly, in “Melville’s Masonic Secrets,” Hennig Cohen states that, “Allusions to Freemasonry appear throughout the Melville corpus, many of them obvious.” (Cohen, 1997) He includes, among others, *Typee*, *Mardi*, *Redburn*, *White-Jacket*, *Pierre*, and *The Confidence-Man*, as Melville works that reference Freemasonry.

Connected to Freemasonry at different times, Rosicrucianism is another theme that appears in Melville’s work, most obviously in his poems, “The New Rosicrucians” and “Rose Window.” The first poem begins,

“To us, disciples of the Order
Whose rose-vine twines the cross,
Who have drained the rose’s chalice.”

“Rose Window” begins,

“The preacher took from *Solomon’s Song*
Four words for text with mystery rife—
The Rose of Sharon,—figuring Him
The Resurrection and the Life.”

It is likely that at least some of Melville’s esoteric leanings were influenced by his involvement with the Young Americans Club (initially known as “the Tetractys”), which was led by his lifelong friend and literary mentor Evert Augustus Duyckinck. This club was the center of a cultural movement which attempted to forge an identity for America separate from its European influences. The literary works of

Herman Melville, Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and others were instrumental in creating that culture.

Melanie May Bloodgood says that, “...it seems clear enough to me that the Tetractys or Young Americans Club was a semi-masonic group whose members were affected by the view that Gnosticism subsumed the truths of all other religions and/or represented a higher form of Christianity.” (Bloodgood, 1984) She summarizes the words of Perry Miller, in his book, *The Raven and the Whale*, by saying, “He describes the club in semi-masonic terms and notes that Duyckinck wanted writers to form a ‘fraternity.’”

She continues, “... besides literature, the club members were interested in metaphysics, politics, economics, and theology; that they enjoyed coarse humor and defended ‘rudeness’ as a cure for the genteel conventionality of their era; that they indulged in and justified ‘Rabalaisian’ sensuality; and that they formed long-lasting, intense friendships.” Perhaps, unsurprisingly, then, “Melville’s Christian gnostic world view promotes freedom, equality, and the ‘ideal of a balanced society’,” (Bloodgood, 1984) and is critical of Christian fundamentalism.

Ultimately, from Gnosticism to Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry, the esoteric influences on Melville were essential to formulating the great American literary canon, of which *Moby-Dick* is one of the early, great exemplars.

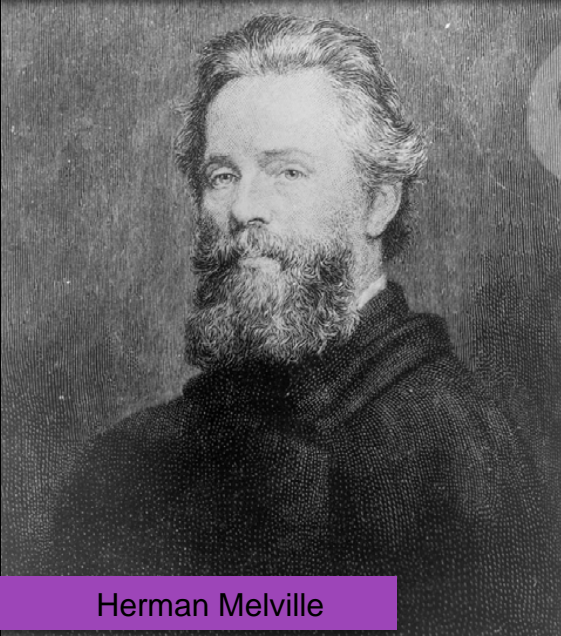
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Cohen, H. (1997, March). “Melville’s Masonic Secrets.” *Melville Society Extracts, Number 108*, pp. 3-17.

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FINAL WORD



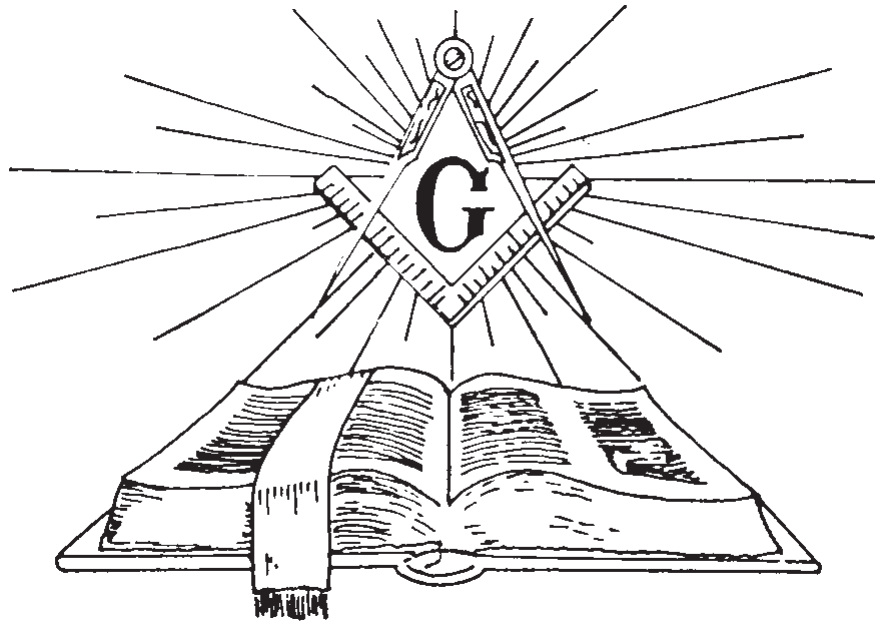
Herman Melville

“Allusions to Freemasonry appear throughout the Melville corpus, many of them obvious.

The earliest occur in *Typee* (1846), *Mardi* (1849), and *Redburn* (1849). The most obvious reference is in *White-Jacket* (1850). Melville’s review, ‘Hawthorne and His Mosses,’ of the same year, has significant, albeit submerged, masonic resonance, and masonic references are present in *Moby-Dick* (1851)...”

Henning Cohen, University of Pennsylvania, from
“Melville’s Masonic Secrets” published in *Melville Society
Extracts*, No. 108, March 1997.

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November Dinner Menu



Join us on November 7th for dinner at 6:00 PM before the stated meeting. The entire family is invited. Our chefs have planned an excellent menu. If you have any dietary restrictions please contact the secretary so that we may arrange suitable alternatives.

Roast Turkey with stuffing and gravy
Mashed Potatoes and Yams
Green Beans
Tossed Salad
Bread / Rolls
Desserts
Coffee, tea, and sodas



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What is the purpose of Freemasonry?

“To admit, make and pass Freemasons according to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Grand Lodge. To advance the moral and social interests of its membership; to foster good citizenship, honest industry and upright living; to cultivate the exercise of charity in its best and broadest sense; to assist the widows and orphans of its deceased members; to stimulate friendship, harmony and Brotherly love and generally to promote, in its own way, the happiness of mankind — it is a fraternity of good men, linked together by honorable and indissoluble bonds, to accomplish these noble purposes, eschewing all interests in factional politics and sectarian religion and free from the dictation of both.”

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