

Chapter One

Melville with Heidegger:¹ Technology, Thinking, and Being

Melville's World and His Question:

The Shipwreck Effect in the Technological America around the Mid-nineteenth Century

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*. (MD 426; emphasis added)

The shipwreck of the Essex urgently summons Herman Melville to respond to the crisis of technology through Ishmael's re-telling of the voyage on the whaling vessel, the Pequod. According to Hershel Parker, Melville was intensely fascinated by



¹ The phrase, "Melville with Heidegger" comes from the allusion of "Kant with Sade" (1963), which is one of Jacques Lacan's famous essays in *Encore* seminar. In the essay, Lacan paralleled two disparate figures (Kant as the philosopher of German Idealism; while Sade as the writer of erotic literature) to expose the rupture of ethics, showing the uncanny proximity between categorical imperative and sadistic perversion. Although my own intention to use the preposition "with" to connect Melville and Heidegger is much like the supplementary mode than subtractive pattern, I do think to obtain the enlarged scope of vision through the interaction between two distinct thinkers (Melville as the writer of American Romanticism; while Heidegger as the philosopher of existentialism) is the same direction and thus it is legitimate for me to borrow this rich word to be transformed into my own context.

Owen Chase's narrative of the disaster in 1841 (432). In "Manuscript Notes on Owen Chase," Melville writes, "The reading of this wondrous story upon the landless sea, & close to the very latitude of the shipwreck had a surprising effect upon me" (*MD* 572). Likewise, such a "surprising effect" has also fallen upon our modern readers situated in the age of technological crisis, especially after the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. As Randy Kennedy points out in the *New York Times*,

[...] parallels between that disaster and the proto-Modernist one imagined by Melville more than a century and a half ago have something be striking—and painfully illuminating as the spill becomes a *daily reminder of the limitations, even now, of man's ability to harness nature for his needs.* (emphasis added)

Like Melville, our dormant emotions of technology—*anxiety, fear, ambivalence, disturbance, alertness, and horror*—abruptly burst after the vessel explosion.

The astonishment and obsession with calamity that Melville bears can be further understood when the atmosphere of his age filled with the thrill of technology and the eulogy of progress is infiltrated into our reading adventure. According to Ronald Takaki, America was, in the nineteenth century, "the most highly developed technological society in the world" (148). Based on the finding of *In Pursuit of Leviathan: Technology, Institutions, Productivity, and Profits in American Whaling, 1816-1906* (1997), we realize that the U.S. whaling industry had overwhelmingly surpassed other countries for its ceaseless progress in invention and improvement of ship-building, equipments, and techniques. "By the late 1840s *American ship-builders* were regarded as *world leaders* in the design and construction of general-duty wooden sailing vessels" (Davis 267; emphasis added). Hence, catastrophe on the high sea does not stop short at a saddening accident but one singular event in which the technological imagination for a better life has abruptly

collapsed. With this in mind, Melville takes full strides in his enchanted *Moby-Dick* and develops his profound interrogation on technology, thinking, and Being.

An Encyclopedic “Wicked Book”

Moby-Dick is called by Melville “a wicked book” (MD 545). The main reason is mostly due to captain Ahab’s satanic deed. Through such an extreme character, Melville sketches the fall of Being, depicting the insane and resolute Captain Ahab’s voyage to take revenge on the whale, Moby Dick, which had torn his leg away. In addition, he also tells about one melancholy and indolent youngster, Ishmael’s exile from the choking atmosphere on land, which had urged him to attack others or commit suicide. In any case, the starting point of the book is filled with the aggressive tinge of violence. Besides Ahab and Ishmael, there are other characters playing a considerable role. For example, the first mate, Starbuck, the representative of the conservative, upright and cautious people, attempts to resist Ahab’s feverish act, and yet he is restricted by his own moral dilemma. The second mate, Stubb, acting on the side of the indulgent, optimistic and careless group, has been aware of the captain’s oddity, and yet he is persuaded to give up his pleasure principle. Through his diverse descriptions of seamen and the whaling activities on the Pequod, Melville writes his consistent thesis on technology, thinking, and Being through the coming catastrophe of the Pequod.

In addition to the “wicked” base, *Moby-Dick* is also an encyclopedia of genres and topics. It is usually categorized by literary critics into the genre of novel; however, it is more than a novel but includes many other types, like essay, poetry, short story, drama, anecdote, sermon, history, biography, journalism, log, etc. As for the topic, I can find to roughly three types of chapters. First, it is the introduction to the whaling technology and industry. It is not hard to find out chapters named by the whaling

instruments or mechanical devices, such as chapter 44 “The Chart,” chapter 72 “The Monkey-Rope,” chapter 118 “The Quadrant,” chapter 123 “The Musket,” chapter 124 “The Needle,” etc. There are also countless chapters with the title of whaling industry or processing activity. For instance, chapter 47 “The Mat-Maker,” chapter 67 “Cutting In,” chapter 84 “Pitchpoling,” chapter 94 “A Squeeze of the Hand,” chapter 96 “The Try-Works,” chapter 117 “The Whale Watch,” etc.

Secondly, there are chapters related to the philosophy of cetology and whaling history. We can find that there are considerable chapters in which Ishmael (Melville’s spokesperson) articulates his comments on and asks questions about the world and Being, like chapter 32 “Cetology,” chapter 42 “The Whiteness of the Whale,” chapter 74 “The Sperm Whale’s Head—Contrasted View,” chapter 75 “The Right Whale’s Head—Contrasted View,” chapter 85 “The Fountain,” chapter 102 “A Bower in the Arsacides,” etc. What is more, a serial of investigation and criticism on the whaling history can also be seen in not a few chapters. For example, chapter 14 “Nantucket,” chapter 18 “The Ship,” chapter 41 “Moby Dick,” chapter 54 “The Town Ho’s Story,” chapter 82 “The Honor and Glory of Whaling,” chapter 83 “Jonah Historically Regarded,” and chapter 89 “Fast Fish and Loose Fish,” etc.

Thirdly, there are chapters concerning the characters and actions in the whaling world. Chapters all to introduce characters’ background and personality are scattered all over the book. For illustration, chapter 1 “Loomings,” chapter 12 “Biographical,” chapter 26 “Knights and Squires,” chapter 28 “Ahab,” chapter 107 “The Carpenter,” chapter 112 “The Blacksmith,” etc. Furthermore, chapters serving to display the dramatic interaction among crewmen on the Pequod or sailors abroad other vessels on the sea appear intermittently. The former is like chapter 36 “The Quarter-Deck/Ahab and All,” chapter 48 “The First Lowering,” chapter 61 “Stubb Kills a Whale,” chapter 108 “The Deck/Ahab and the Carpenter,” chapter 109 “The Cabin/Ahab and

Starbuck,” chapter 110 “Queequeg in His Coffin,” chapter 135 “The Chase—Third Day,” etc; while the latter includes chapter 52 “The Pequod Meets the Albatross,” chapter 71 “The Pequod Meets the Jeroboam,” chapter 81 “The Pequod Meets the Virgin,” chapter 91 “The Pequod Meets the Rose-Bud,” chapter 100 “Lag and Arm: The Pequod, of Nantucket, meets the Samuel Enderby, of London,” chapter 115 “The Pequod Meets the Bachelor,” chapter 128 “128 The Pequod Meets the Rachel,” and chapter 403 “The Pequod Meets the Delight.”

Questioning Technology, Unveiling Teleology, and the Problematic of Fate in
Moby-Dick

[...]—at that instant, *a red arm and a hammer* hovered backwardly uplifted in the open air, in the act of *nailing the flag* faster and yet faster to the subsiding spar. [...] and so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive from *folded in the flag of Ahab*, went down with his ship, which like *Satan*, would not sink to hell till *she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her*, and helmeted herself with it. (*MD* 426-27; emphasis added)

In *Moby-Dick*, Melville throws Ishmael, as well as the readers, into perdition as haunted by the phantom of crisis, forcing all to listen to the cry of pain on the edge and raise the urgent question about technology. Such a stunning and perplexing moment is petrified and endured by Tashtego’s desperate but futile act to nail Ahab’s flag. The scene is uncannily thrilling to witness when the Indian harpooner accomplishes his task regardless of his life. Moreover, the unexpected and impetuous involvement with the bird from the sky seems to proclaim the severely dreadful arrival of the pervasive and tremendous technological mishap. Hence, “Ahab’s flag” inevitably calls us to reflect on our lethal interaction with technology. As Alan

Trachtenberg echoes this in his chapter “Mechanization Takes Command” in *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (1982, 2007):

“Perceived as *an incalculable force* in its own right, *reified, fetishized, even demonized*, the machine thus found *a troubled place* in the cultures of the times” (42; emphasis added). In like manner, Melville weaves an unusual satanic vein into the Pequod, demanding us to query what has deviated this piece of technology from felicity.

Indeed, the vortex of technology has induced a series of ripples in Melville’s meditative water, disclosing the partial understanding of technology and displaying the alienated condition of existence in the age of machinery. We can say that Ahab’s trait of Being is shown in his negation of nature and himself in order to elevate the will of Subject to execute his program. This can be well demonstrated in Ahab’s last words on the threshold of the leviathan’s final strike:

I *turn* my body from the *sun*. What ho, Tashtego! Let me hear thy *hammer*.
Oh! Ye three *unsundered spires of mine*; thou uncracked keel; and only god-bullied hull; thou firm deck, and haughty helm, and Pole-pointed prow,—*death-glorious ship!* Must ye then perish, and without *me?* (MD 426; emphasis added)

It is ironical to see Ahab resolute in killing the huge whale (the embodiment of nature or unrepresented mystery) even when the coming of doom is perceived. The sound of hammer he wants to hear is the affirmative power of “usefulness” and the strong effect of his “dominion” endowed with technology. In *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (2000), Ronald Takaki points out the emergent ideology in America society as “*the practical application of scientific knowledge* in man’s effort to ‘convert’ nature and natural materials to ‘*usefulness*’” (147; emphasis added). In other words, the will to conquer nature or anything else with the aid of

technological equipments and scientific knowledge *is* the privileged rule itself. By the same token, “The development of technology gave additional impetus to *the elevation of rationality* and *self-renunciation*” (Takaki 148; emphasis added). When Ahab “hears” the sound of the hammer, he ignores the call of the essence of technology waiting him to “listen in.” Then, he is simultaneously estranged from his own Being and “completes” the fate of the Pequod.

Eventually, the obscure but omnipresent motif entwined with technology in Melville’s “mighty book” (*MD* 349) —fate—is unveiled. As Trachtenberg has it, “*Determinism* appeared not only in explicit theories and observations of the role of machinery in economic prognosis; it also appeared at a deeper level of thought, in *less self-conscious processes of mind*” (44; emphasis added). Melville senses this, but is also disturbed by one’s ontological relationship with technology. In the chapter “The Spirit-Spout,” he describes the captain and the crew as “practical fatalists” (*MD* 194), insinuating the structure of becoming fatalists and the possibilities of impractical fatalists. In addition, in “The Chase—Second Day,” he delineates fate as a huge hand snatching the crew’s souls—fused with time (the second day), space (wind), and human beings (the crew)—forcing the Pequod to rush forward with in a strange force and an excessive speed. Here, the entangled texture of fate is endowed with a more meditative point of departure, waiting for us to speak to the multiplicity of the technological event in *Moby-Dick*.

Heidegger’s Thinking and His Encounter with Meilville:

Enframing: The Critique of Technology in the Mid-Twentieth Century

Heideggerian insight into “Enframing” (*Ge-stell*)² was developed in his critique

² For Heidegger, “Enframing means the gathering together of that setting-upon which

of technology in his later years. Instead of the mechanistic definition according to the category of substance or the instrumental concept in terms of the principle of abstraction, he regards “the essence of modern technology” as “our current constellation of historical intelligibility” (Iain D. Thomson 53) and “Enframing” as “an historical ‘mode of revealing’ in which things increasingly show up only as resources to be optimized” (Iain D. Thomson 53). It is the challenging claim pushing human beings to order their life in extremely setting program and think the question of Being in their age.

For Heidegger, this “technological understanding of Being” is the claim of “challenging” (*Herausfordern*)³ demanding entities to gather everything (including

sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve” (*QT* 20). It is a unique word created by Heidegger that cannot be separated from other key concepts like “challenging” and “standing-reserve.” As for the latter two, please see notes 3 and 4. According to the translator, William Lovitt, the German verb *stellen* has highly rich meanings, like “to order,” “to represent,” “to secure,” “to entrap,” “to disguise,” “to produce,” etc. He reminds us that “[a]ll these meanings are gathered together in Heidegger’s unique use of the word that is pivotal for him, *Ge-stell* (Enframing)” (n.14, *QT* 15). In addition, he emphasizes that “[t]he translation ‘Enframing ‘for *Ge-stell*’ is intended to suggest, through the use of prefix ‘en-,’ something of the active meaning that Heidegger here gives to the German word” (n.17, *QT* 19). Here, I interprets the use of suffix “ing” as the possibility and dynamics in human beings’ events.

³ “The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging [*Herausfordern*], which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such” (*QT* 14). “It is composed of the verb *fordern* (to demand,

ourselves) into the “standing-reserve” (*Bestand*)⁴ that stands by for further arrangement, operation, or enhancement based on the maxim of optimized efficiency and standardized accuracy. Yet, Enframing also includes the claim of “bringing-forth” (*Her-vor-bringen*),⁵ eliciting entities to unfold a singular “clearing” through each

to summon, to challenge) and the adverbial prefixes *her-* (hither) and *aus-* (out).” The verb might be rendered very literally as “to demand out hither” (n.13, *QT* 14). In other words, we can say that it is the trend or ideology to influence human beings’ thoughts and behaviors.

⁴ “Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordering about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve [*Bestand*]” (*QT* 17). “*Bestand* ordinarily denotes a store or supply as ‘standing by.’” (n.16, *QT* 17) As William Lovitt notes, “[...] Heidegger wishes to stress here not the permanency, but the orderability and substitutability of objects.” (n.16, *QT* 17) It is reasonable to say that the standing-reserve is the huge system based on the principle of setting and substitution. And objects is “nothing” than the disposable target for they lose their primal character as they are caught up in the system.

⁵ “Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment. This coming rests and moves freely within what we call revealing [*das Entbergen*]” (*QT* 11). “The structural similarity between *harausforden* (to demand out hither) and *her-vor-bringen* (to bring forth hither) is readily apparent” (n.13, *QT* 14). Obviously, the two terms signals two distinctive modes of revealing. Revealing, in philosophical sense, means the presence of Being. And for Heidegger, it is revealed in human beings’ responses to the call of the age, including feeling, thinking, behavior, etc.

enduring event of thinking, to think the unthought or turn our concealment into unconcealment “within” and “out” side the limit or the blind point of our age. From this perspective, he distinguishes the destining from the fate, emphasizing it is the common way of Being yet not the absolute way of Being.

As a result, Heidegger notes that *the* danger is rather rooted in our way to respond to the “technological understanding of Being” than technology itself; likewise, the saving power rests in the proximity to *the* danger, which arouses our awareness to clarify such a “technological understanding of being” in the meditative work. Hence, it is significant to reflect on the singular events in which “the disaster of technology” (mainly presented by Ahab) and “the voice of freedom” (distinctly displayed by Ishmael) occur aboard the whaling ship.

Unveil the Truth of Being in the Disaster of Technology through Thinking

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. (*MD* 229; emphasis added)

In the chapter “The Line,” Melville scrutinizes the oblivion of Being under the technological condition and emphasizes the force of thinking to open up the unthought of the age. In *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live in* (1978) C. L. R. James proclaims that the vision of Melville’s world is feverishly dashing into the crisis of “science, knowledge, technical

skill and ability to lead” (36). To respond to the doom, Melville emphasizes the power and hope of thinking to respond to the technological event. Therefore, we can frequently detect such dictions as “a philosopher” or “a metaphysical professor” between the lines. For instance, in the first chapter “Loomings,” he proposes that “Should you ever be athirst in the great American desert, try this experiment, if your caravan happen to be supplied with *a metaphysical professor*. Yes, as every one knows, *meditation* and *water* are wedded for ever” (*MD* 19; emphasis added), conveying an intimate and deep relationship between thinking and Being. According to F. O. Matthiessen, Melville has touched upon such themes as “Fixed Fate, Free-will, foreknowledge absolute” (76) with a German scholar on his trip to England in 1849. We can guess that the discussion has aroused his strong concern for an ontological exploration on technology.

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger is also keen on the problem of technology after the dropping of two atomic bombs at the end of World War II. In his lecture on “The Question Concerning Technology” in 1955, he launches a constellation of questions related to technology, urging us to think more in order to come near to our Being. Robert C. Scharff and Val Dusek have this note, “‘*thinking*’ must locate itself at and within the ‘*site*’ or ‘*clearing*’ where our relationships with things and people take place” (247; emphasis added). In other words, Heidegger accentuates thinking when facing the work of technology upon human beings.

Literature Reviews: The Forum on Technology

The issue of technology in *Moby-Dick* is only dealt with by few literary critics. Among them, Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (1964, 2000) is a monumental and pioneering work, in which he unfolds the clash between technology and nature in the context of history, society, as

well as literature. In his interpretation of *Moby-Dick*, he claims that Ishmael finds out that “man’s primary relation to nature is technological” (Marx 295). However, Marx does not further explicate what the *technological* is and what the complicated *interaction* with technology might be. Nevertheless, he highlights “the mechanistic habit of mind” (Marx 297) in accordance with Thomas Carlyle’s observation on modern man, regarding it as the kernel of Ahab’s magic to manipulate his crew. Overall, Marx leads his way to tackling the troublesome problem relevant to technology; yet his symbolical analysis still leaves us a few unsolved knots.

After Marx’s significant initiation, subsequent scholars offer a variegated spectrum on the research of technology and science. In “The Whale and the Machine: An Approach to *Moby-Dick*” (1975), Stephen C. Ausband offers an approach to *Moby-Dick* from Melville’s use of “organic-mechanistic terminology” in his choice of imagery (198). Although Ausband has well illustrated his methodology with many textual proofs, he cannot give us a further and satisfactory understanding of this singular tendency in Melville. Through his metaphorical and imagery analysis, he manages to present the opposition of images between the whale and the machine. But he has avoided directly to deal with the troublesome relationship between technology and organism. In “The Function of the Cetological Chapters in *Moby-Dick*” (1956), J. A. Ward argues that Melville’s “periodic light mockery” (176) functions actually as his skepticism towards the classified and systematized “science.” Furthermore, the statement of “the dangers of subjectivism as a means to knowledge” (Ward 179) is smartly pointed by him but has not been fully elaborated. Still, he offers a new meaning to the subtle and profound value of cetological chapters in the book. Other critics, like Harold Aspiz, Elizabeth S. Foster, and Tyrus Hillway, focus specifically on Melville’s reading of phrenology, physiognomy, and geology, and they have similarly regarded Melville as a critic of dogmatic science.

Recently, two critics join the discussion of technology with refreshing views. In *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (2002), Cesare Casarino sketches the contours of “a regime of machines” (84) in the light of Karl Marx’s historical dialectics, claiming that “[...] that apparatus which Melville perceives as *the primary agent in the destruction of whaling*, in fact, will turn out to constitute itself precisely as *a regime of machines*, as an emergent techno-industrial imperative” (84; emphasis added). The statement reminds us that the sinking of the Pequod is never the termination of technology but the movement of modernity dependent on technology itself. Nevertheless, the main argument in the book *is* about the sea narrative in which the overwhelming representative urge of modernity and excessive counter-representative flow of emotion and thought are entangled with each other. In *The Errant Art of Moby-Dick: The Canon, the Cold War, and the Struggle for American Studies* (1995), William V. Spanos reveals that Ishmael’s cetological chapters as his errant discourse mean to “call into question the archival rules of discursive formation of the natural sciences coming to maturity in mid-nineteenth-century America in the form of *a technological instrument* designed to complete the American errand in the wilderness: *the conquest of nature*” (197; emphasis added). In his interpretation of the chapter “Cetology” in *Moby-Dick*, he exposes the condition and manner of *technological science* and views Ishmael’s errant narrative as the voice *moved to speak the truth*.

In short, the subject of technology (in association with science) is explored and discussed in diverse approaches. Yet, there is still a lack of a more integral and deeper inquiry into the relationship between technology and Being unveiled in *Moby-Dick*.

My Approach

I attempt to listen to the voice of freedom in the disaster of technology brings in

Melville's *Moby-Dick* through Heidegger's insight in terms of the complex responses between Ahab and Ishmael on board of the Pequod. For Heidegger, "The relationship [to technology] will be free if it opens our human existence to the essence of technology" (QT 3). Therefore, to be unchained from the dilemma of clichés about technology being the necessary evil or the unavoidable fate in the technological age, we must clarify that "Technology is [...] no mere means. [It] is a way of revealing" (QT 12). Put more clearly, the Pequod is no more a general concept of a whaling ship or a chained factory than the site for a group of people to respond: the captain in the drafting room and the crew at their trying-work. Here, Melville's representation of diverse and complicated ways of revealing is embedded in the singular but also manifold organism to turn concealment into unconcealment.

In Heidegger's words, "Enframing means the way of revealing which holds sway in the essence of modern technology [...]" (QT 20). This newly-created word, "Ge-stell" [Enframing], is well crystallized in Ahab's flag that governs the *Pequod*—"[the] challenging claim which gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve" (QT 19). That is to say, it is a compulsive demand to urge man to fix something into an orderable order for immediate usage at any given moment; simultaneously, it even pushes man to thoroughly forget himself while he forcefully grasps whatever at hand to assert himself. Heidegger points to the crucial fact that "What is dangerous is not technology. There is no demonry of technology, but rather there is the mystery of its essence. The essence of technology, as a destining of revealing, is the danger" (QT 28). Obviously, Ahab's course of response is an illustration of *the danger*, as what fulfills his will to kill the mystery—Moby Dick, blocks other possibilities of revealing the truth, and consequently comes to meet the advent of danger.

Yet, Heidegger not only expresses that "Enframing is a way of revealing having

the character of destining, namely, the way that challenges forth” (*QT* 29), but also emphasizes that “The revealing that brings forth (*poiēsis*) is also a way that has the character of destining” (*QT* 29). Thus, the revealing on the Pequod is actually the bringing-forth “*rests and moves freely*” (*QT* 11; emphasis added). Through Ishmael’s narrative of survival, his preparation to open up the free relationship can hardly be ignored, pointing to the danger of the overwhelming ordering, and reflecting as well a constellation of fresh views on time and Being. As Heidegger speaks, “This *dignity* lies in *keeping watch over the unconcealment*—and with it, from the first, the *concealment*—of all coming to presence on this earth” (*QT* 32; emphasis added). Retrospectively, we see that obsession, struggle, stun, and “the innermost indestructible belongingness of man” (*QT* 32) amazingly arise in Ishmael’s language when facing the radical hazard.



The Chapter Layout:

Chapter 1: “The Pequod as the Site for the Challenging Claim”

In my first chapter, “The Pequod as the Site for the Challenging Claim,” I want to go deep into Melville’s profound statement about the ship, “A noble craft, but somehow a most melancholy!” (*MD* 70) My concern will be the manner of the whaling vessel fulfilling the challenging claim under Ahab’s leadership, and within Starbuck and Stubb’s inert responses to the demand of Enframing. Through Heidegger, Melville’s seemingly confusing attitude is well translated into the uncanny relationship between technology and Enframing—“this [technological] activity always merely responds to the challenge of Enframing, but it never comprises Enframing itself or brings it about” (*QT* 21). In other words, the melancholy state of the Pequod is indeed the concealment of the nobleness or of the essence of technology reduced to the challenging revealing.

This can be further illustrated by three aspects of the Pequod's function: spatio-temporal location, whaling oil preservation, and human resource management. We find that the Pequod is dashing into the setting-upon of the sea (time and space) and challenges the nature with its unreasonable demand. As what Heidegger points out, "Regulating and securing [...] become the chief characteristics of the challenging revealing" (*QT* 16): everything around the ship is confined and arrayed into a flat and monotonous category. The tides and currents are nothing other than an information report to detect the presence of the monster at the sea and the whale is merely conceived as the object which "suppl[ies] *energy* that can be *extracted* and *stored* as such" (*QT* 14; emphasis added). Moreover, the crew is reduced to the nuts and bolts of the warship controlled by one central engine—"all *varieties* were welded into *oneness*" (*MD* 415; emphasis added).

Here, the challenging tendency of the Pequod is especially carried out through Captain Ahab's abuse of the sailing instrument and scientific knowledge, and his manipulation of oratorical skills and expedient tactics. His biased leadership pushes us to think how technology and science are dwindled to a mere tool of human will and how man can be the calculable animal to achieve his selfish end. As note Melville, "It seems an inconsistency to assert *unconditional democracy* in all things, and yet confess a *dislike* to all mankind—in the *mass*. But not so.—But it's an *endless sermon*—no more of it" (*MD* 539; emphasis added). Obviously, he realizes the violence of democracy while admitting the potency of democracy. So far, the issue of technology shows the aporia of science and democracy and exposes the kernel of problem involved in technology—Being.

Through two representative responses to the Pequod—Starbuck's skepticism and Stubb's optimism, Melville sharply exposes their similar destructive mode, which is their avoidance of thinking. Perhaps, the meaning of such an "endless sermon" can be

fully displayed only after we understand this Heideggerian insight, “The *danger* can remain that in the midst of all that is *correct* the *true* will withdraw” (QT 26; emphasis added). For the crew, the danger is their “correct” way to interact with technology, regarding it as a neutral thing and sticking to its concealment. As a result, they have thoroughly misunderstood that Ahab’s passionate affirmation or desperate denial of technology is the same thing, blocking anyone’s possibility of further questioning.

Chapter 2: “Ahab’s Relationship to Enframing as the Precipitous Fall”

According to Heidegger, “When man, in his way, from within the unconcealment *reveals that which presences*, he merely responds to the call of unconcealment even when he *contradicts* it” (QT 19; emphasis added). Hence, it is significant to trace Ahab’s contradictory way back to Enframing. In my second chapter—“Ahab’s Relationship to Enframing as the Precipitous Fall,” I focus on Ahab’s way of response to the call of Enframing that results in the sinking of the Pequod from his denial of thinking and his practice of anthropological definition of technology.⁶ Further, I will point out specifically his routes of response that draws extremely close to the irresistibility of ordering *itself*. Hence, Ahab’s claim that “[...] be the prophet and the fulfiller one” (MD 143) will arrive at a new vision when we understand what Heidegger means by saying that “The actual threat has already affected man in his essence” (QT 28). Through his arbitrary⁷ response to the call of Enframing, *the danger* shows up and exposes Ahab’s complete Fall when preoccupied by his

⁶ Heidegger: “The current conception of technology, according to which it is a means and a human activity, can therefore be called the instrumental and anthropological definition of technology” (QT 5).

⁷ It means his negation of the call of thinking and his excessive preoccupation with human will.

technological understanding of being.

As Hubert Dreyfus points out, “The danger, then, is not the destruction of nature or culture but *a restriction in our way of thinking—a leveling of our understanding of being*” (55; emphasis added), I think that this shipwreck is not caused by the gigantic whale, Moby Dick, nor the gloomy condition of the Pequod. It is caused by the limitation of thinking and by the partial understanding of Being on Ahab’s part. And this can be seen in Ahab’s double-sided Being—the worship of feeling and the dare of defiance. Although he admits that he is aware of “the food for thought” (*MD* 419), he excludes any thinking and is indulged in feeling. Therefore, his will to know lets his response to the fire be narrowed down to the conclusion that “thy [fire] right worship is defiance” (*MD* 382). At the same time, his understanding of Being is rigidified into a repetitious and compulsive pattern. Hence, we can find that his interaction with technology is indeed the execution of what Heidegger has named as “the anthropological definition of technology” (*QT* 5). Captain Ahab has not only pursued science as the regulating means for some specific ends but has also celebrated the infinite expansionism⁸ through machine. Within his understanding and practice, the nature turns out to be “orderable as a system of information” (*QT* 23), while the machine becomes the concrete manifestation of the challenging demand itself to force natural resources into the production process.

Ahab’s arbitrary responses to Enfaming marks what Heidegger call “the supreme danger” (*QT* 26), in which the destining reigns. To the end of the novel, it is certain that he has thoroughly misinterpreted the destining as the fate when he is obsessed with the passion to resist the call of thinking. Hence, it is necessary and urgent to trace how Ahab’s way of thinking is blocked and how his understanding of Being is

⁸ Here, expansionism means the one of capitalism.

imperiled. In chapter 108 “Ahab and the Carpenter,” Ahab has firmly expressed his inclination to “a good grip” (*MD* 359) and his will to “order a complete man after a desirable pattern” (*MD* 359). Both statements reveal that his understanding of things and humans must be highly representable and radically controllable. And his way of Being can be crystallized in the event of his prosthesis which makes him to be fixed into the position to constitute the subject or the Will.

Moreover, such a position of the subject can be further explained in two drastically distinct aspects in chapter 99 “The Doubloon.” Here, Ahab’s deed to nail the doubloon as the reward to attract his crew to detect the white whale is quite similar to the Heideggerian concept of standing-reserve—“Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be *on call for a further ordering*” (*QT* 17; emphasis added). This doubloon nailed on the mast turns out to be the erection of the ordering system for it is the means ordering every crew at any time and place to execute the task of watching out for Moby Dick. For Heidegger, the doubloon in the sense of standing-reserve “no longer stands over against us as object” (*QT* 17). This can be proved by Ahab’s interpretation of the icons on the doubloon—the tower, the volcano, and the fowl—as “all are Ahab” (*MD* 332). We find that he not only disallows things to be themselves but also lets himself become “the orderer of the standing-reserve” (*QT* 27) or standing-reserve itself. Though he views himself as the lord to construct anything and always encounters only himself, he can no longer meet and see himself. In the sense of unconcealing, he *is* not even an object.

However, there is indeed one thing which Ahab cannot define and expel from his world. In chapter 127 “The Deck,” Ahab seriously asks the carpenter to get the lifebuoy of a coffin out of his sight. For him, it is hard to tolerate the scene for he cannot see any further function or definition of the object. Even if he has the idea that

it may be “an immortality-preserver” (*MD* 396), he says nonetheless, “I’ll *think* of that. But *no*” (*MD* 396; emphasis added). Here, we find that the event of Ahab’s conscious resistance to do any further thinking on his handling of the life-buoy of a coffin offers a meaning comparable to that of the only survival in the novel, Ishmael. Since the undefined container has uplifted Ishmael and lets him have the chance to be picked up by another ship. However, it is taken by Ahab as “the theoretic bright one” (*MD* 396) and yet “uncertain twilight” (*MD* 396). Here, it is obvious that Ahab’s unthinking makes himself away from the saving power.

It is as early as in chapter 37 “Sunset” that his claim that “I will dismember my dismemberer” (*MD* 143) foreshadows again the self-destruction in the final chase. Since the real dismemberer is his position to be the Subject (embodied in his leg) instead of the whale. In fact he has darted to Moby Dick. Yet, he misinterprets the Parsee, Fedallah’s prophesy of “Hemp can only kill thee” (*MD* 377) and overlooks the threat of the line serving as whaling-hunting equipment. Hence, it is obvious that he is endangered by his unthinking and willful daring. *Unavoidably*, he denies the domination of the fate with his will and at the same time fulfills the fate he has resisted. As Heidegger writes, “The essence of freedom is *originally* not connected with the will or even with the causality of human willing” (*QT* 25; emphasis added). We find that Ahab’s way to strive for freedom with his steel will has gone beyond the pale task. In chapter 132 “The Symphony,” where he laments, “By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in this world, like *yonder windlass*, and *Fate* is the *handspike*” (*MD* 407; emphasis added). It is obvious that he is still not free but is always in the self-denial to go on with *his* life and encounter *his* death in the end.

Chapter 3: “Ishmael’s Relationship to Enframing as the Emergent Growth”

Compared with Ahab, Ishmael’s responsive way to Enframing is distinctly

dynamic and integral. In my third chapter, “Ishmael’s Relationship to Enframing as the Emergent Growth,” I discuss his way to respond to Enframing for he is the only survival of the Pequod. His narrative of survival shows his preparation of thinking and his more flexible interpretation of technology that is totally different from others’ avoidance of thinking and anthropological definition of technology. I will go into his enduring responsive courses which cultivate the only possible saving power. As Ishmael says, “There is no steady unretracing progress in life” (*MD* 373) in his own reflection. His understanding of Being echoes the Heideggerian insight that “All revealing comes out of the open, goes into the open, and brings into the open” (*QT* 25). Unlike Ahab, he admits of the mystery of life and takes care of it with patient listening.

Hence, what distinguishes Ishmael from Ahab as well as other crew in their relationship to Enframing is his preparation of thinking and his integral understanding of being. This can be crystallized in his two dispositions—the courage of questioning and the piety of truth. Ishmael has expressed that “Doubts of all things earthly, and intuitions of some things heavenly” (*MD* 293). This lets us find that his way of questioning has built up an open horizon to respond to the age of Enframing. Through his praise of the sailor, Bulkington, Ishmael points out the sureness as a perilous shelter and lets himself into the open site of thought where truth emerges. Here, we find that his understanding of Being is unfolded in a skeptic and spontaneous air as what Ishmael says, “this combination [doubt and intuition] makes *neither believer nor infidel*, but makes a man who regards them both *with equal eye*” (*MD* 293; emphasis added). As a result, he criticizes the anthropological definition of technology advocated by Ahab. On the one hand, he “def[ies] all general methodization” (*MD* 120) of science, and yet he has never denied science itself. On the other hand, Ishmael points out that man loses the primal respect for nature in the imagination of

technology to conquer just anything, and yet he has never resisted technology itself. What he is to do “is simply to project the draught of a systematization cetology” (*MD* 116). Here, his way of research of the leviathan is developed in his own singular constellation of questions rather than in any presupposed purpose or answer. In addition, his salvation by the Rachel’s “retracing research” (*MD* 427) is actually a *new* relationship between technology and nature. Instead of some mere instrument to grasp what is present in nature, technology appears as the media to find the lost thing through reflection and care.

In Ishmael’s open responses to Enframing, we realize what Heidegger has said, “*The danger is the saving power* inasmuch it brings the saving power out of its—the danger’s—concealed essence that is ever susceptible of *turning*” (*T* 42; emphasis added). The final turn of the emerging life-buoy of a coffin which endows Ishmael a chance to be picked up by the Rachel is the emblem of the guarding power of thinking. Therefore, it is meaningful and crucial to retrace how Ishmael’s way of thinking is disseminated and how his understanding of Being is enlarged. In chapter 60 “The Line,” Ishmael points out two dangerous characteristics belonging to the whale-line. First, it is its unusual complexity of procedure and device that lets “[a]ll the oarsmen [be] involved in its perilous contortions” (*MD* 228-29). Second, it is its extraordinary suddenness of velocity and direction that makes the whalemens “[be] taken out of the boat by the line, and lost” (*MD* 229). Furthermore, Ishmael finds that the ultimate danger is rooted in seamen’s way to deal with the risk. The seamen’s escapist way to omit the terror of hempen intricacies with “[g]ayer sallies, more merry mirth, better jokes, and brighter repartees” (*MD* 229) is actually a collectively suicidal act. And the sailor’s *brave* way to “sit motionless in the heart of these perils” (*MD* 229) is indeed a deed of destruction. His observation of the line shows the crew on the Pequod and Captain Ahab’s blocking of thinking Enframing

and their fulfillment of the danger.

Unlike them, Ishmael unfolds his own reflection onto Enframing while he sees the danger. In chapter 89 “Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish,” through the gaze at the waif, he develops his discussion on the law of the whale fishery and brings out a constellation of questions in the age of Enframing. Starting from one controversial suitcase, he gets the intolerable impression that “*possession is the whole of the law*” (MD 309; emphasis added) and unveils the fact that “the epoch of Being coming to presence as Enframing” (T 43). In the whaling *World*, “[h]ow the thing came into possession” (MD 309) does not matter; on the contrary, who actually possesses the thing is the law. According to the subjective principle of representability and applicability, all things are tuned into two flat and empty categories, fast-fish and loose-fish. As what Heidegger notes as “the world *conceived and grasped* as picture” (AWP 129; emphasis added), Ishmael’s whaling world is an epitome of the modern age as the world picture in which “[...] *the truth of Being* remains *denied* as world” (T 48; emphasis added).

Before fostering such an insight on the *World*, there is a crucial event of meditation for Ishmael. In chapter 72 “The Monkey-Rope,” he initiates the pivotal questioning on justice. At first glance, it is intolerable for him to see the possible situation that “*another’s mistake or misfortune* might plunge innocent me into *unmerited disaster and death*” (MD 255; emphasis added). For him, this is “a mortal wound” (MD 255) of his free will and “so gross an injustice” (MD 255). Yet, when he “renounce[s] human self-will” (T 47) and “project[s] himself toward that insight” (T 47), he corresponds to his own Being in “the claim of that insight” (T 47). We find that Ishmael shapes an enlarged vision of Being when he looks away from himself and penetrates into the event. Not merely monkey-rope, he see that Tashtego and Daggoo’s other protection of the harpooner, Queequeg—the spade to drive out the

sharks around him—absurdly endangers the savage in “their *hasty zeal to befriend* him” (*MD* 256; emphasis added). Here, the aporia of utilitarianism is revealed before him—“It *justifies* itself before *the claim to justice* that it itself has posited” (*WN* 90; emphasis added). Here, the huge gap between justice and justification displays before us. Ishmael suddenly realizes that his former “[...] question of *the certainty of salvation* is the question of *justification*” (*WN* 90; emphasis added). We find that he can never foster the safeguarding power of reflection when he only persists in demanding the answer that he must be safe. If Ishmael never loses his position of the self will, he can never open the site for the free will to be held in “the precious image of each and all of us men in this whaling world [...] *That unsounded ocean you gasp in, is Life; those sharks, your foes; those spades, your friends; and what between sharks and spades you are in a sad pickle and peril*” (*MD* 256; emphasis added). Retrospectively, we realize that Ishmael’s final salvation is a token of *true* justice in the sense that the truth of being is gradually unveiled through the truth of the little things.

Although Ishmael does not predict that the saving power lies in the life-buoy-of-the-coffin and the Rachel, his early reflection on the loom of time is indeed the signature of the saving power hidden in his understanding of Being. In chapter 47 “The Mat-Maker,” Ishmael notes that life is woven by “[t]he straight warp” (*MD* 179) as necessity and the “shuttle between given threads” (*MD* 179) as free will, and Queequeg’s “easy, indifferent sword” (*MD* 179) as chance. In a significant way, he has brought out the crucial insight that “chance by turns rules either, and has *the last featuring blow at events*” (*MD* 179; emphasis added). Echoing Heidegger, who notes that “*destining is never a fate* that compels. For man becomes truly *free* only insofar as he *belongs to the realm of destining* and so becomes one who *listens and hears* [*Hörender*], and *not* one who is simply constrained to *obey*

[*Höriger*]" (*QT* 25; emphasis added), Melville lets us see Ishmael's openness in listening to the call of Enframing. Unlike Ahab's denial and other crew's submission, Ishmael has amazingly brought forth a distinct way from the event of the Pequod set as the doom and gone aboard the Rachel in waiting of hope.



Chapter Two

The Pequod as the Site for the Challenging Claim

In the chapter, I highlight the challenging tendency of Enframing that treats everything as a “resource” serving to yield the optimal effect through the precise and efficient operation at the site of the Pequod, then I try to attribute the decisive cause of the shipwreck to the failure the of thinking. The challenging way the Pequod presents in *Moby-Dick* is my starting point to investigate the call of thinking. Then, I study how the Pequod allows Captain Ahab to “use” things and men in a manipulative manner. Finally, I analyze how the two mates’ disparate ways to respond to the challenge posed by the Pequod end up in the same outcome as the disaster of technology.



The Pequod as the Presentation of the Initial Stage of the Challenging Claim: “The Demand to Dispose!”

It is meaningful to reflect that the Pequod’s outcome conforms to “a celebrated tribe of Massachusetts Indians” (*MD* 69) that was in extinction or near annihilation. According to Charles Olson, the Pequots are “a skilled part of the industry [whaling] down to its end” (17). Here, we can understand why Melville write such an ambivalent statement on the ship as “A noble craft, but somehow a most melancholy!” (*MD* 70). In fact, the strong connection between technological development and human condition is one of his highlighted issues in *Moby-Dick*. Through detailed descriptions on the ship, the history of its variant forms shows us “new and marvelous features” (*MD* 70) besides “her old antiquities” (*MD* 69-70). We find that the Pequod’s new way to present before our eyes is “a thing of trophies” (*MD* 70) collected with whale bones. Significantly, Melville’s observation displays what

Heidegger has named as the most manifested features of modern age—the challenging claim. Within Heideggerian insight, the Pequod presents not only the common sense of instrument but the site for the challenging claim, causing Captain Ahab to place just anything into an orderly position. And the mates' responses to the challenging claim will later determine the complete doom of the Pequod.

The Pequod:

“The Modern Railway and the Systematic Database on the High Sea”: The Spatio-Temporal Regulation

The challenging claim is readily present in the spatio-temporal location the Pequod is in, and the functions it carries such as whaling oil preservation and human resource management. The sea, the whale, and the crew are those that, it seems, are calculating and manipulative around the whaling vessel. First, the repeated image of the railroad in *Moby-Dick* is a metaphor of such a challenging claim, as if it projected a trajectory on the high sea. We see that the channel of space and the waterway of time are paved as the settled course for a train on the sea. In chapter 134 “The Chase—Second Day”, Melville hints that the whaling world is a pace-scheming railway and considers the “hunter’s wondrous skill” (*MD* 414) to speculate on the whale’s trace to be the doctor’s pulse-rating to treat a baby. “And as *the mighty iron Leviathan of the modern railway* is so familiarly known in its every pace, that, with watches in their hands, *men time his rates as doctors that of a baby’s pulse*; and lightly say of it, the up train or down train will reach such or such a *spot*, at such or such an *hour*” (*MD* 414; emphasis added). Here, Melville’s words not only reveal that the infinite and unfathomed sea can be constructed by human beings. Metaphysically, he even reveals the tendency that not only space is visualized, but time is also spatialized. Rather than being the residence or habitat in which mortals live, the sea

seems to appear as one of “the whalemens’ allies” (*MD* 414). As William V. Spanos points out, “Whatever the degree of Melville’s conscious affiliation with the tragic literary tradition, what *Moby-Dick* in fact ‘accomplishes’ is *the destruction of the privileged ontology of the principle of presence, the spatializing eye*” (147; emphasis added), Melville’s awareness of the danger of the overwhelming habit of representation in the sense of presence, acuteness and causality can be found out by Ahab’s frenzied monologue in the end of chapter 37 “Sunset.” “*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 angel to the iron way* (*MD* 143; emphasis added).” Echoing with Heidegger, the statement expresses two representative characteristics of the challenging claim—regulating and securing. “The revealing reveals to itself its own *manifoldly interlocking paths*, through *regulating their course*. This regulating itself is, for its part, *everywhere secured* (*QT* 16; emphasis added).” Apparently, the iron rails mean to regulate the path to Ahab’s goal and every rail is secured to lead to his destiny under such regulation. Here, we can say that the sea is almost nothing other than the direction and the number to provide information for location-tracing in the Pequod as an event.

“The Processing Factory of Whale Oil”: The Natural Resource Preservation

In addition to time and space, in *Moby-Dick*, the animal is also explained in the same way. If Melville lets us realize that “an American whaler is outwardly distinguished by her try-works” (*MD* 325), Heidegger lets us see that the challenging claim is unfolded around this innovative apparatus. As the gigantic motivation of the hunting activity, the try-works initiate the regular process and effective technique to yield an unrestricted amount of whale oil in the broad sea. In chapter 94 “A Squeeze

of the Hand,” we find that the whale is dealt with complicated procedures and precise skills to produce the commodity, whale oil in the firepower device system.

That whale of Stubb’s, dearly *purchased*, was duly brought to the Pequod’s side, where all those *cutting* and *hoisting* operations previously detailed, were regularly gone through, even to the *bailing* of the Heidelburgh Tun, or Case.

While some were occupied with this latter duty, others were employed in draggling away the larger tubs, so soon as filled with the *sperm*; and when the proper time arrived, this same sperm was *carefully manipulated* ere going to the *try-works*, of which anon. (*MD 322*; emphasis added)

As C. L. R. James expresses, that “The men do not merely collect and prepare the raw material. The whale-ship is also *a factory*” (49; emphasis added), we understand that “the curious anomaly of the most solid masonry joining with oak and hemp” (*MD 325*) on board of the Pequod is actually the sign of the modern industry. According to Heidegger, “[...] the construction of a *high-frequency apparatus* requires the *interlocking of various processes of technical-industrial production* (*QT 5*; emphasis added),” and it is clear that the activity on the Pequod is different from the fishery in the agricultural society. Instead of tilling and cultivating the farmlands, the whaling industry makes unreasonable demand on the whale in ways of “unlocking, transforming, storing, distributing, and switching about” (*QT 16*). Like the fire-burning of the try-works, the challenging claim “*never* simply comes to an *end*. *Neither* does it run off into the *indeterminate* (*QT 16*; emphasis added).” We find that the shriveled whale blubber is ceaselessly provided to support the consumption of the try-works and is simultaneously distilled as the whale oil. The whale is exclusively viewed as the used resource which is exactly qualified through stokers and is thoroughly quantified in barrels.

“The Disciplined Fleet of Military Troops”: The Human Force Management

Finally, it is hard for us to ignore the challenging claim in which men are merely the arsenal of their weapons on the battlefield. In *Moby-Dick*, all the crew on the Pequod become the operating switch of Ahab’s martial mechanism and are reduced to the cogs in a machine of the warship controlled by the central keel to catch his own deadly enemy—Moby Dick. In chapter 46 “Surmises,” Melville points out that “To accomplish his *object* Ahab must use *tools*; and of all tools used in the shadow of the moon, *men* are most apt to get out of the order (*MD* 177; emphasis added).” Here, we can infer that Ahab realizes the practical difficulty to control these sailors of diversity and variability. Nevertheless, his success in leadership and persuasion is proved by the only protester, Starbuck in his surrender, at the end of the novel. As Starbuck’s early declaration in chapter 37 “Sunset” shows, “’Twas not so hard a task. I thought to find *one stubborn*, at the least; *but my one cogged circle* fits in *all their various wheels*, and they *revolve* (*MD* 143; emphasis added),” every crew eventually is involved in the plan of revenge. As Hubert Dreyfus has emphasized, “Human beings, on this view, become a resource to be used, but more important to be *enhanced—like any other* (56; emphasis added),” we find that the crew are not just turned into be a pile of weapons as an installation of machine for Ahab’s private purpose but they have also dissipated their own personal integrity and traits in the voyage on the Pequod. “*They were one man, not thirty*. [...] *all the individualities of the crew*, this man’s valor, that man’s fear; guilt and guiltlessness, *all varieties were welded into oneness*, and were all directed to that *fatal goal* which Ahab their one lord and keel did point to (*MD* 415; emphasis added).”

Captain Ahab:

The Abuse of Technological Instrument and Scientific Knowledge

Now, it is time to see how the challenging claim of the Pequod is executed by Captain Ahab. In *Moby-Dick*, in order to fulfill his own private purpose, Ahab is not only good at technical skills and scientific knowledge to drive the whaling ship into the zone of war but masters also the oratorical skill and expedient tactics to manipulate his crew into the position to arm. “With his purpose clear before him, he is now concerned with two things only: 1) *science*, the management of *things*; and 2) *politics*, the management of *men* (James 13; emphasis added).” We find that Ahab’s way to complete the challenging claim has exposed the dilemma ingrained in science and politics. When things and men are demanded or controlled in such a radically biased manner, their singularity and richness are forgotten or erased in the dominant way of challenging practiced by Ahab.

It is rare to find the continuous development of plot in *Moby-Dick*; therefore, it is unique to find that Melville spends a constellation of chapters to depict Ahab’s act in the abuse of technology and science. Still, we realize that these chapters are actually Melville’s lucid elaboration of the dialectics between science and pseudo-science. In the context of Ahab’s treatment of three sailing equipments—the quadrant, the lightning-rod, and the needle, we witness the vision of perspective and the blind spot in Ahab’s understanding of the common being. In chapter 118 “The Quadrant,” the captain of the Pequod madly destroys the quadrant (functioning as the guide of the holder’s latitude in the sea through the observation of the sun) for it cannot signal the specific location of Moby Dick in the exact time. He chooses instead a level compass, the log and the line to lead his way.

Science! Curse thee, thou *vain toy*; and cursed be all things that cast man’s eyes aloft to that heaven, whose *live vividness* but *scorches* him, as these old eyes are even now scorched with thy light, O sun! *Level by nature to*

this earth's horizon are the glances of men's eyes; not shot from the crown of his head, as if God had meant him to gaze on his firmament. (MD 378; emphasis added)

Significantly, we find that Ahab's discontent, with the quadrant and astronomy show his denial of the open horizon. When daily observation and subtle calculation cannot deduce the exact fact he wants, all the process is meaningless to him. Here, it is obvious that technology and science are nothing other than the instrument to fulfill his demand. And the reason why the scorching sunlight is so intolerable for him is that he cannot accept that the omniscient sun is out of his reach. His immediate turn to the compass asserts again his affirmation of flat horizon. Withdrawn into science in the narrow sense, he *merely* sees the daily direction of the ship's navigation and the hourly-rate of the ship's progression in the level sight. For him, the definite data record is more satisfying than the subtle variation analysis. Ahab's view on usefulness is rigid according to the privileged doctrine, seeing.

Dialectically, Melville unveils the danger of such a *correct* short-sightedness in later chapters. When Ahab rejects using the lightning-rod in the risky storm because of the inconvenience it causes for sailing, he ignores the recurrent possibility that the compass may be affected by the thunder and be out of work. It is ironic to see that he is away from his presumed route in order to exclude any delay of progression. "Heading *East* at this hour in the morning, and the *sun astern* (MD; 388 emphasis added)." Though he immediately discovers the deviation, Melville let us see that Ahab's short-sightedness almost lets the Pequod be lost in the boundless sea. In addition, without the aid of the knowledge of the sun, he surely cannot perceive the error of technology and change direction at once. As Maurice Friedman says, "[...] not only in the case of the quadrant, but finally in that of the compass and all his other guides, *Ahab throws away science, that form of co-operation with nature* which man

has used to *gain his greatest dominion over it* (89; emphasis added).” Here, we find that Ahab cannot eventually control either the vertical quadrant/astronomy nor the level compass/magnetism to capture the whale when he is obsessed in the *all-seeing* interest. Although he later successfully comes up with a new needle of the compass, the end of the fiction silently articulate his failure to conquer Moby Dick even it is targeted by the Pequod with the flag of the challenging claim.

The Manipulation of Oratorical Skill and Expedient Tactics

Besides abusing technological equipment and scientific knowledge to steer the Pequod as the fleet into the zone where Moby Dick lingers, Ahab manipulates oratorical skill and expedient tactics to control the crew like the military obeying the chief’s command to hunt Moby Dick. Ahab’s soliloquy goes, “Now, in his heart, Ahab had some glimpse of this, namely: all my *means* are *sane*, my *motive* and my *object mad* (MD 157; emphasis added),” Melville articulates here the bottleneck of politics. In *Moby-Dick*, the divergence between democracy and populism is presented by Melville as two groups, the common sailors and the mate, Starbuck. We find that Ahab’s agitative oratory does an astounding effect to the crew’s emotion. In chapter 36 “The Quarter-Deck,” Ahab’s first formal speech dramatically arouses strange excitement in the crew and easily persuade them to follow him to kill *the* whale.

“Aye, aye! And I’ll chase him round Good Hope, and round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition’s flames before I give him up. And *this is what ye have shipped for, men! To chase that white whale on both sides of land, and over all sides of earth*, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? *I think ye do look brave.*”

“Aye, aye!” shouted the harpooners and seamen, running closer to the

excited old men: “A sharp *eye* for the White Whale; a sharp *lance* for Moby Dick!” (*MD* 139; emphasis added)

Here, we find that Ahab used repetitious sentence pattern with a different substitution of nouns to depict his will to hunt Moby Dick and summarize the aim of the Pequod with a terse and exclamatory sentence. Moreover, he has asked an open question with a hint of anticipated tone. Just as expected, the crew passionately turn to be the supervisory apparatus and the armament under *general* Ahab’s leadership.

Even the calm mate was ambivalent to hate him with a touch of pity. When Starbuck retorts that “How many *barrels* will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? (*MD* 139; emphasis added)” Ahab replies, “If *money’s* to be the *measure*, 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!*” (*MD* 139; emphasis added) Cunningly, Ahab’s eloquence undermines Starbuck’s inquiry through the hierarchical classification in which value (spirit) is higher than material (body). Although Starbuck shrewdly counters him in the name of God that “To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems *blasphemous*” (*MD* 140), Ahab swiftly responds, “Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; *I’d strike the sun if it insulted me*. For could the sun do that, then could I do the other; since there is ever *a sort of fair play* herein, jealousy presiding over all creations. But *not my master, man, is even that fair play. Who’s over me?* Truth has no confines. (*MD* 140; emphasis added)” We find that Starbuck’s religious accusation is promptly overthrown by Ahab’s principle of fairness, who returns a blow to Starbuck’s belief in God in the sense of presence. “Whereas formerly he could oppose Ahab precisely because of the clear distinction between *Ahab’s rage* and *his own moral identity*, Starbuck now knows a state of mind enabling him to identify Ahab’s rage with an impulse of his own inner life (Pease, 386).”

Therefore, as early as in chapter 38 “Dusk,” the only remonstrator foresaw his fate to assist him to achieve the evil task.

My soul is more than matched; she’s *overmanned*; and by a mad man! [...] I think I see *his impious end*; but feel that *I must help him* to it. [...] Oh! I plainly see miserable office, —*to obey, rebelling*; and worse yet, *to hate with touch of pity*! For in his eyes I read some lurid woe would shrivel me up, had I it. (*MD* 144; emphasis added)

In addition to the oratory skill, Ahab understood how to cope with different men with distinct expedient tactics. In chapter 46 “Surmises,” Ishmael unfolds his conjecture that Ahab has attracted the crew to watch out Moby Dick with the actual and accessible doubloon for Ahab realizes that passion cannot last that long for such an abstract and remote aim to revenge. “Had they been *strictly* held to their *one final and romantic object*—that final and romantic object, *too many* would have turned from in *disgust*” (*MD* 178; emphasis added). Subtly, the doubloon has indeed functioned as the attainable presence to stimulate the crew’s fantasy and simultaneously as the sublime token to remind them of their oath of passion in the passage. In chapter 99 “The Doubloon,” the crew’s submissive veneration and extraordinary attention to treat the doubloon displays the effect of Ahab’s success of calculation.

Nor, though placed *amongst* a ruthless crew and every hour passed by ruthless hands, and through the livelong nights shrouded with thick darkness which might cover any pilfering approach, nevertheless every sunrise found the doubloon where the sunset left it last. For it was *set apart* and *sanctified to one awe-striking end*; and however wanton in their sailor ways, one and all, the mariners *revered* it as the white whale’s talisman. (*MD* 332; emphasis added)

Besides the scheme of the lure of gain to handle the crew, Ahab knows the strategy of the appeasement of compromise to deal with the chief mate. He realized that his charisma upon Starbuck is merely on the level of “intellectual mastership” (*MD* 177) instead of that of “the purely spiritual” (*MD* 177). Therefore, he must impose “some ordinary, prudential, circumstantial influences” (*MD* 177) upon him; otherwise, he is inclined to step back to “open relapses of rebellion against his captain’s leadership” (*MD* 177). In chapter 109 “Ahab and Starbuck in the Cabin,” Ahab accepts Starbuck’s suggestion to hoist the burtons in order to avoid the thorough breakup with him for he knows that the cautious and righteous mate may react against him as soon as he has affirmed the legal and reasonable evidence of Ahab’s crime.

It may have been a flash of honesty in him; or mere *prudential policy* which, under the circumstance, *imperiously forbade* the slightest symptom of *open disaffection*, however transient, *in the important chief office of his ship*. However it was, his orders were executed; and the Burtons were hoisted. (*MD* 363; emphasis added)

In the end of the fiction, Ahab overwhelmingly leads his legion to the three-day-battle. Yet, the termination of the almost annihilative army proclaimed his defeat to manipulate men as the weapon to hunt Moby Dick.

The Failure to Respond to the Challenging Claim in Different Modes: “Ye Two Are the Opposite Poles of One Thing”

However, it is not true Ahab, who charges forward with the destruction of the Pequod. Carefully considered, the fatally challenging claim is on the one hand specifically acted out through the captain’s misappropriation of knowledge and power and on the other hand tacitly agreed by the crew’s passive denial and positive affirmation. In *Moby-Dick*, the chief mate, Starbuck and the second mate, Stubb, can

represent such two perilous ways of response to the *technological situation* which Ahab has created. As Ahab sharply observes in the first day of the chase, “Ye two are *the opposite poles of one thing*; Starbuck is Stubb reversed, and Stubb is Starbuck (*MD* 413; emphasis added),” we find out that Starbuck’s deliberate consideration and Stubb’s frivolous humor ironically end up in the same destructive outcome. Both of them hurry to the shelter of comfort and elude the call of thinking.

Starbuck: “Most Careful Bravery”

Starbuck had the skeptical spirit to question Ahab’s misappropriation of sailing instrument yet his “most careful bravery” (*MD* 362) has stopped him from any action in the moment of emergency. In chapter 123 “The Musket,” he queried Ahab’s endless wrong decisions of technology and understood the hazardous outcome under Ahab’s murderous leadership.

Does he not say he will *not strike his spars to any gale*? Has he not *dashed his heavenly quadrant*? and in these same perilous seas, gropes he not his way by *mere dead reckoning of the error-abounding log*? And in this very Typhoon, did he not swear that *he would have not lightning-rods*? But shall this crazed old man be tamely suffered to drag a whole ship’s company down to doom with him?—Yes, it would make him *the willful murderer of thirty men and more*, if this ship come to any deadly harm; and come to deadly harm, my soul swears this ship will, *if Ahab have his way*. (*MD* 387; emphasis added)

However, he excludes one lawful and available way to bind Ahab’s movement for the reason of sleep and concludes that the only plausible resolution is to kill Ahab.

Finally, he is stuck in the ambivalence of morality and cannot determine any reaction to resist the wild captain.

But is there no other way? *No lawful way?*—Make him a prisoner to be taken home? What! Hope to wrest this old man’s living power from his own living hands? *Only a fool would try it.* [...] I could not endure the sight; could not possibly fly his howlings; *all comfort, sleep itself, inestimable reason would leave me on the long intolerable voyage.* [...]—And would I be a murder, then, *if.* (MD 387; emphasis added)

So far, it is manifested that Starbuck was confined by the shelter of the comfort and reject the concrete breakthrough of action. As Ahab had observed before, “*He waxes brave, but nevertheless obeys; most careful bravery that!*” (MD 362; emphasis added), we find that Starbuck is actually restricted by his hesitating way to avoid the uncertain outcome. Hence, it is ironic to see Ishmael’s introduction of the chief mate in chapter 26 “Knights and Squires,” thus: “Starbuck was no crusader after perils; in him *courage was not a sentiment; but a thing simply useful* to him, and *always at hand* upon all *mortally practical occasions.* (MD 102; emphasis added).” Here, Melville highlights a typical failure of response to the technological age through the chief mate’s sophisticated calculation of utility and facility. We find that he has actually made use of the excuse of moral issue to disguise his own inert agency.

Stubb: “Too Indifferent Boldness”

As for Stubb, he is once aware that Ahab’s perilous mastership on technology, and yet his indifferent boldness has prevented him from any reflection in the risky circumstance. In chapter 121 “Midnight—the Forecastle Bulwarks,” the third mate, Flask wonders at Stubb’s dramatic shift to totally trusting Ahab’s leadership. “Didn’t you once say that *whatever* ship Ahab sails in, the ship should pay something *extra on its insurance policy*, just as though it were loaded with *powder* barrels aft and boxes of *lucifers* forward?” (MD 384; emphasis added) Stubb answers that, “Don’t you see,

then, that for these *extra risks* the Marine Insurance companies have *extra guarantees*?" (MD 384; emphasis added) We find that his inference sounds right with the accumulation of the same word, and yet it is actually a statement based on fallacy. The essence of insurance is not originally rooted in guarantees; on the contrary, its purpose of presence is for compensation after unpredicted perils and loss. In addition, it is Stubb's thorough neglect to any warning signal while he defends Ahab's decision of the lightning-rod: "[...] *Not one ship in a hundred carries rod*, and Ahab,—aye, man, and all of us,—were in *no more danger then*, in my poor opinion, than all the crews in *ten thousand ships* now sailing the seas" (MD 385; emphasis added). With the statistical information, Stubb absurdly deduces that it is generally safe to sail without a lightning-rod for all ships.

Here, we find that Stubb is restrained by the comfort zone and indulged in the superficial play of logic. As his monologue in chapter 39 "First Night-Watch" demonstrates "Because *a laugh's the wisest, easiest answer to all that's queer*; and come what will, one comfort's always left—that *unfailing comfort* is, it's all *predestinated*" (MD 145; emphasis added), it can be sure that Stubb is actually confined by his detached position to shun the unknown. That is why Ahab is stupefied to say, "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" (MD 413; emphasis added) on the first day of the chase. Melville embodies another characteristic failure of response to technological era in the second mate's reckless obsession with pleasure and easiness. We find that his impersonal dare serves to dissipate the inexhaustible fear. "But I am not a brave man; never said I was a brave man; I am a *coward*; and I *sing to keep up my spirits*" (MD 380).

"To Elude the Call of Thinking" Is the Critical Point of the True Disaster

It is clear that both of Starbuck and Stubb have eluded the call of thinking in a distinct manner. And the locus of the true disaster cannot be simply due to Ahab but their way to shun the response to the challenging claim which Ahab has imposed. “This is perhaps as profound a thing as Ahab has said in all that journey, that *Stubb’s indifference and perpetual good humor* and *Starbuck’s life of unremitting moral crisis* are merely different responses to the same weakness—the *inability to make of life a creative adventure*” (James, 70; emphasis added). The true courage is not discreet bravery, nor careless boldness; on the contrary, it is the openness to sincerely respond to the elicitation of thinking.

Overall, we find that the challenging tendency in the Pequod presents is led and controlled by Captain Ahab; still, the disaster technology brings about is caused by the avoidance of thinking when facing Enframing. On board of the Pequod, all things are overwhelmingly put into the order for use, including time and space, animals, and men. All this is has been caused by Captain Ahab’s abuse of technology and science, and his manipulation of oratory skills and tactics. The two mates, Starbuck and Stubb’s ways to deal with the call of Enframing in the mode of pessimism and optimism have reinforced the havoc Ahab wrecks. Hence, the decisive cause of the final disaster must be ascribed to their abandonment of reflection and their subsequent lack of action.

Chapter Three

Ahab's Relationship to Enframing as the Precipitous Fall

“Ahab's Entrapment in the Pequod's Linear Progress”: The Flat and Rigid
Relationship to Enframing

The sinking of the Pequod is the epitome of Ahab's relationship to Enframing. As Heidegger with, “The essence of Enframing is that setting-upon gathered into itself which *entraps* the *truth* of its own coming to presence with *oblivion*” (T 36; emphasis added), we find that Ahab is feverishly obsessed with the challenging claim attached to Enframing and completely forgets the other voice belonging to Enframing. When he persists in maneuvering everything (including men) into the assembly of this whaling ship, he actually drives out any possibility and multiplicity which may appear in the Pequod as an event. Although a shipwreck is nothing special in the whaling world, the disaster occurring to the Pequod reveals the fundamental danger in which mortal eyesight is totally fascinated by the light of correctness and truth is silently eclipsed. As Heidegger emphasizes that, “[...] *the* danger, namely, *Being* itself endangering itself in the truth of its coming to presence, remains veiled and disguised. This *disguising* is what is most dangerous” (T 37; emphasis added). Ahab's intentional elimination of any further thinking and his absolute advocacy of the instrumental and his anthropological definition of technology fatally steer the ship towards the havoc. Through his way to treat specific things (the artificial leg, the doubloon nailed on the mast, a life-buoy of a coffin, and the handspike and the windlass), his arbitrary responsive routes to the call of Enframing unveil how he has radically alienated himself from his own Being.

The Prejudice of Thinking: The Dare of Defiance and the Worship of Feeling

Ahab's limited way of thinking and partial understanding of Being imperil himself and his crew. Indeed, Ahab is a passionate worshiper of feelings and a daring defiant of will. In chapter 135 "The Chase—Third Day," Ahab expresses his view on thinking.

Here's food for thought, had Ahab time to think; but Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels; that's tingling enough for mortal man! to think's audacity. God only has that right and privilege. Thinking is, or ought to be, a coolness and a calmness; and our poor hearts throb, and our poor brains beat too much for that. (MD 419; emphasis added)

We find that he has perceived something for reflection, yet he negates any thought and is satisfied with feeling. In an extreme manner, the brain is returned to God and the heart is assigned to men in his binary antagonism between thinking and feeling. Hence, it is unavoidable that his understanding of being is biased and flat. This can be specifically exhibited by his way to interact with the fire in chapter 119 "The Candles."

[...] I now *know* thee, thou *clear spirit*, and I now *know* that *thy right worship is defiance*. To neither *love* nor *reverence* wilt thou be kind; and e'en for *hate* thou canst but kill; and *all are killed*. No fearless fool now fronts thee. I own thy speechless, placeless power; *but to the last gasp of my earthquake life will dispute its unconditional, unintegral mastery in me.* (MD 382; emphasis added)

We see that his understanding of fire is oversimplified into *one* authoritative principle of mastership. The fire is misrecognized by him as the trial to be *the* independent Man. "In the midst of *the personified impersonal*, a *personality* stands here. Though but a point at best; whencesoe'er I came; wheresoe'er I go; *yet while I earthly live, the queenly personality lives in me, and feels her royal rights*" (MD 382; emphasis added).

Therefore, Ahab ignores other crew's safety when he is indulged in the feeling of the will of Man (personality). His understanding of Being functions in a monotonous and dogmatic way.

Advocacy of the Anthropological Definition of Technology

Hence, Ahab adheres to “the instrumental and anthropological definition of technology” (QT 5) to treat techno-science merely as “a means and a human activity” (QT 5). On the one hand, he regards science as the programmed methodology to serve certain purposes; on the other hand, he views technology as the dominated apparatus to develop an endless progress. Consequently, the nature appears theoretically as a quantifiable inventory and shows up physically as the energy repository at the same time. “As Heidegger says, ‘*Immediate graspability and usefulness and serviceability ... self-evidently constitute what is in being and what is not*’ ” (Guignon 20; emphasis added), Ahab's way to handle nature with the aid of both science and technology simultaneously exposes Being in one radical style. He demolishes the structure of Being, place it in the spot-light, and abandons other prospects of Being, leading them in shadow.

To Pursue Cartography as the Means to Achieve His Ends

In chapter 44 “The Chart,” cartography is pursued by Ahab as the means to regulate the trail of Moby Dick and the ocean becomes the classified database for the retrieval of information.

Now, to any one not fully acquainted with the ways of the leviathan, it might seem an absurdly hopeless task thus to seek out one solitary creature in the unhooped oceans of this planet. But not so did it seem to Ahab, who knew *the sets of all tides and currents, and thereby calculating the driftings*

of the sperm whale's food; and, also, calling to mind the regular, ascertained seasons for hunting him in particular latitudes; could arrive at reasonable surmises, almost approaching to certainties, concerning the timeliest day to be upon this or that ground in search of his prey. (MD 167; emphasis added)

In his inferential procedure, we find that Ahab views tides and currents as the equivalent signal of the whale's food field and deduces the whale's specific lingering zone and period. Obviously, for Ahab, it is undoubted "[...] that nature reports itself in some way or other that is identifiable through calculation and that it remains orderable as a system of information" (QT 23; emphasis added). As goes Melville's comment on Ahab's attitude, "[...] when all possibilities would become probabilities, and as Ahab fondly thought, every probability the next thing to a certainty" (MD 168; emphasis added), we find that the captain or the researcher has demanded the presentable answer or result through scientific knowledge and totally misinterpreted possibilities to understand nature. As Heidegger writes that, "It seems as though causality is shrinking into a reporting—a reporting challenged forth—of standing-reserves that must be guaranteed either simultaneously or in sequence" (QT 23; emphasis added), Ahab's way to quest after science essentially deviates from nature/Nature (Being) when he imposes the linear framework to know everything.

To Celebrate the Infinite Expansionism through Machine

Likewise, the Pequod is celebrated by Ahab as the vehicle to approach the whale, Moby Dick and the sea turns to be the gigantic power-station for the mobilization of impetus. In chapter 124 "The Needle," Melville describes the nature using the metaphors of force movement and energy transformation: "[...] the not-yet-subsided sea rolled in long slow billows of mighty bulk, and striving in the Pequod's gurgling track, pushed her on like giants' palms outspread. [...] The sea was as a crucible of

molten gold, that bubblingly leaps with *light and heat*" (MD 388; emphasis added).

We find that his diction foreshadows Ahab's misrecognition of nature. The captain misinterprets the push of the wave as the motivating force of the Pequod under his commandership and concludes that the sun on the blue is also brought by his Pequod. "Ha, ha, *my ship!* thou mightest well be taken now for *the sea-chariot of the sun*. Ho, ho! all ye nations before my prow, *I bring the sun to ye! Yoke on the furthest billows;* hallo! A tandem, *I drive the sea!*" (MD 388; emphasis added) As Charles Guignon notes, "The stance toward things in the modern age is that of "*machination*" (*Machenschaft*), which interprets all entities as *representable (vor-stellbar)* and *capable of being brought forth in production*" (20; emphasis added), Ahab's ecstatic exclamation exposes precisely the doctrine of all-seeing and all-using. He welcomes the sun only when he can persuade himself that the rays on the ocean after the ship are easily visible and are "blending with his *undeviating wake*" (MD 388; emphasis added). Thus, Ahab's position to deal with technology has alienated nature from their original unspeakable air as well as Being when he is occupied with the agency of the self and misunderstands the nature as the world existing for the self.

The Arbitrary Response to Enframing and the Fulfillment of the Danger

So far, it is time to clarify how Ahab is estranged from his own Being through further observation on his arbitrary responsive route to the call of Enframing. And this route can be specifically traced by the interaction between Ahab and things around him. Looking closer, we find places to see how the danger is *fated* in Ahab's irresistibility to ordering and his understanding of Being. First of all, Ahab's artificial leg reveals his fixed position to constitute his subjectivity. Then, the doubloon nailed by the captain on the mast on the one hand appears as the standing-reserve to initiate his assigned task and on the other hand articulates his illusion to be the constructor of

everything. In addition, his negation of the life-buoy of a coffin marks his denial of thinking and ensuing ignorance about the turn of one thing. Finally, Ahab's mechanistic metaphor of handspike and the windlass to depict life unveils his misinterpretation of destining as fate and expresses his distorted judgment to resist everything out of his Will.

Subject Position as "Ahab's Prosthesis": The Formation of the Subject through "the" Fixed Position

In *Moby-Dick*, Ahab's prosthesis is the crystallization of his immovable position to maintain his subjectivity. In chapter 28 "Ahab," Ishmael is stunned by "the singular posture [Ahab] maintained" (MD 109) and he especially portrays his pose in his ivory leg and his spirit in his fearless gaze. We find that "[h]is bone leg steadie[s] in *that hole*" (MD 109; emphasis added), which he particularly measures and bores, and his gaze is permeated with "an infinity of firmest fortitude, a determinate, *unsunderable willfulness*" (MD 109; emphasis added). These characteristic outward features present what Heidegger has highlighted as a new phenomenon—the position of man. "What is decisive is that man himself *expressively takes up this position as one constituted by himself*, that he *intentionally maintains* it as that taken up by himself, and he makes it *secure as the solid footing for a possible development of humanity*" (AWP 132; emphasis added). Apparently, Ahab has meant to adopt a stationary position with a self-made hole to mold his subjectivity in as the Man of Will. Therefore, in his subjective world, the other is defined to be the targeted object from his absolute standpoint. In chapter 36 "The Quarter-Deck," the white whale, Moby Dick, is announced by him as the aimed object to be eradicated in his tight value system.

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 leaps 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 wreck that hate upon him. (MD 140; emphasis added)

Ahab has actually thought that it is meaningless to return his attack to the animal, yet he still decides to assault it, for its “inscrutable malice” is totally intolerable by him. It reveals that what Ahab must resist is the uncontrollable anxiety in himself rather than the intention of Moby Dick itself. As Heidegger points out, “There begins that way of *being human* which mans the realm of human capability as a domain given over to *measuring and executing, for the purpose of gaining mastery over that which is as a whole*” (AWP 132; emphasis added), we can infer that the mad captain must kill the object of surplus to regain his subjectivity or Wholeness. And his precise manipulation of science and exact implementation of technology mentioned above are his way of *being* the Man.

Again, Ahab's understanding of Being is well explained by his view on things and humans. In chapter 108 “Ahab and the Carpenter,” Ahab's rebuttal to the carpenter's warning to use the pincer tells us his disposition to grasp no matter what it takes.

Oh, sir, it will break bones—beware, beware!

No fear; I like *a good grip*; I like to *feel something in this slippery world that can hold*, man (MD 359; emphasis added)

Here, the vice turns to be the instrument of his will to mastery. Furthermore, it also reveals that Ahab's stern tendency to dominate the world. Nevertheless, as Heidegger reminds us, “*The will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control*” (QT 5; emphasis added), we find that Ahab's

subjectivity is symbolically broken down when his artificial support as “[h]is ivory leg ha[s] been snapping off” (*MD* 417) in the second day of the chase. Besides those on things, Ahab’s perspective on men has exposed how his understanding of Being is away from Being. In the same chapter, Ahab expresses his will to “order *a complete man after a desirable pattern*” (*MD* 359; emphasis added), dividing men into parts and functions as tools.

Imprimis, fifty feet high in his socks; then, chest modelled after the Thames Tunnel; then, *legs with roots to ‘em, to stay in one place*; then, arms three feet through the wrist; *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.* (*MD* 359; emphasis added)

We find that his imagination of the perfect Man marks the narrowest way to imagine life. The Man in Ahab’s model sticks just to one position with a firm will and sophisticated calculation, having no need to look outside. Yet, he can never be “a complete man” when it is defined in such a mechanistic way as to cut the mind from the body.

Standing-Reserve as Ahab’s Strategy of “the Doubloon on the Mast” to Capture His Target: Everywhere Everything Is Ordered to Stand by!

In *Moby-Dick*, Ahab’s practice of such a technological understanding of Being is crystallized in his act to nail the doubloon on the mast. When Ahab names the golden coin as the reward for sighting Moby Dick, the crew all squeeze their eyeball to capture the presence of the whale. As Heidegger depicts how the way as standing-reserve functions: “Everywhere everything is ordered to *stand by*, to be immediately *at hand*, indeed to stand there just so that it may be *on call for a further*

ordering” (QT 17; emphasis added), we find that every sailor on board of the Pequod is put by Ahab in the position of preparation, keeping a watchful eye on the infinite sea to find out the leviathan and instantly execute any order he gives. Theoretically, the crew is nothing but the arranged order *itself* in the doubloon-mast system. As for the captain, he “in the midst of *objectlessness* is nothing but *the orderer of the standing-reserve*” (QT 17; emphasis added) and approaches “the very brink of a precipitous fall” (QT 27). Yet, when he is stuck in the perilous situation, he “exalts himself to the posture of lord of the earth” (QT 27). In chapter 99 “The Doubloon,” Ahab’s interpretation of the mark on the coin exposes his fantasy of subjectivity. “The firm *tower*, that is Ahab; the *volcano*, that is Ahab; the courageous, the undaunted, and victorious *fowl*, that too, is Ahab; *all are Ahab*; and this 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*” (MD 332; emphasis added). We find that everything is conceived by Ahab as himself. As Heidegger says, “It seems as though *man everywhere and always encounters only himself*” (QT 27; emphasis added), the captain is indeed obsessed with the illusion of the *ultimate* self. “As much echo as *mirror*, the coin reflects *his name* again and again” (Sitney 134). Apparently, such a radical retreat from Being is already hinted by Melville in chapter 1 “Loomings,” “It is the image of *the ungraspable phantom of life*; and this is the *key* to it all” (MD 20; emphasis added). Like Narcissus, Ahab’s persistency to capture his own image of Subjectivity has fundamentally threatened his Being.

The Negation of Thinking in “the Life-Buoy of a Coffin” Condition: Besides the Certainty, Possibility Is Nothing!

Although Ahab almost turns the Pequod into standing-reserve, there is one thing on the whaling ship that is out of his reach. Intensely, we find that one thing—the

life-buoy of a coffin—is so intolerable for Ahab that he must avoid it. Such a creative and undefined thing—has dramatically illustrated what Heidegger emphasizes as the turn of Being. And Ahab’s unthinking of the turn has brought himself to the danger. In chapter 127 “The Deck,” Ahab raises such an interrogation on the real through the thing. “Oh! How *immaterial* are *all materials*! What things *real* are there, but *imponderable thoughts*?” (MD 396; emphasis added) We find that he is aroused by the question of Being, Yet, his final conclusion to dispel the mystery of the thing holds back any further thinking and open possibility.

Here now’s *the very dread symbol of grim death*, by a mere *hap*, made the expressive sign of *the help and hope of most endangered life*. A life-buoy of a coffin! *Does it go further?* Can it be that in some spiritual sense the coffin is, after all, but *an immortality-preserver!* *I’ll think of that. But no.* (MD 396; emphasis added)

For Ahab, it is difficult to accept the fact that the thing is reined by the chance. In addition, he cannot see the accurate practicability or definite function distributed to the thing. Even when he can think of the potential belongingness to the thing, he denies it for he cannot instantly catch it or confirm it. As Heidegger reminds us, “All this we can do only if, *before* considering the question that is seemingly always the most immediate one and the only urgent one, *What shall we do?* We ponder this: *How much we think?*” (T 40; emphasis added) Obviously, Ahab goes on to persist the first question and blocks the turn of Being. He denies to go deeper into the prospect of “an immortality-preserver” but grasps the mode of standing-reserve. “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” (MD 396; emphasis added). The insight which he drives away is finally revealed as Ishmael’s saving hope. Yet, the vessel as standing-reserve is indeed dismantled and dissipated into the vortex of the ocean in the end.

Misunderstanding Enframing as Man's Counterattack in "the Handspike and the Windlass" Relation: The Antagonism between the Self and the Other Ends up in the Fulfillment of the Fate in Which Agency Loses

So far, it is manifested that Ahab's arbitrary responsive way to the call of Enframing is the fundamental disaster—the radical Fall of Being. Instead of listening the real voice in the event, Ahab only hears the factual sound in the activity. Thus, he *inevitably* misinterprets the destining characteristic of the Enframing as the Fate and ironically *fulfills* the doom (the loss of autonomy) that he intensely *denies* while he willfully strives to *dismiss* the Fate controlled by the absolute and arbitrary God through *exalting* the new Fate of Technology. At the same time, the shipwreck as the fate of the Pequod is theoretically *doomed* to happen. In chapter 132 "The Symphony," Ahab has been affected by the "lovely aromas in that enchanted air" to reflect on his history of Being: "how for forty years I have fed upon dry salted fare—fit emblem of *the dry nourishment of my soul!*" (MD 405; emphasis added) We find that he has very likely perceived his isolation from Being before the chase. Yet, he immediately resists the voice and insists on the willful goal he sets. Instead of telling more about the leviathan, his monologue unveils the real thing he wants to attack—the "cozening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor" (MD 407) of God. For Ahab, it is such a "nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing" (MD 407) compelling him to abandon "all natural lovings and longings" (MD 407) to protest the injustice of life with willful daring.

Is Ahab, Ahab? *Is it, I, God, or who, that lift this arm?* But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an earned-boy in heaven; nor one single star can resolve, 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.* (MD 407; emphasis added)

We find that Ahab's indulgence in discontents simultaneously erects the position of Man and confines his understanding of Being. "By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in this world, like *yonder windlass*, and *Fate* is the *handspike*" (MD 407; emphasis added). The world is then distinguished by Ahab as a binary antagonism in which the linear mechanism monotonously runs. He totally misrecognizes the essence of Enframing as the challenging claim of Enframing while he misunderstands the destining which waits for listening as the Fate which compels one to obey.

As Heidegger notes, "The threat to man does not come *in the first instance* from the potentially lethal machines and apparatus of technology. *The actual threat has already affected man in his essence.* The rule of Enframing threatens man with the *possibility* that it could be *denied* to him *to enter into a more original revealing* and hence *to experience the call of a more primal truth*" (QT 28; emphasis added). We can say that Ahab's doom is not originally caused by the gallows-like whaling-line. In fact, it is rooted in the sum of his repudiation to clear the site of the Pequod as the challenging claim through thinking.

Chapter Four

Ishmael's Relationship to Enframing as the Emergent Growth

“Ishmael's Salvation in The Rachel's Retracing Research”: The Integral and Flexible Relationship to Enframing

Ishmael's narrative of survival after the shipwreck is the crystallization of his relationship to Enframing. Let me begin from Heidegger,

The word *stellen* [to set upon] in the name *Ge-stell* [Enframing] not only means *challenging*. At the same time it should preserve the suggestion of another *Stellen* from which it stems, namely, that *producing* and *presenting* [*Her- und Dar-stellen*] which, in the sense of *poiēsis*, *lets what presences come forth into unconcealment*. (QT 21; emphasis added)

For Ishmael, he sees the disguise in which the challenging claim is taken for granted as Enframing itself, and he patiently unfolds in his deep reflection mute voice from Enframing. When he endures this and risks the habit of making himself clear-headed on the Pequod, he opens himself up to another ship of hope and salvation, the Rachel. Perhaps, a rescue is not rare in the whaling world, and the narration guarded by the Rachel reveals how things all done in the most primitive manner, demonstrating how the truthful can come into being. As Heidegger has it, “[...] a painstaking effort to think through still more primally what was primally thought is *not the absurd wish to revive what is past*, but rather *the sober readiness to be astounded before the coming of what is early*” (QT 22; emphasis added). Ishmael's sustained preparation of thinking and his open exploration of the meaning of technology brings him the saving power. Through his way of treating specific tools (the line, the waif-pole, the monkey-rope, and the loom), he shows his enduring responses to the call of Enframing, displaying how he gradually gets near to his Being.

The Preparation of Thinking: The Courage of Questioning and the Piety of Truth

Ishmael's open-minded way of thinking and integral understanding of Being profoundly relieve himself. It is unique to find that Ishmael is the pious follower of truth and the courageous pursuer with questioning. In chapter 85 "The Fountain," Ishmael articulates his insight into thinking thus: "*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*" (MD 293; emphasis added). We find that he lets his reflection freely unfold in criticism and intuition. For him, the two are not contradicted each other in the exchange between doubt and intuition. Here, we find that his understanding of Being is more flexible and richer as compared with Ahab's. This can be clearly expressed by his observation on sailing in chapter 23 "The Lee Shore." "With all her might she [the ship] crowds all sail off shore; in so doing, fights 'giants the very winds that fain would blow her *homeward*; seeks all the lashed sea's *landlessness* again; for *refuge*'s sake forlornly rushing into *peril*; her only *friend* her bitter *foe!*" (MD 97; emphasis added). We see that his comprehension of sailing is deeply enlarged into the dynamic struggle between danger and saving power. Metaphorically, the land and the sea are interpreted by him as the border for Being. He sees that the danger is dormant in the withdrawal into the sureness of the comfort to shun the call of thinking. As Heidegger writes, "The *closer* we come to the danger, the more *brightly* do the ways into the saving power begin to shine and the more *questioning* we become" (QT 35; emphasis added), Ishmael's courage to unfold thinking through his continuous questionings lets his understanding of Being reveal in a productive manner.

Criticism on the Anthropological Definition of Technology

More Specify, Ishmael criticizes the instrumental and anthropological definition of technology embraced by Ahab, although he never repels the call of Enframing. On the one hand, he opposes any doctrinal science but never renounces science itself. On the other hand, he disputes the instrumentalized technology and yet he never discards technology per se. His research methodology is a rough projection of the cetological system. From its base, he can freely build up his own space for thinking, instead of ceaselessly piling up loads of formulas and terms to mechanically construct an abstract space for *knowledge*. Furthermore, his chance encounter with the Rachel reveals the possibility that technology can appear in the manner of creative bringing-forth instead of simply regulating challenging-forth. Instead of being the tool to force everything into the standing-reserve, it shows up as the preserver to recollect that which is forgotten through thinking.



To Defy the General Methodized Cetology

In chapter 32 “Cetology,” Ishmael points out the doctrinal tendency of scientific research and declares his own view on scientific exploration. “I promise nothing complete; because any human thing *supposed* to be *complete*, must *for that very reason* infallibly be *faulty*. [...] My object here is simply to *project* the *draught* of a systematization of cetology” (MD 116; emphasis added). Here, Ishmael finds that cetology has fundamentally deviated from truth when the objective of research is set as an all-knowing. Moreover, he clarifies that his motive to detail the classification of whale is to let the structure of *science* expose and to think further within a more restricted framework. In addition, he lets us realize that “however such a *nomenclature* may be *convenient* in *facilitating allusions* to some kind of whales, yet it is *in vain* to attempt a *clear classification* of the Leviathan” (MD 120; emphasis added). Echoing Heidegger, Ishmael discovers the phenomenon in which the more

extensively and effectively the categorical jargon is mobilized by man to categorize whales, the more science is sadly reduced to “a doctrine of man” (AWP 133).

Following his question, “What then remains? Nothing but to take hold of the whales *bodily*, in their entire liberal volume, and *boldly sort* them that way. And this is the *Bibliographical system* here adopted; and it is the only one that can possibly succeed, for it alone is *practicable*. To *proceed*” (MD 120; emphasis added), we find that science has radically turned into a sorting system in which every species is abruptly categorized at man’s disposal. As Heidegger writes, “We first arrive at *science as research* when and only when *truth has been transformed into certainty of representation*” (AWP 127; emphasis added), Ishmael is equally conscious of the absurd situation in which science or truth is judged by scientific research or correctness. Hence, he cannot complete anything in his scientific exploration to reach the rigor of thinking. As Heidegger has proposed, “[...] all the sciences concerned with *life*, must necessarily be *inexact* just in order to remain *rigorous*” (AWP 120; emphasis added).

To Blame on the Exploitation of Nature through Technology

Moreover, Ishmael intensely laments the instrumentalized trend of technological disposal and subscribes instead to the freer way of technological collection. In chapter 58 “Brit,” Ishmael points out that any innovative invention and sophisticated improvement of ship is invalid when it is set as an instrument to dominate the ocean. The mission of seafaring is lost in man’s technological fantasy to conquer everything at once.

[...] however baby man may brag of his science and skill, and however much, 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

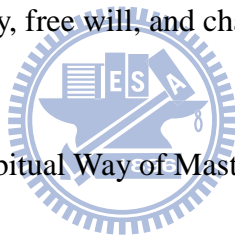
pulverize the stateliest, stiffest frigate he can make; nevertheless, by the continual repetition of these very impressions, man has *lost that sense of the full awfulness of the sea* which *aboriginally* belongs to it. (MD 224; emphasis added)

That is, we find that the sea turns out to be the close-at-hand object for man to overcome while technology is conceived as man's tool to display the will of mastery. Man forgets then the unrestrained power the water way may exert: "Panting and snorting like a mad battle steed that has lost its rider, *the masterless ocean overruns the globe*" (MD 224; emphasis added). Nevertheless, Ishmael's fortuitous experience with the Rachel discloses the potentially free interaction between the whaling ship and the ocean. In "Epilogue," Melville lets Ishmael be saved by this *collective* and *retrospective* vessel: "On the second day, a sail drew near, nearer, and picked me up at last. It was *the devious-cruising Rachel* that in her *retracing search* after her *missing children*, only found another orphan" (MD 427; emphasis added). He is here giving a strong hint allow the free doom through which technology and nature can interact, being that which is oblivious in the journey of life. As Ishmael claims so in chapter 24 "The advocate," "[...] if, at my death, my executors, or more properly my creditors, find any precious MSS. in my desk, then here I prospectively ascribe all the honor and the glory to whaling; for a whale-ship was *my Yale College and my Harvard*" (MD 99; emphasis added). We find that the whale-ship is not just the manipulated apparatus serving for man to dominate nature but the reflective site waiting for the human beings to think of life.

The Enduring Response to Enframing and the Cultivation of the Saving Power

Now, it is crucial to approach how Ishmael approximates his own Being through a deep scrutiny on his response to the call of Enframing. And this can be particularly

sketched by the intercourse between Ishmael and the things around to him. Focusing on the mundane things, we have numerous advantageous points to see how the saving power is *becoming* in Ishmael's durability of thinking and his understanding of Being. We find that the whale-line is recognized by him as the emblem of the challenging Enframing demanding whalemens to put their life in order. Then, the waif-pole serving to differentiate the fast fish from the lose fish is the vivid embodiment of the age of the world picture in which "the world is *conceived* and *grasped* as a picture" (AWP 129). Furthermore, his contemplation on the monkey-rope signals his openness of thinking and oncoming fostering of saving power. Finally, Ishmael's craftsmanlike metaphor of the loom to describe life manifests his interpretation of destining as necessity and opens up his horizon to allow himself to listen to necessity, free will, and chance.



Enframing as "the Line": The Habitual Way of Mastering and the Danger of Complexity

In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael's observation on the whale-line echoes what Heidegger names by the challenging Enframing. In chapter 60 "The Line," Ishmael points out that danger is *dormant* in the sophisticated complexity and the extreme velocity belongs to the whale-line. As Heidegger notes, "Enframing means *the gathering together of that setting-upon* which sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve" (QT 20; emphasis added). We finds that the "sundry mystifications" (MD 228) of the whale line have demanded the whalemens to put every oar in motion and in the position to be mobilized.

Before lowering the boat for the chase, the upper end of the line is taken aft from the tub, and passing round the loggerhead there, is again carried

forward *the entire length of the boat, resting crosswise upon the loom or handle of every man's oar*, so that it jogs against his wrist in rowing; and also *passing between the men*, as they alternately sit at the opposite gunwales, to the leaded chocks or grooves in the extreme pointed prow of the boat, where a wooden pin or skewer the size of a common quill, prevents it from slipping out. (MD 228; emphasis added)

In addition, the whalemens' intricate way to arrange the whale-line throws the whalemens onto the edge of the danger while *sending* them into *the way of ordering* in an extreme momentum.

Perhaps a very little thought will now enable you to account for *those repeated whaling disasters*—some few of which are casually chronicled—of this man or that man *being taken out of the boat by the line, and lost*. For when the line is darting out, to be seated then in the boat, is like being seated in the midst of *the manifold whizzings of a steam-engine in full play*, when every flying beam, and shaft, and wheel, is grazing you. (MD 229; emphasis added)

Nevertheless, Ishmael shrewdly finds that the whalemens' way to interact with the whale-line is precisely the decisive factor in causing disaster. As Heidegger's clarification on the relation between Enframing and the danger goes, "Enframing *comes to presence* as the danger. But does the danger therewith *announce itself* as the danger? *No*" (T 37; emphasis added), Ishmael likewise points out that the ultimate danger is rooted in the seamen's way to deal with the risk. In this chapter, two characteristic models to complete the perilous situation are specifically singled out. First, the sailor's self-persuasive habit with utmost humor is actually an escapist response to the call of Enframing and the desperate abandonment of their life.

Yet habit—strange thing! *What cannot habit accomplish?*—*Gayer sallies,*

more merry mirth, better jokes, and brighter repartees, you never heard over your mahogany, than you will hear over the half-inch white cedar of the whale-boat, when thus hung in hangman's nooses; and, like the six burghers of Calais before King Edward, the six men composing the crew pull into the jaws of death, with a halter around every neck, as you may say. (MD 228-29; emphasis added)

Secondly, the seamen's self-supportive position with persistent will is indeed the escapist response to the call of Enframing and the active execution of their doom.

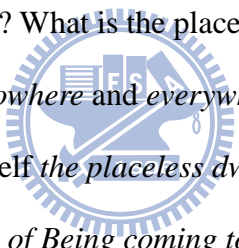
It is worse; for you cannot sit motionless in the heart of these perils, because the boat is rocking like a cradle, and you are pitched one way and the other, without the slightest warning; and only by a certain self-adjusting buoyancy and simultaneousness of volition and action, can you escape being made a Mazeppa of, and run away with where the all-seeing sun himself could never pierce you out. (MD 229; emphasis added)

We find that Ishmael seems to indicate that the crew on the Pequod (represented especially by Stubb) and Captain Ahab's denial of thinking the Enframing has brought them danger. "In whatever way the destining of revealing may hold sway, the unconcealment in which everything that is shows itself at any given time harbors the *danger* that man may *quail* at the unconcealed and may *misinterpret* it" (QT 26; emphasis added). Stubb takes the whale-line as a neutral thing and lets Enframing pass away while Ahab regards the whale-line as the man's position and turn Enframing into an extreme risk.

The World Picture as the Whaling World Ruled by the Principle of "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish": "A" World View—Everything Is Coming to Be Presented!

Distinctly, Ishmael develops his thinking into Enframing when he sees the

danger in its persistency. In chapter 89 “Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish,” he highlights the waif to expose the controversial and wayward law of fishery and brings out a series of questions to the world as the picture in the age of Enframing. Through one debatable suitcase in the whaling world, the overwhelming spirit of representability appears. “Is it not a saying in every one’s mouth, possession is half of the law: that is, *regardless of how the thing came into possession?* But often *possession is the whole of the law* (MD 309; emphasis added).” Under the principle of possession, the process and variation are disregarded and deduced into the represented. Here, Melville foresees the danger of Being as *the world* becomes *the World* in the mid-19th century before Heidegger to witness *the completed World Picture* in the mid-20 century. As Heidegger writes,


 But where is the danger? What is the place for it? Inasmuch as *the danger is Being itself*, it is both *nowhere and everywhere*. It has no place as something other than itself. It is itself *the placeless dwelling place of all presencing*. The danger is *the epoch of Being coming to presence as Enframing*. (T 43; emphasis added)

Thus, when Ishmael further explains that “But if the doctrine of Fast-Fish be *pretty generally applicable, the kindred doctrine of Loose-Fish* is still more widely so. That is *internationally and universally applicable*” (MD 310; emphasis added), it is clear that his target of criticism is never the action to interpret the world as picture, but is more on the position to grasp the World as Picture. The risk has come from the arbitrary classification of things and the radical retreat from Being: “[...] *the truth of Being remains denied as world*” (T 48; emphasis added). As Heidegger says, “‘*Picture*’ here does not mean some imitation, but rather what sounds forth in the colloquial expression, ‘*We get the picture*’ [literally, *we are in the picture*] concerning something. This means *the matter stands before us exactly as it stands with it for us*”

(*AWP* 129; emphasis added), Ishmael's doubt of the history of Western expansionism and his interrogation of the spirit of Western tradition display the subsequent result of "the world conceived and grasped as picture" (*AWP* 129). It is at this juncture that he raises the kernel issue about the possibility of free voice in the age of Enframing.

What was America in 1492 but a Loose-Fish, in which Columbus struck the Spanish standard by way of waiving it for his royal master and mistress? What was Poland to the Czar? What Greece to the Turk? What India to England? What at last will Mexico be to the United States? All Loose-Fish.

What are *the Rights of Man* and *the Liberties of the World* but Loose-Fish? What *all men's minds and opinions* but Loose-Fish? What is *the principle of religious belief in them* but a Loose-Fish? What to *the ostentatious smuggling verbalists* are the thoughts of thinkers but Loose-Fish? And what are you, *reader*, but *a Loose-Fish and a Fast-Fish*, too? (*MD* 310; emphasis added)

In sum, Melville is aware of the biased tendency to interpret the world exclusively from Man's position and to define "the fundamental stance of man in relation to what is" as "a world view" (*AWP* 133). He sees the devastation of the mystery of the world and recognizes the absurdity to put Man before Being. "As soon as *the world becomes picture, the position of man* is conceived as *a world view*" (*AWP* 133-34; emphasis added) and the voice of Being is ignored in the time.

The Question of Justice in "the Monkey-Rope" Condition: Beyond the Self-Will, There is the Truth of Being.

Ishmael experiences a pivotal event before he fosters the observation on the *World*. In chapter 72 "The Monkey-Rope," he expresses the hidden risk in the

situation of the monkey-rope and makes his question of justice to shift from individual will to free insight. At first, Ishmael can hardly accept the fact that he may be stuck in the calamity caused by other's error or mishap. For him, this possibility is harmful to *his* free will and makes him doubt on justice from the perspective of himself being a subject.

So strongly and metaphysically did I conceive of my situation then, that while earnestly watching his [Queequeg's] motions, I seemed distinctly to perceive that my own *individuality* was now emerged 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*. Therefore, I saw that here was *a sort of interregnum in Providence*; for its *even-handed equity* never could have sanctioned *so gross an injustice*. (MD 255; emphasis added)

Nevertheless, he gradually responds to his own Being when he no longer insists on "the question of the certainty of salvation" (WN 90). We find that he is submerged in "the claim of that insight" (T 47) in time as he "renounce[s] human self-will" (T 47) and "project[s] himself toward that insight" (T 47). Consequently, the rich vision of Being appears in his openness into the event. Not only does he see "the hempen bond" (MD 255) between Queequeg and himself but he also does notices "another protection" (MD 256)—Tashtego and Daggoo's spades to drive out the sharks around him.

This procedure of theirs, to be sure, was very *disinterested and benevolent of them*. They meant Queequeg's *best happiness*, I admit; but in *their hasty zeal to befriend him*, and from the circumstance that both he and the sharks were at times half hidden by the blood-mudded water, *those indiscreet spades of theirs would come nearer amputating a leg than a tail*. (MD 256;

emphasis added)

He finds that a good will might also possibly be a fatal act. Their urgent aid to help Queequeg ironically locates him into an extreme peril. For Ishmael, their certainty of other's "best happiness" exposes the nuanced yet distinct gap between justification and the claim to justice—"It *justifies* itself before *the claim to justice* that it itself has posited" (WN 90). They are undoubtful of their reaction in such a haste; however, Ishmael perceives the obscure yet undoubtful habit to justify certainty and correctness in self-will behind their behavior. As Heidegger reminds us, "Proved correct [*richtig*] in this way, it is, as 'rightly deal with' [*recht gefertigt*] and as *at our disposal*, made right, justified [*gerecht-fertigt*]" (WN 89). We find that justice or righteousness is transformed and fixed into a principle of secureness to maintain the Subject. Suddenly, Ishmael understands that his former "[...] question of *the certainty of salvation* is the question of *justification*" (WN 90; emphasis added) and moves forward to the truth of justice (the claim of the insight) in *Being in the whaling world*.

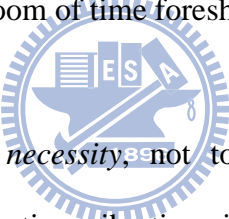
It is undeniable that Ishmael can never foster the safeguarding power of reflection when he only insists on demanding the answer that he must be safe. When he loses his position being a subject, he has allowed the site for the free insight to open:

Well, well, my dear comrade and twin-brother, thought I, as I drew in and then slacked off the rope to every swell of the sea—what matters it, after all? Are you not *the precious image of each and all of us men in this whaling world? That unsounded ocean you gasp in, is Life; those sharks, your foes; those spades, your friends; and what between sharks and spades you are in a sad pickle and peril, poor lad.* (MD 256; emphasis added)

He points out the ambivalent situation in which mortals are less endangered by wild animals in the nature than by human technology disposed by the Subject.

The Destining Character of Enframing as “the Loom”: To Listen to the Voice of Necessity, Free Will, and Chance

Overall, Ishmael’s open and responsive way to the call of Enframing is his safeguarding power against danger—his gradual remembrance of the fall. He patiently listens to the true voice from the correct sound, the habitual understanding of Being. Thus, the characteristic of the Enframing—the destining—is not understood by him as Fate but unexpectedly *fosters* hope (the proximity of Being), which he faithfully *admits* while he enduringly lets himself *move* among necessity, free will, and chance. Simultaneously, the “retracing research” (MD 427) of the Rachel can be the mark of the hope in the age of the Enframing. In chapter 47 “The Mat-Maker,” Ishmael’s early reflection on the loom of time foreshadows the saving power—the life-buoy-of-the-coffin.



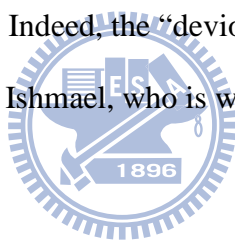
The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate course—its every alternating vibration, indeed, only tending to that; free will still free to ply her shuttle between given threads; and chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of necessity, and side ways in its motions modified by free will, though thus prescribed to by both, chance by turns rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events. (MD 179; emphasis added)

Significantly, his interpretation of the loom sketches out the unique understanding of Being. Similar with Heidegger, the destining is realized by him not in the sense of the Fate; on the contrary, it is approached by him as the necessity to let free will listen and think.

Always the destining of revealing holds complete sway over man. But that destining is never a fate that compels. For man becomes truly free only

insofar as he *belongs to the realm of destining* and so becomes one who *listens and hears* [*Hörender*], and *not* one who is simply constrained to *obey* [*Höriger*]. (*QT* 25; emphasis added)

In sum, both of Melville and Heidegger regard that the voice of freedom can occur only within the universal and overwhelming destining, unfolding an unique and unrestrained process of corresponding. Moreover, the crucial yet obscure distributes of Being—the mystery or the chance—in the event is specifically highlighted by Melville. In the novel, the undefined thing, the life-buoy-of-the-coffin, is embodied into the intricate experience of truth. When Ishmael is continually concerned with the danger and sees “the growth of the saving power” (*QT* 33), he is not “not yet saved” (*QT* 33). However, he is “*summoned to hope* in the growing light of the saving power” (*QT* 33; emphasis added). Indeed, the “devious-cruising” (*MD* 427) Rachel is the symbol of the hope to pick up Ishmael, who is waiting for better way to respond to the age of Enframing.



Chapter Five

Conclusion: The Meaning of the Pequod

From the Pequod to the Deepwater Horizon

A specially outfitted ship [the Deepwater Horizon] ventures into deep ocean waters in search of oil, increasingly difficult to find. Lines of authority aboard the ship become tangled. Ambition outstrips ability. The unpredictable forces of nature rear up, and death and destruction follow in their wake. (Kennedy)

After the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, Melville's *Moby-Dick* looms ghostly as the apocalyptic tale to recount "the worst environmental disaster in the country's history" (Kennedy). "As Andrew Delbanco said, [...] 'It's irresistible to make the analogy between the relentless hunt for whale oil in Melville's day and for petroleum in ours'" (Kennedy). The disaster of oil spill has never left us far from Melville's time. These two extremely similar catastrophes can each represent what Heidegger has expressed as "the danger" in the late modern age, that is, the misunderstanding of Enframing. According to him, human beings' technological understanding of Being to respond to the age of Enframing is completed when entering the late modern age, in which everything including technology, nature, and men can all become the arranged resource and the effective tool to achieve the maximum result. Man's relationship between nature and technology is rigidly reduced in the narrow pattern of cause and effect. From this Heideggerian insight, the danger is not directly related to the nature or the technology. In its root, it is men's mechanical way to interact with the Enframing that has allowed them to thoroughly forget Being.

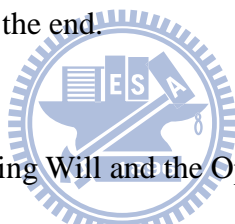
Enframing: Ahab and Ishmael's Different Ways to the Pequod

Overall, the Pequod in *Moby-Dick* not only reveals the failure in responding to the beginning period of Enframing in Melville's time but also hides the hope of the unsaid waiting in us to think the Deepwater Horizon in our time situated in the late stage of Enframing. We see men and things appear in the Enframing pattern, which is not itself their inherent quality. The taken-for-granted mode of spatiotemporal location, energy transformation and preservation, and human resources management are precisely that which was practiced aboard the vessel in the whaling industry. In addition, Captain Ahab's behavior in abusing the sailing instruments and scientific knowledge and his manner to manipulate oratorical skills and expedient tactics are indeed on the way to alienate Being itself from humans, becoming nothing other than the system of ordering. Finally, the two mates' (Starbuck and Stubb) responses to the Enframing led by Ahab on the Pequod, though displayed such distinct manners (the former with a skeptic attitude, the latter with the optimistic reaction) fail, because they cannot persistently think or they reject to reflect on the question or doubt that comes upon them. And this is the point of divergence that Ishmael persists by going his way.

In *Moby-Dick*, there are two different ways to respond to the Pequod as the site of the challenging claim: one is Ahab, the other is Ishmael. We find that Ahab's way to meet Enframing is adhering it and executing it, and this completes the fall of Being. Especially, his denial of thinking and his obsession with power are crystallized by his worship of feeling and his defiance. Within his technological understanding of Being, he allows himself to pursue science and machine to control nature and men in the nihilistic and mechanistic style. Through his demand on his prosthesis and the activity of the doubloon-on-the-mast, we can see his subjectivity is totally overwhelmed by the will to power and his interaction with people is thoroughly operated in the mode of the "standing-reserve." And his comment on the lifebuoy of a coffin and the self-prophecy of the leg afterward illustrates the connection between his rejection of

thinking and his own death.

Indeed, Enframing is undoubtedly treated by Ahab as the fate, yet it is not so for Ishmael. We can see that Ishmael, as the only survivor from the shipwreck in the novel, is thinking and clarifying the challenging claim, and therefore fostering his oncoming of Being. His own distinguished features like the courage of questioning and the piety of truth shape his preparation of thinking and a series of valuable insights of Being. Due to his new understanding of Being, he is open to the mystery of life and takes care of it with patient listening and dynamic utterance. By his observation of the line and his analysis of the waif, we can see his readiness to face the danger of the Enframing and his critique of the arbitrary rule of law. And his reflection on the monkey-rope and the meditation on the mat display the link between his openness to thinking and his own salvation in the end.



The Common Questions Concerning Will and the Opposite Ways of Being

Although Ahab and Ishmael have contrary attitudes towards thinking, they actually face a resembling question about will. This demonstrates that how they think about will plays a crucial role in their opposite ways of Being. In chapter 36 “The Quarter-Deck,” Ahab expresses his discontents about the oppressing environment and his inclination to the will to power: “Talk not to me not of blasphemy, man; *I’d strike the sun if it insulted me*. For could the sun do that, then could I do the other; since there is ever *a sort of fair play* herein, jealousy presiding over all creations. But not my master, man, is even that fair play. *Who’s over me?* Truth hath no confines” (*MD* 140; emphasis added). Here, he yields to the rule of “a sort of fair play” (*MD* 140) and decides to negate truth that is not useful in the world. Later in chapter 37 “Sunset,” he even claims his doctrine of will thus: “What I’ve *dared*, I’ve *willed*; and what I’ve willed, I’ll *do!*” (*MD* 143; emphasis added) We can find that his way of Being is

oversimplified into the linear and setting mode.

Similarly, In chapter 1 “Loomings,” Ishmael articulated the aggressive movement he detects and his melancholy toleration: “[...] everybody else is one way or other served in much the same way—either in a physical or metaphysical point of view, that is; and so *the universal thump is passed round*, and all hands should rub each other’s shoulder-blades, and *be content*” (MD 21; emphasis added). Here, we find that Ishmael never immediately turns to the will to power to face “the universal thump” (MD 140). In his thinking, he understands that it is self-deceit to embrace the absolute doctrine of will and choice.

[...] now that I recall all the circumstances, I think I can see a little into the springs and motives which being cunningly presented to me under various *disguises*, induced me to *set about performing the part I did*, besides cajoling me into the delusion that *it was a choice resulting from my own unbiased freewill and discriminating judgment*. (MD 22; emphasis added)

Due to his honesty to the fact, he later gradually develops his belief in truth. In chapter 79 “The Prairie,” the pronouncement of “*I try all things; I achieve what I can*” (MD 273) is crystallized as his rich and open manner to Being.

The Crucial Events of Responding and the Distinct Outcomes of Being:

The Disposal of Fate or the Fall within the Fall?

In *Moby-Dick*, Melville subtly develops the dialectics between thinking and Being by creating a tight link between the crucial events which Ahab and Ishmael respond to and the decisive consequences of their Being. In chapter 117 “The Whale Watch,” Parsee foretells that Ahab’s death will be followed by two hearses and caused by the hemp: “But I said, old man, that *ere thou couldst die on this voyage*, *two hearses* must verily be seen by thee on the sea; the first *not made by mortal hands*;

and *the visible wood* of the last one must be grown in *America*” (MD 377; emphasis added). At that time, Ahab carelessly negates this prophecy, saying, “Aye, aye! a strange sight that, Parsee:—a hearse and its plumes floating over the ocean with the waves for the ball-bearers. Ha! *Such a sight we shall not soon see*” (MD 377; emphasis added). As for another prediction, he also recklessly dismisses it as being absurd, replying, “The *gallows*, ye mean.—I am *immortal* then, on land and on sea” (MD 377; emphasis added). In the end, he realized what the foretelling actually means as he is actively completing his fate. In chapter 135 “The Chase—Third Day,” he knows that it is the first hearse as he witnesses Parsee’s corpse entwined on the back of Moby Dick by the line, and then, he knows the second hearse as the seamen on the Pequod are shattered by the whale’s attack. Finally, he faces his own fatality of death by the hemp as his neck is caught in the line.

The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward; *with igniting velocity the line ran through the groove;—ran foul*. Ahab stooped to clear it; he did clear it; but *the flying turn caught him round the neck*, and voicelessly as Turkish mutes bowstring their victim, he was shot out of the boat, ere the crew knew he was gone. (MD 426; emphasis added)

Here, the fulfillment of the prophecy does not mean the inevitability of the Fate; on the contrary, it points out Ahab’s fate is executed by his unthinking. His alienation from Being is directly caused by his elusion of thinking in the age of Enframing, instead of the whale, Moby Dick nor the technology, the Pequod.

The Occurrence of Chance or the Power of Thinking?

In chapter 47 “The Mat-Maker,” Ishmael refers to the hope in his meditation on the looming, pointing out that the key element in Being lies in the chance around the necessity and free will: “[...] this savage’s sword, thought I, which thus finally shapes

and fashions both warp and woof; this easy, indifferent sword must be chance—aye, chance, free will, and necessity—no wise incompatible—all interweavingly working together” (*MD* 179; emphasis added). Worthy of notice is the metaphor of Queequeg’s artwork, proved to be the threshold of turning. In “Epilogue,” the lifebuoy of a coffin eventually turns out to be Ishmael’s hope of Being after being in the savage’s coffin, Ahab’s whaling boat, another hearse:

Round and round, then, and ever contracting towards the button-like black bubble at the axis of that *slowly wheeling circle*, like another Ixion I did resolve. Till, gaining *that vital centre*, the black bubble upward burst; and now, liberated by reason of its cunning spring, and, owing to its great buoyancy, rising with *great force*, the *coffin life-buoy* shot lengthwise from the sea, fell over, and floated by my side. (*MD* 427; emphasis added)

Unexpectedly, Ishmael is rescued from the downward force of the swirl by the mysterious force of uprising. Nevertheless, he is not safe enough until he successfully gets on another ship. In chapter 114 “The Gilder,” he expresses his dynamic view on Being and time and concludes with his belief to patiently understand our own Being:

There is *no steady unretracing progress in this life*; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one pause:—through infancy’s unconscious spell, boyhood’s thoughtless faith, adolescence’s doubt (the common doom), then skepticism, then disbelief, resting at last in manhood’s pondering repose of If. But once gone through, we where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more? In what rapt ether sails the world, of which the weariest will never weary? Where is the foundling’s father hidden? *Our souls are like those orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them*: the *secret* of our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to *learn* it. (*MD* 373; emphasis added)

In the chapter “Epilogue,” he is indeed safeguarded by another ship, the Rachel, whose captain is rejected by Ahab to help him to find out his lost son: “It was *the devious-cruising* Rachel, that in her *retracing search* after her missing children, only found *another orphan*” (MD 427; emphasis added). Here, we can say that Ishmael’s salvation is attributed to the chance; yet it is prerequisite that he believes in thinking and practicing it to reply his own question about Being. The buoyancy of the coffin life-buoy is the mixture of the mystery of nature and technology. And the retracing search of the Rachel is the token of human beings’ reflection on and care of Being.

Melville’s Insight for Heidegger and Us: The Mystery of Nature and the Chance of Being

Now, it is time to give Melville a full credit to disclosing the rupture of “technological understanding of Being” prevailing in the late modern age, which is our contemporary time, through his whaling world situated in the early modern age, which was still replete with the aura of mystery about things and the influence over chance to Being. As Ishmael says it in chapter 102 “A Bower in the Arsacides,” to listen to the voices in the movement of the weaver-god is the task of his time and our age:

Oh, busy weaver! unseen weaver!—pause!—*one world!*—whither flows the fabric? What place 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 forth the loom; the fresh-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*. (MD 345; emphasis added)

This passage in *Moby-Dick* can be the crystallization of Melville's insight into the age of Enframing, letting us listen to the context of Being in history instead of only looking on the current trend of Being. The age of Enframing is not terribly dreary or feverishly welcomed as long as we can enduringly think it. If this can be done, the rich understanding of Being will also be unconcealed. Put it more specifically, Melville has left a constellation of tasks for us to think in the age of Enframing. What is thinking? How should we be used to thinking? How do we think? And we must ask these two questions in the modern time. What is education? How do educational institutions teach us to think?

In sum, the meaning of the Pequod is its manifestation of the technological understanding of Being and the crewmen's failed response to the call of Enframing. Nevertheless, it can never be the failure since it lets us see how the way of thinking is crucial to Being. In *Moby-Dick*, the Pequod is the site for the challenging claim, presenting human beings' practices to set things as the resources. Instead of the thing itself, around the ship, nature, animals, and men all tend to be nothing than the parts under an over-reaching system. Although this is achieved by Captain Ahab's abuse of science and technology, and his manipulation of oratory and tactics, two mates' avoidance of the call of thinking is actually the fundamental cause of the disaster. Through Ahab and Ishmael's distinct manners of thinking and contrasting attitudes towards the anthropological definition of technology, we can see how their different responses to the call of Enframing have caused their divergent ways of Being. Ahab's preoccupation with the absolute value of the "self-will" completes the "fate"—as long as the Pequod sinks into the vortex, while Ishmael's acceptance with the "necessity," the "free will," and the "chance," brings out the "destining" that directs him to the Rachel.

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