

HERMAN MELVILLE'S "MOBY-DICK" AND THE ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISTS

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"Moby-Dick" served as a touchstone of literary source and inspiration to the Romantic imagination of Abstract Expressionism.

From the early 1940s into the 1970s there has been appreciable mention in art criticism of relationships between Herman Melville, more specifically, his *Moby-Dick*, and Abstract-Expressionist painting. For example, writing about Jackson Pollock in 1943, Clement Greenberg observed that his paintings have a "muddiness of color... that is the equivalent... of that American chiaroscuro which dominated Melville, Hawthorne, [and] Poe..."¹ In his now famous 1952 essay, "The American Action Painters," Harold Rosenberg claimed, "The American vanguard painter took to the white expanse of the canvas as Melville's Ishmael took to the sea."²

Dore Ashton noted in 1962 that when European critics saw "The New American Painting" exhibition in 1958-59, frequent reference was made to Melville. She wrote, "The critics who turned back to Melville were justified... His wonder and despair of the human condition... [and]... the notion that art is a way of probing for answers to the riddle of the cosmos [is] the view of art that still dominates American painting."³

Brian O'Doherty in 1973 saw a parallel between Jackson Pollock and Ahab: "Ahab's quest for the whale, a multiform symbol whose lineaments remain indistinct, which is sensed rather than perceived, which forces contradictions on us with absolute firmness, can be seen as a model of Pollock's and mod-

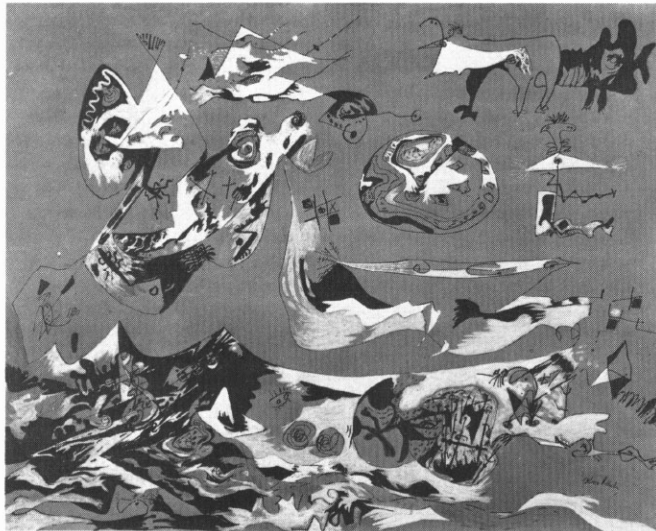


Fig. 3. Jackson Pollock, Blue (Moby Dick), c. 1943. Gouache and ink on composition board, 18 3/4 x 23-7/8". Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, Japan.

ernism's quest for the absolute visual symbol which would summarize knowledge and make the spirit whole."⁴ There was sufficient allusion to Melville for Hilton Kramer to write in 1971: "The art historians who are beginning to sniff out the Tenth Street archives should be warned that not everybody took the references to Melville seriously."⁵ Acknowledging the warning, this essay nevertheless will proceed.

What makes art criticism's *Moby-Dick* connection interesting is a body of work by a number of artists associated with Ab-



Fig. 1. Karl Knaths, Moby Dick, 1935. Oil on canvas, 41 1/2 x 27 1/2". Neuberger Museum, State University of New York, Purchase, New York. Gift of Roy R. Neuberger.

stract Expressionism which is inspired by, named after, or created in homage to Melville's novel. Artists who worked directly with the theme of *Moby-Dick* in the 1940s and '50s include Pollock, Seymour Lipton, Theodore Roszak, Paul Jenkins, William Baziotis, Sam Francis, and Theodoros Stamos. Others are known to have been intrigued with the book.⁶ Monographs on a number of these artists indicate in varying degrees the importance of *Moby-Dick* for their subjects, but they barely mention Melville's novel, if at all, in a larger context. The many scattered references to Melville suggest the need for a study of the Melvillean current in Abstract Expressionism.

Both art and criticism were affected by the Melville revival which began in the 1920s.⁷ Upon publication of *Moby-Dick* in 1851, the book generally received unfavorable notice, and it was forgotten, along with Melville, for some seventy years. However, beginning in the 1920s, articles and books on Melville were published at an increasing rate. It is of some significance that the Melville revival reached a notable plateau in the years 1949 to 1951, at a time when Abstract Expressionism was particularly vital and fully realized. In these years, three major Melville studies were published: Howard P. Vincent's *The Trying-Out of Moby-Dick*, 1949; Newton Arvin's *Herman Melville*, 1950; and Jay Leyda's *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville, 1819-1891*, 1951. Arvin's book, in particular, was widely read in artistic circles according to the artist Fritz Bultman, who recalls that it was referred to as "Moby Dick on the Couch" because of its psychoanalytic overtones.⁸

The first relevant visual document in this discussion is a picture entitled *Moby Dick* painted by Karl Knaths in 1935 (Fig. 1). Knaths used this subject periodically for four decades; a painting entitled *Moby Dick the Third Day* was painted as late as

1970.⁹ Knaths, essentially a Cubist, was one of the older generation of American artists admired by the emerging Abstract Expressionists. One thing he had in common with them, and with American Scene painters and Regionalists as well, was the search for an American identity coupled with a deeply felt chauvinism. Knaths, like several of the Abstract Expressionists, pursued this search in the writings of Melville.¹⁰ In addition, the Abstract Expressionists felt the need to compete with and surpass the Europeans, and as Robert Motherwell remarked to this writer, *Moby-Dick* for his generation was one of the few acceptable legacies of the American past.¹¹

Jackson Pollock's appreciation of *Moby-Dick* is well known. It apparently dates to the 1930s before his relationship with Lee Krasner began in 1941.¹² He is reported to have read *Moby-Dick* many times, and he named one of his dogs Ahab.¹³ It is also well known that *Pasiphaë* (Fig. 2), painted in 1943, was originally en-

titled *Moby Dick*. It was renamed after James Johnson Sweeney told Pollock the legend of the wife of King Minos of Crete.¹⁴ What either title demonstrates is Pollock's fascination with myth, which was shared by most of the young artists of the New York School. In 1943 Gottlieb and Rothko wrote their oft-cited letter to *The New York Times* which referred to mythological themes, the validity of the archaic symbol, and the pursuit of subject matter which is "tragic and timeless."¹⁵ Pollock and others found these elements in *Moby-Dick*.

Melville scholars have demonstrated that the symbolism and references to myth in *Moby-Dick* are prodigious. Literary criticism has interpreted the whale variously as "the symbol of evil, the Energies of Existence, Phallic Being, the Freudian Super-Ego, the Parent, Life itself, and God (as Good, Evil, and Indifferent). . ."¹⁶ For another critic, "the White Whale represents the mythological dragons of both Western and Eastern tradition."¹⁷ Melville's use of classical mythology is generally acknowledged. The myths of Prometheus, Oedipus, and Narcissus figure prominently in *Moby-Dick*, with particular connections between Prometheus and Ahab. One scholar has stated that the "struggle between Osiris and Typhon [Egyptian deities] forms a basic part of the conception of Ahab's struggle with Moby-Dick."¹⁸ Melville was undoubtedly a resourceful myth-user, but in creating the struggle between Ahab and the whale he is just as much a myth-maker, and that mythic struggle became part of the American myth. Or, as Edward F. Edinger has written, "*Moby-Dick* is the first major product of the American imagination to give authentic expression to the mythological depths of the collective American psyche."¹⁹

Myth is central to Jungian psychology, and Pollock's interest in Jung, like his interest in Melville, dates to the 1930s. He appears to have been familiar with the basic writings of the psychologist in translation as early as 1934.²⁰ Subsequently, his periods of analysis with the Jungian therapists Drs. Joseph L. Henderson and Violet Staub de Laszlow between 1939 and 1941 intensified his interest in archetypal symbolism. For eighteen months Pollock and Henderson discussed the symbolism of the "psychoanalytic drawings," which Pollock specifically produced for their sessions. He could not have failed to see Ahab's voyage as a profoundly archetypal quest and *Moby-Dick* as a deeply primordial symbol. Jung, in fact, expressed the convic-

Fig. 4. William Baziotès, *Moby Dick*, 1955. Oil on canvas, 60 x 72". Collection Mr. and Mrs. William A. M. Burden, New York.



Fig. 2. Jackson Pollock, *Pasiphaë*, 1943. Oil on canvas, 56 x 96". Collection Lee Krasner Pollock, New York.

tion in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, published in New York in 1933, that *Moby-Dick* was "the greatest American novel."²¹

Judith Wolfe has pointed out that whether the title of Pollock's painting is *Moby Dick* or *Pasiphaë*, it makes little difference in Jungian terms, because both refer to the obsession of a human being with an animal: Pasiphaë descended into a cave to make love to a bull, Ahab pursued the whale. Since Jung felt that in mythology great animals—for instance, "a whale, wolf or dragon"—represent the unconscious, both titles allude to the striving for union which brings psychic integration.²² "Ahab's mad pursuit of the whale is a kind of primitive, negative dialogue with the Self. His persistence. . . leads him eventually to the corrective experience which teaches the ego, decisively, the difference between it and the Self."²³ This striving, the search for unity with the unconscious Self, and the consequent subordination of the ego, was called by Jung "the process of individuation," and is a central aspect of Pollock's life and work.

Another Pollock work that may be related to Melville is a small gouache and ink picture entitled *Blue (Moby Dick)*, c. 1943 (Fig. 3). According to O'Connor and Thaw, the title was not assigned by the artist, but has become standard through usage.²⁴ Whatever the authority for the title, it seems appropriate to the painting. A small figure with a spear or harpoon may be seen attacking a white whale-like form in the lower-right third of the picture. However, there is a swarm of other signs and symbols as well.

In some ways, Pollock's use of symbolism and his pictorial structures are the visual equivalents of Melville's writing. One Melville scholar has written that Melville's meanings "are not single but multiple; not precisely equatable but ambiguous; not more often reinforcing than contradictory. The symbolism of *Moby-Dick* is not static but in motion."²⁵ Another has observed that the "narrative method found in *Moby-Dick* is the use of a figurative language that within itself is both complex and unresolved."²⁶ Newton Arvin saw Melville's style as having "the capacity to evoke movement, action, and all kinds of kinaesthetic sensations. . ."²⁷ Ultimately, Melville and Pollock both evoke the interminable labyrinth, symbolically and structurally. We can see Pollock, like Ahab, "with charts of all four oceans before him. . . threading a maze of currents and eddies" (Chapter 44). It is not possible to know whether any of Pollock's later paintings were stimulated by *Moby-Dick*, but in view of the Jungian interpretation that "Melville was writing out of the universal archetypal theme of the night sea journey, or descent to the underworld,"²⁸ it is interesting to speculate on such works as *Ocean Grayness* and *The Deep* of 1953.

A painting related to the abstract Surrealist imagery of Pollock's earlier work, although less complex and more poetic, was painted by William Baziotis in 1955 and entitled *Moby Dick* (Fig. 4). Melville's novel would seem to be a perfect vehicle for Baziotis, with his repeated evocations of marine phenomena. The symbolism of *Moby-Dick*, in motion, in water, and endlessly suggestive, had appeal to Baziotis who apparently saw the submarine world as analogous to the unconscious mind or imagination of the artist. Melville was one of the few Americans included in Baziotis' serious reading, which was concentrated in European Symbolist poetry and literature.²⁹ Although most Abstract-Expressionist painting was intentionally vague and evocative, this picture seems to present its subject in a straightforward manner. Or does it?

I believe this painting refers to a specific chapter in *Moby-*

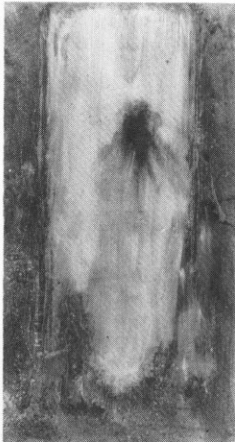


Fig. 8. Paul Jenkins, *Le Poisson Blanc*, 1954. Oil on canvas, 26 x 39". Collection of the artist.

Fig. 7. Paul Jenkins, *Hommage à Melville*, 1953. Tempera on paper mounted on canvas, 46-7/8 x 24-3/8". Collection of the artist.

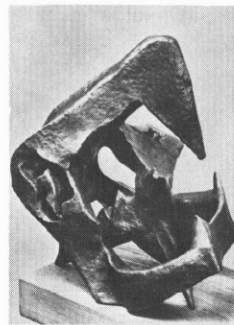


Fig. 5. Seymour Lipton, *Moby Dick #1*, 1946. Lead, 16". Collection of the artist.



Fig. 6. Theodore Roszak, *Whaler of Nantucket*, 1952-53. Steel, 34 1/2 x 45 1/2". Art Institute of Chicago.

Dick, Chapter 55, "Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales." This chapter, and the two that follow—"Of the Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales, and the True Pictures of Whaling Scenes" and "Of Whales in Paint; In Teeth; In Wood; In Sheet Iron; In Stone; In Mountains; In Stars"—have a built-in appeal for artists. In the first of these chapters, Melville recounts the many curious images of whales, referring to the ancient "Hindoos," the Egyptians, Guido Reni, Hogarth, and many others. Some of these images looked like "an anaconda," "an amputated sow," and "a squash." Melville concludes that:

. . . the great Leviathan is that one creature in the world which must remain unpainted to the last. True, one portrait may hit the mark much nearer than another, but none can hit it with any very considerable degree of exactness. So there is no earthly way of finding out precisely what the whale really looks like.

The inference, of course, is that *Moby-Dick*, most of all, can never be known. As we look at Baziotis' painting, we see a creature that resembles a beached seal, not a whale. *Moby-Dick*, a symbol symbolized by the helix, remains an enigma.³⁰

Two sculptors, Seymour Lipton and Theodore Roszak, whose works have correspondences with the vanguard painting of their generation, were inspired by Melville's novel. Lipton made two relevant works in 1946, *Moby Dick #1* (Fig. 5) and *Moby Dick #2*. Lipton, who also was stimulated by myth, wrote:

Moby Dick consumed my interest at the time, but only because it rang bells deep in my being. It was the symbol of destruction and the anti-Platonist conception that evil is at the center of the Universe.³¹

Lipton was intrigued with the violence of the subject, as Pollock seemed to have been. His sculpture is suggestive of gaping jaws and violent dismemberment: "And then it was, that suddenly sweeping his sickle-shaped lower jaw beneath him, *Moby Dick* had reaped away Ahab's leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field" (Chapter 41).

Roszak's *Whaler of Nantucket*, executed in 1952-53 (Fig. 6), suggests the jaws of a huge creature too, but also the prow of a ship. In a talk given at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1955, Roszak described the tremendous impact Melville had on him, and how it is expressed in this work:

. . . I would regard Melville, one of the most richly endowed artists that this country has produced, as one whose meaning for us has not been fully explored. . . not only in terms of American lore, but as one of the few Americans that could assimilate far-reaching influences of ancient and occult origin and weave there [sic] seemingly strange allusions into the fabric of his national experience. . .

In Melville's life, I believe that a crucial moment occurred when he could no longer clearly separate the area of his own pursuit from the enveloping wrath of his protagonist. In his great novel, *Moby Dick*, he traces the invisible lines of this conflict at a point when Ahab and the whale become increasingly indistinguishable, until finally they become one. . .

Perhaps, you can see why I find this particular man of letters and his work related to the problems of the artist today; I became very much interested in the pattern that

to have had special significance for some painters, Newman and Rothko, for example.⁴⁴ Melville's feel for the metaphysics of color, the intertwining of red and white, of mortality and immortality, is one more point of reference with painters of the New York School.

In art criticism, Pollock has been compared to Ahab.⁴⁵ Ahab has been seen to represent the romantic artist.⁴⁶ Abstract-Expressionist painters in general have been compared to Ishmael.⁴⁷ And of Ishmael, a literary scholar has written, "He alone is the artist who dares to make new symbols. . ."⁴⁸ All the comparisons involve the myth of the artist-hero. It is difficult to assess the impact of a book like Newton Arvin's *Herman Melville* or Rosenberg's "The American Action Painters." Rosenberg's statement about "Ishmael [taking] to the sea" is perhaps the single most memorable image in this very influential essay. I am inclined to agree with Brian O'Doherty that "such writing is material, somewhat raw material, for history."⁴⁹ As the myth of the artist-hero associated with Abstract Expressionism grew in the '50s, criticism's acknowledgment of Melville probably had as much influence as the book itself.

The recognition of Melville's great work and the emergence of American expressionist painting and sculpture occurred at the same time. Their impact was experienced in a period aspiring to a truly American art and literature, a yearning which quickly was posited in the new artists and Melville. In both, criticism sensed expressions of an authentic American identity. Comparing Pollock to Dubuffet, Clement Greenberg wrote in 1947, "He is American and rougher and more brutal, he is also completer."⁵⁰ In the same year, in another attempt at defining Pollock's American character, Greenberg observed, "If the aspect of his art is not as originally and uniquely local as that of Graves' and Tobey's, the feeling it contains is perhaps even more radically American."⁵¹ This tone of writing prevailed in discussions of Melville as well. The following comments by Newton Arvin could have been written by Greenberg about Pollock's work:

In form alone *Moby Dick* is unique in its period, and that too in a sense more special than the sense in which every fully achieved work of literature is unique. Such a book could only have been written by an American, and an American of Melville's generation, working as he did in a kind of isolation from the central current of European writing in his time—an isolation quite consistent with his keeping abreast of it intellectually—and while losing something in consequence, gaining something indispensable he could not otherwise have had.⁵²

The search to identify essential elements of the American experience, on the part of criticism and art, compounds the mythologies with which the subjects of Melville and Abstract Expressionism abound.

Melville's *Moby-Dick* and Abstract Expressionism are interwoven in the cultural history of the '40s and '50s. There are a few instances of Melvillean references in later art, for example, a piece called *Ahab* made in 1966 by the sculptor Bernard Rosenthal (Fig. 12). But even here, although the sculpture has the feel of the '60s, Rosenthal's active career goes back to the late '30s and '40s, and he had exhibited in New York in the early '50s with Lipton and Roszak. That was the moment for Melville and Abstract Expressionism, and the relationship now seems almost predestined.

A shorter version of this article was presented as "Melville's *Moby Dick* and the Abstract Expressionist Generation" in the Twentieth-Century Art session of the Annual Meeting of the College Art Association, Washington, D. C., February 1, 1979.

I would like to express my appreciation to Western Carolina University for the support given to me to research this subject.

1. Clement Greenberg, *The Nation*, CLVII, No. 22, November 27, 1943, p. 621; quoted in Francis V. O'Connor, *Jackson Pollock*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1967, p. 31.
2. Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," *Art News*, Vol. 55, No. 5, September 1952, p. 48; quoted in Henry Geldzahler, *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970*, New York, 1969, p. 345.
3. Dore Ashton, *The Unknown Shore: A View of Contemporary Art*, Boston, 1962, pp. 64-65.
4. Brian O'Doherty, *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth*, New York, 1973, p. 105.
5. Hilton Kramer, "Alex Katz" (November 28, 1971), *The Age of the Avant-Garde, An Art Chronicle of 1966-1972*, New York, 1973, p. 464.

6. For example, Robert Motherwell, Philip Guston, and Lee Krasner Pollock, although the latter recently stated that "Billy Budd has always interested me as much as *Moby Dick*."

7. Milton R. Stern, *The Fine Hammered Steel of Herman Melville*, Urbana, 1957, p. 2.

8. Since Greenberg and Rosenberg both came out of literary backgrounds—Greenberg wrote criticism and Rosenberg poetry—it was inevitable that comparisons would be made.

9. Fritz Bultman to the author, January 31, 1978.

10. *Cape Cod as an Art Colony*, Heritage Plantation of Sandwich, Sandwich, Massachusetts, 1977, p. 18.

11. Knaths also used such American subjects as Johnny Appleseed and Babe the Blue Ox (Paul Bunyan).

12. Telephone conversation, October 20, 1978.

13. Francis Valentine O'Connor and Eugene Victor Thaw, *Jackson Pollock, A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings and Other Works*, New Haven and London, 1978, p. 193:IV.

14. B. H. Friedman, *Jackson Pollock, Energy Made Visible*, New York, 1974, p. 91.

15. Bryan Robertson, *Jackson Pollock*, New York, 1960, p. 139.

16. Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko, "Letter to the Editor," *The New York Times*, June 13, 1943, Section 2, p. 9; quoted in John W. McCoubrey, *American Art 1700-1960, Sources and Documents*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965.

17. Martin Leonard Pops, *The Melville Archetype*, Kent, Ohio, 1970, p. 65.

18. Dorothee Finkelstein, *Melville's Orianda*, New Haven, 1961, p. 163.

19. H. Bruce Franklin, *The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology*, Palo Alto, 1963, p. 71.

20. Edward F. Edinger, *Melville's Moby-Dick: A Jungian Commentary*, "An American Nekyia," New York, 1978, p. 21. I am indebted to Francis O'Connor for pointing out the relevance of this book to my subject.

21. Judith Wolfe, "Jungian Aspects of Jackson Pollock's Imagery," *Artforum*, Vol. XI, No. 3, November 1972, p. 65.

22. C. G. Jung, "Psychology and Literature," in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, New York, 1933, p. 154.

23. Wolfe, p. 69.

24. Edinger, p. 143.

25. O'Connor and Thaw, p. 49:IV. Another painting that possibly is related to Melville is *Portrait of H. M.*, c. 1945, School of Art, The University of Iowa, Iowa City. O'Connor and Thaw suggest either Helen Marot or Herbert Matter as the subject of the painting, but Herman Melville is just as likely the reference.

26. Walter E. Bezanson, "Moby-Dick: Work of Art," *Moby-Dick Centennial Essays*, Tyrus Hillway and Luther S. Mansfield, eds., Dallas, 1953, p. 47.

27. James Guetti, *The Limits of Metaphor*, Ithaca, 1967, p. 13.

28. Newton Arvin, *Herman Melville*, New York, 1950, p. 164. O'Doherty, pp. 90, 105, has suggested the similarity between Pollock's paintings and the picture described by Melville in Chapter 3 of *Moby-Dick*, "The Spouter-Inn": ". . . A boggy, soggy, squitchy picture. . . yet was there a sort of indefinite half-attained, unimaginable sublimity. . . Ever and anon a bright, but alas, deceptive idea would dart you through.—It's the Black Sea in a midnight gale.—It's the unnatural combat of the four primal elements.—It's a blasted heath.—It's a Hyperborean winter scene.—It's the breaking-up of the ice-bound stream of Time. . ."

29. Edinger, p. 21.

30. For a discussion of Baziot's literary interests, see Barbara Cavaliere, "An Introduction to the Method of William Baziot's," *Arts Magazine*, Vol. LI, No. 8, April 1977, pp. 124-131, especially p. 131, n. 21. According to Ethel Baziot's, her husband was in the habit of quoting the following line from the first paragraph of Chapter 1 of *Moby-Dick*: "It is a damp, drizzly November in my soul." Baziot's liked November because it is a moody month. I am grateful to Mona Hadler for this information.

31. Baziot's acknowledged his intentionally ambiguous treatment of subject matter in the following statement: "As for the subject matter in my painting, when I am observing something that may be the theme for a painting, it is very often an incidental thing in the background, elusive and unclear. . ." Barbara Cavaliere, "William Baziot's: The Subtlety of Life for the Artist," *William Baziot's: A Retrospective Exhibition*, Newport Harbor Art Museum, 1978, p. 42.

32. Albert Elsen, *Seymour Lipton*, New York, 1974, p. 28.

33. Theodore Roszak, "In Pursuit of an Image," *Time to Time Publications*, Art Institute of Chicago, November 2, 1955, pp. 11-13.

34. H. H. Arnason, *Theodore Roszak*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1956, p. 30.

35. "Black or White, Paintings by European and American Artists," Kootz Gallery, February 28-March 20, 1950. I am indebted to Fritz Bultman for a Xerox copy of this exhibition brochure.

36. Telephone conversation, October 20, 1978.

37. Albert Elsen, *Paul Jenkins*, New York, 1975, p. 58.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Paul Jenkins to the author, March 26, 1979.

40. Telephone conversation, March 14, 1979. In a communication to the author dated April 4, 1979, Jenkins elaborated: "It was my intention to encroach upon the ambiguous image of the whale without its literal supposition getting in the way of the painting. The titles are meant as indirect references to *Moby Dick* without appearing as illustrations for a literary idea. I set out to do the image and then had to discover the ambiguous titles afterward. I had to discover titles which would not get in the way of the fact that they are paintings. Although *Moby Dick* inspired the paintings, I was not trapped in a literary idea. I attempted to be sincere and committed unto my own medium. The idea came first—the titles had to be appropriate for the paintings."

41. Peter Selz, *Sam Francis*, New York, 1974, p. 64.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

44. According to Stamos, the painting is named for the poet Ralph J. Humphrey. This was the only information he supplied when asked through an intermediary (Fritz Bultman) about the painting and Melville.

45. See Diane Waldman, *Mark Rothko, 1903-1970: A Retrospective*, New York, 1978, p. 58.

46. O'Doherty, *op. cit.*

47. Selz, p. 65.

48. Rosenberg, *op. cit.*

49. James Baird, *Ishmael*, Baltimore, 1956, p. 50. Melville, himself, seems to exemplify the romantic artist. After spending eight months on a whaling vessel in 1841, he jumped ship in the Marquesas Islands and then traveled on to Tahiti. Melville found the primitive life that all but vanished fifty years later when Gauguin arrived.

50. O'Doherty, p. 109.

51. *The Nation*, February 1, 1947; quoted in O'Connor, p. 41.

52. *Horizon* (London), October 1947; quoted in O'Connor, *ibid.*

53. Arvin, pp. 151-152. Arvin and Greenberg were writing in an atmosphere which inspired Robert Goldwater's "A Symposium: The State of American Art," *Magazine of Art*, Vol. 42, No. 3, March 1949, pp. 83-102. Among the questions submitted to a group of writers and critics was, "What is being done in the United States today of sufficiently marked character to warrant being called 'American'?" Greenberg was one of the respondents, Arvin was not.