THE JOBAN THEME IN MOBY DICK

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In writing *Moby Dick* Melville alluded to the biblical book of *Job* half a dozen times, and even quoted directly from it on several occasions. Melville's use of *Job* gives rise to the question of whether the quotations were only intended in a superficial manner, such as linking the biblical leviathan with the white whale, or whether they were intended to amplify the central thematic similarity between *Job* and *Moby Dick*. This paper argues the latter thesis by examining the problem and resolution of both works.

Literary criticism on the biblical *Job* and Melville's best known novel is fairly extensive, but its conclusions are less than satisfying. Nathalia Wright argues that Ahab is wrong in attributing positive evil to the whale; instead Ishmael's view, that the universe is inscrutable and merely physical, with no meaning, points to the solution of *Moby Dick*.[1] Other critics, like Lawrence Thompson, in *Melville's Quarrel with God*, have argued that Ahab, not Ishmael, is the character who provides the solution to the questions raised by Melville in the novel. However, in spite of the fact that Thompson catches the spirit of *Job* in his book, he leaves the relation between the biblical book and *Moby Dick* rather sketchy.[2] There is room, it seems, for more suggestions on the Joban theme in Melville's best known novel. One caution needs to be stated at the outset, however, and it is that both *Moby Dick* and *Job* lend themselves to many interpretations. Therefore, this paper might aptly be titled "speculations on a controversial subject": it only attempts to offer a tentative, but hopefully illuminative, exploration of the Joban theme in *Moby Dick*.

In an important article on the biblical *Job* and Melville's most famous novel, C. Hugh Holman traces the influence of biblical sources on the creation of *Moby Dick*. The scholarly consensus is that the Bible far outranked any other works of literature in its influence on Melville, for not only did Melville come from a Dutch Reformed background, but his personal copies of the Bible were heavily annotated, showing frequent usage. Furthermore, the 1850 Bible owned by the New York Public Library has forty-seven verses in *Job* marked,

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[1]Nathalia Wright, "Moby Dick: Jonah's or Job's Whale?" *American Literature*, 37 (May, 1965), 190-195.

[2]Lawrance Thompson, *Melville's Quarrel with God* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952).

most of them dealing with the theme of darkness and suffering.[3] That Melville relied heavily on biblical content, and in particular, on the book of *Job*, for his artistic creations is a thesis which is assumed true throughout this paper.

Once the general influence of *Job* on the writing of *Moby Dick* is established, we must examine the thematic similarity of the two works. We begin with a general problem posed by both Melville's Calvinism and biblical wisdom literature; then we proceed to an interpretation of the specific problem and resolution in *Job* and *Moby Dick*.

We may outline a framework in which Melville's inherited religion and *Job* both fit by glancing at the first three chapters of *Genesis*, where the general problem of wisdom appears. An orthodox Jew and Calvinist would both agree that the central conflict in the Garden of Eden story is between mortals who seek knowledge and a God who sees the aggressive attempt to get wisdom as an encroachment on His territory. The classical word for this sin is pride, the desire to be like gods. Adam and Eve had been given, in the beginning, all that was absolutely necessary for a happy life, including the kind of knowledge which would enable them to cultivate the garden, care for the animals, and subdue the earth. But Adam and Eve had been strictly enjoined not to seek cosmic knowledge—the kind that was associated with immortality and good and evil. This cosmic wisdom often appears in Hebrew literature described in metaphors like walking in the springs of the deep, entering the storehouses of snow, being present when the foundation of the earth was laid. (See, for example, Yahweh's use of wisdom language in *Job* 38). Melville was well aware of the strict injunction in his religious tradition not to seek this kind of knowledge, one of the things the white whale signifies. "To grope down into the bottom of the sea after them; [whales] to have one's hands among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and the very pelvis of the world; this is a fearful thing. What am I [Ishmael] that I should essay to hook the nose of this leviathan! The awful tauntings in Job might well appal me. 'Will he' (the leviathan) 'make a covenant with thee? Behold the hope of him is vain!' "[4] Although Ishmael is probably being sarcastic, the major point, that of the opposition between the searcher after wisdom and the God who guards it, is clear. Yahweh's power and initiative and human power

[3]C. Hugh Holman, "The Reconciliation of Ishmael: *Moby Dick* and the Book of *Job*," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 57 (Autumn, 1958), 479.

[4]Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, ed. Harrison Hayford and Hersel Parker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), p. 118 . Subsequent references will appear in the text.

and initiative are mutually exclusive categories is the lesson in *Genesis*. Therefore, the righteous person, whether a Jew or a Calvinist, is the obedient and submissive one who avoids seeking any knowledge of the roots and springs of the cosmos. Wisdom of the foundations, so to speak, is the Lord's, and He alone knows the way to it.

This basic opposition between the "wise man" and the creator God provides the framework for understanding the question Job raises and the answer he receives. But before discussing the biblical book of *Job*, one must decide what pieces are to be taken as the original or authentic parts, since scholars have long recognized that there are five sections to be considered. These sections are the prologue, (1:1-2:13), the Joban speeches (3:1-31:40), the Elihu discourse, (32:1-37:24), the Yahweh speeches, (38:1-42:6), and the epilogue, (42:7-17). The prologue and epilogue are not usually considered part of the original poem because: 1) the prologue is prose; the Joban speeches are poetry 2) the prose describes an innocent man; in the poetry Job is a doubter and blasphemer 3) the prose uses the word Yahweh to refer to the deity; the poetry uses El, Shaddai, etc., but never the frequent Hebrew name of Yahweh 4) the prose shows a detached, philosophical Job; the poetry has a passionate questioner 5) the prose is written in classical Hebrew; the poetry is full of foreign phrases. Hence, for our purposes, two of the sections in *Job* may be considered irrelevant to the authentic book.[5]

A third section, the Elihu discourse, may also be left out of the present discussion, as it too is considered an interpolation by most critics. The Joban speeches proper never mention Elihu, nor do the prologue and epilogue. An early reader or scribe may be responsible for these Elihu chapters.

We are left, finally, to examine the Joban poetry and the Yahweh speeches in hopes of finding Job's problem and the answer given to him. In the first parts of the dialogue beweeen the poet and his friends, Job asks questions which relate to his suffering and therefore to the issue of divine justice. Later on, though, the scope of the questions is broadened to include the universal human condition and the character of the universe. In other words, Job in the later chapters wants to know where the meaning of existence lies.

In chapter six, which comes near the beginning of the dialogue, the poet is concerned only with his own history and with how the forces of the universe have treated him. He asserts positively that he

[5]The division of Job into five parts and the reasons for dissociating the prologue from *Job* proper may be found in many standard summaries, such as Samuel Terrien, "The Book of Job," *The Interpreter's Bible*, III, ed. George A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon, 1954), 885-887.

is guilty of no evil: "Is there any wrong on my tongue? Cannot my taste discern calamity?" he asks rhetorically in 6:30.[6] 'For I have not denied the words of the Holy One" (v. 10). Even though he is sure of his innocence, he is aware of the psychological traps when one's own taste or judgment is doing the evaluating. Hence, in a later chapter, he calls upon the earth and nature to witness for him and to "cover not his blood" if he is innocent (16:18). Since God does not end his life, or declare his innocence, He is unjust, Job implies. If Job is guilty, he wishes to be killed; but if not guilty, he wants Yahweh to stop hanging him over the pit. The question in the early chapters revolves around the suffering of the innocent, and God appears to be unjust insofar as He refuses Job the peace of death and makes his life a torment.

In the later chapters of the poetic discourse Job stretches his personal case to include all humanity, and the scope of the questions moves from innocent suffering to the broad one of the rationale for why things happen in the world. In other words, Job raises the issue behind wisdom literature: is it wrong for a human being to attempt to understand the roots and springs of existence, the very causes for events? In chapter 14 the poet begins to make broad comments on the nature of human life. People, he argues, are creatures of radical temporality and finitude. "Man that is born of a woman is of a few days, and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower, and withers; he flees like a shadow, and continues not" (14:1-2). God governs the universe by laws known only to Himself, and when He does interfere with man's lot, it is only to make him worse off. "Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with thee, and thou hast appointed his bounds that he may not pass, look away from him, and desist, that he may enjoy, like a hireling, his day" (14:5-6). God could at least leave humans alone, the poet says, since when He does act in human lives, the end result is disastrous. Job's sufferings are not extraordinary, given the lot of man and the nature of the cosmos. His case is representative of the way the world works.

The tension and accusations in the Joban speeches gradually rise to the climax, when the poet's major preoccupation with the meaning of events becomes clear. Job uses the question of divine justice and suffering as an instrument to approach his primary wish to know, or as he expresses it, to see God. Only when the deity makes His reasons known will the poet be satisfied. He wants to hale God into court in order to argue with Him: "But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue my case with God" (13:3). Again, "Oh, that I knew

[6]Biblical quoations are from the *Revised Standard Version.*

where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!" (23:3). "I would learn what he would answer me, and understand what he would say to me. . . . There an upright man could reason with him, and I should be acquitted for ever by my judge" (vss. 5.7). Job wants nothing less than a principle, a law, an understanding, by which even the Almighty is bound in His relations with humans. Only then could the two adversaries reason with each other. In wisdom language, the poet is demanding insight into the well-springs of existence.

Small wonder, then, that Job's friends see his assertions and interrogations as blasphemy. They, not Job, are in accord with the orthodoxy which sees the acquisition of divine wisdom as the primal sin. Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Knowledge in the attempt to become as gods. To Yahweh alone belongs all wisdom (see the poem in *Job* 28) and to the degree man tries to penetrate the veil of holy mystery, he is transgressing. For the three friends the beginning of wisdom was "the fear of the Lord." This thinking translates into something like "kill your intellect, simply have faith." But Job was asserting his human right to seek understanding, although in terms of orthodoxy he was setting himself up against Yahweh. The categories of human initiative and divine initiative were mutually exclusive in the traditional religious interpretation. God asked Job: "Will you condemn me that you may be justified?" (40:8). This question goes to the heart of the matter: either human rights are asserted or humanity suspends its judgments and capabilities in the face of the Almighty.

We summarize Job's assumptions about the nature of the cosmos and his small part in it before going on to examine Ahab and his world. The poet lived in an absurd universe: there was no root by which it became intelligible. "But when I looked for good, evil came; and when I waited for light, darkness came" (30:26). Secondly, he is positive that he has committed no crime: his sixteen oaths of clearance (chapter 31) end with the defiant exclamation, "Here is my signature! [literally, "X"] Let the Almighty answer me!" (31:35). Thirdly, Job is certain that God is powerful and mysterious, as evidenced in the workings of His creation. Also, although Job wants meaning, he refuses to accept the easy answers of the philosophers "who bring their god in their hand" (12:6), or the simplistic cause and effect solutions of the three friends. Lastly, Job cannot see how the God behind all is ethically good. In fact, when God interferes, it is only to tangle men up and cause misery. "How long wilt thou not look away from me, nor let me alone until I swallow my spittle?" (7:19). God is not only the principle behind the cosmos, supplying the world's order and pur-

pose; but He is the active agent, carrying out His designs Himself (16:12).

Leaving Job behind for the time being, let us move to Ahab. Who is he; what does he represent; and what is wrong with his world? He, like Job, becomes a paradigm of the human condition. In describing the Pequod as a small universe made up of sailors from all over the earth, Melville makes the ship into a microcosm of the world. Ahab as its captain is not different in kind but only in degree from the rest of mankind. Ahab, then, provides a magnified case of the reality that is man, and in examining him and his world, we can draw conclusions as to the character of existence in general.

First of all, to be human is to search endlessly for knowledge and meaning, Melville implies in the contrast between landlessness and the shore. The shore is associated with security, unchanging truths and peace, while the sea is associated with tumult, change, and battles with big fishes. Water has a strange attraction, Ishmael muses in "Loomings," because in it we see the image of ourselves, and we plunge into the water in an attempt at self-understanding. The self-image is also "the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all" (*MD*, p. 14). For Melville the deciphering of the mystery and ambiguity of the sea would yield the clue to the deciphering of the individual, and hence the humans who seek to live life to the fullest must seek the meaning wrapped up in the oceans.

Ahab is one of the decisive individuals who, although drawn to the land by a young wife and child, breaks away from the shore and must sail in the waters of the unknown. He is not content to be the dull, ordinary landlubber even if his search may be taboo. To change the metaphor, "there is a Catskill eagle in some souls that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces. And even if he forever flies within the gorge, that gorge is in the mountains; so that even in his lowest swoop the mountain eagle is still higher than other birds upon the plain, even though they soar" (*MD*, p. 355). Ahab is the eagle who is not content with the wisdom of the people on the plains; he wants the exhilaration of high altitudes and soaring. And one can only understand if he dares to wade into the tumult of life and grasp the "ungraspable phantom." "Only in the heart of quickest perils; only when within the eddyings of his angry flukes; only on the profound unbounded sea, can the fully invested whale be truly and livingly found out" (MD, p. 378). To discover one's fullest potential and to find self-understanding, one must go to sea; and Ahab is no exception to the rule, but rather a magnified example of the will-to-know.

A corollary of this assumption that life at sea is fuller and more satisfying than life on land is the assumption that aggressive determination is better than speculation and quiet contemplation. Only in *doing* we discover ourselves, Melville seems to be saying. And doing requires acts of will. (The emphasis on will and doing are both Jewish and Calvinist.) Thus, the resolute, fiery personality is the admirable one, the one which suggests that to be human is to be active and aggressive. "For I believe that much of a man's character will be found betokened in his backbone. I would rather feel your spine than your skull, whoever you are" (*MD,* p. 294). Although these words are in Ishmael's mouth, Ahab is without a doubt the man with willpower and backbone. And it seems a fair judgment to make that Melville used Ahab not as a pointed lesson of sin and its consequences, but as an example of an admirable human being who chose the best alternative, defiance, given the kind of stage humans are forced to play on. In a well-known letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, April? 16?, 1851, Melville remarks:

> We think that into no recorded mind has the intense feeling of the visable truth ever entered more deeply than into this man's. By visable truth, we mean the apprehension of the absolute condition of present things as they strike the eye of the man who fears them not, though they do their worst to him,—the man who, like Russia or the British Empire, declares himself a sovereign nature (in himself) amid the powers of heaven, hell, and earth. He may perish; but so long as he exists he insists upon treating with all Powers upon an equal basis. If any of those other Powers choose to withhold certain secrets, let them; that does not impair my sovereignty in myself; that does not make me tributary.[7]

To search through the sea for the whale was Ahab's monomaniac purpose: it consumed his soul so that he looked like a man cut away from the stake. Job, too, was in the same nearly consumed condition, wanting to fathom mysteries which no human had attempted before, at least as recorded in Hebrew literature. Job wanted to see God; Ahab wanted to bring the whale into his hands. But in both the Jewish and Calvinist understandings of the universe, the daring human who pursued these mysteries was trespassing on divine territory. Ahab and Job were asserting their natural right to know, to receive answers, and when they were close to the Unknowable,

[7]*The Letters of Herman Melville,* ed. Merrell R. Davis and William H. Gilman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), pp. 124-125.

they became even more determined and insistent. When lightning strikes the ship's conducting rods, Ahab confronts the forces of nature with: "I own thy speechless, placeless power; said I not so? Nor was it wrung from me; nor do I now drop these links. Thou canst blind; but I can then grope. Thou canst consume; but I can then be ashes. Take the homage of these poor eyes, and shutter-hands. I would not take it. The lightning flashes through my skull; mine eye-balls ache and ache; my whole beaten brain seems as beheaded, and rolling on some stunning ground. Oh, oh! Yet blindfold, yet will I talk to thee" (*MD*, p. 417). He continues the speech with the supernatural force by saying that he came from fire and spirit and he is proud of his genealogy. He was made to be a fire-spirit, and he wants to be united with the source of this divine power: "I leap with thee; I burn with thee; would fain be welded with thee; defyingly I worship thee!" (*MD*, p. 417).

The thrust of Ahab's speech above is much the same as Job's last words in chapter 31. Job has cleared himself of sin after sin, and if he is guilty of anything, it is wanting to see his Creator. Even though the Deity holds him over the pit by a thread, he will not keep quiet until he knows the rationale behind events. His complaints cannot be ignored until he is dead because as long as he is living, he will raise the taboo questions of existence. "Yet blindfold, yet will I talk to thee," as Ahab puts the matter.

Now the problem of wanting cosmic knowledge is that all wisdom like this is God's, and He has made it inaccessible. The orthodox response, the one the "orchard thieves" should have made in the face of mystery, would be to bend the knee in awe and reverence before the face of the Almighty. But Job and Ahab are not satisfied with the frustration of being created with ideas of eternity in their minds, and then being told to live on the plains of life.

Job does receive an answer to his passionate questioning, and it is much the same answer that Ahab gets. Both want to tear aside the veil of the mysterious, and both are pointedly told, one by words and one by deeds, that they are to cease and desist from asking. In chapter 38 Yahweh appears out of the whirlwind to announce in a series of ironic passages that He is not necessarily good, but that He is powerful.[8] He begins by making Job look ridiculously small, thus dispensing of any need to consider seriously Job's belief that he has a human right to know why events happen. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? . . . surely you know," He asks sarcastically

[8]The interpretation of the Yahweh speeches and Job's last words as irony comes from an unpublished paper by John Priest, Professor of Religion, Florida State University.

(38:4-5). Again, He sneeringly asks Job if he was the master workman (divine wisdom) at the creation (38:16), or if he is Primeval Man (38:21). Of course, Job has had no such pretensions—he has only demanded wisdom.

God continues by recounting His works of creation, wanting to know if Job thinks he can fathom the secret by which the heavens were ordained, the pattern by which they were established (38:33). He then reels off some of the animals and forces which are under His control, and they are, for example, lions (38:39-40), wild asses (39:5-8), who know no bounds, the ostrich (39:13-18), who "deals cruelly with her young, as if they were not hers," the warhorse, who "swallows the ground" with fierceness and rage (39:24), and the bird of prey whose "young ones suck up blood; and where the slain are, there is he" (39:30). The phrases in the last sentence echo what Job has accused God of: brutal use of force with no apparent moral law behind it. And God is answering by bragging on His power?

Yahweh continues in such a way as to turn Himself into that force (Rahab, the incarnation of chaos) which thwarts man's efforts and shatters the world he builds for himself. God says, "Behold, Behemoth, which I made as I made you" (40:15); "he is the first of the works of God" (40:19). That is, Leviathan, who represents the demonic antithesis of order, was made even prior to man, a point which indicates something about the character of the God who made him. The whale must be of primal importance to Yahweh, since he was the first of His works. Also, one remembers that in other passages in Hebrew scriptures (eg. *Proverbs* 8:22-32) divine wisdom (signifying pattern, orderliness, comprehensibility) was the first of the created works. Why is another being substituted here, except to turn the conception of God as full of steadfast love and justice upside down? Yahweh is not finished with Rahab, either, because in 41:7-8 He taunts Job with his powerlessness in the face of the monster. "Can you fill his skin with harpoons, or his head with fishing spears? Lay hands on him; think of the battle; you will not do it again!" God appears as the divine despot here, flaunting His unpredictibility and lawlessness in Job's face.

Assuming that the Yahweh speeches are ironic, one comes to the conclusion that Job can do nothing other than maintain his own humanity, assert his integrity, and live life on his own terms even if the universe in which he lives is an absurd one. It is absurd because it is rationally incomprehensible. It is also absurd because God gives men minds to search out meanings from the bits and pieces of experience, glimpses of the unknown infinite, and then God takes any

attempt on man's part to reduce the mystery to terms which are intelligible (as in a court of law) to him as a direct attack on His prerogatives. Wisdom belongs to Yahweh alone, and He imparts only enough to lead men to give up their searching and yield to worship of Him. This surrender of human rights was impossible for Job. The alternatives were: either kill the intellect and have faith, or insist upon using one's capacities to deal with a world which does not work on man's scale of values.

Job apparently chose the latter alternative. His speech in 42:1-6 is ironic, I think, because it is inconceivable that the Yahweh discourse could have won him over. That kind of God no one could love or trust, much less a man who, when cut to only a scarecrow, still demanded that God meet him in court and still was certain that the wrong was not on his side. Job had accused God of working in such hidden ways that He seemed malicious, and the Yahweh speeches merely reinforce the accusation. They utterly ignored Job's request for meaning and explanation. Job says, "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes." He had only guessed at God's character heretofore, but now he has been granted an appearance, and the brute power elicits only bitter sarcasm. God has intentionally linked Himself with demonic forces, and when Job finally recognizes the fact, he says bitterly that he gives up his former request, negates what he has stood for in the pasts speeches, and falls down in adoration? All is irony in 42:1-6.

The solution to the authentic book of *Job,* then, is quite similar to that of Moby Dick, for in both the defiant, unshattered hero faces a world which has been set up with inherent contradictions, contradictions which ultimately kill. God has put eternity in men's minds, and then He punishes the person who reaches out to grasp it. Both Job and Ahab know in the end that they *must* take destiny into their own hands because no loving God will take care of them. The world is full of pitfalls, and the person who is ignorant, careless, or indecisive will be eliminated from the game. Job's eyes have been opened and he chooses himself; he decides to steer clear of the God who interferes in human history only for dark, bloody purposes. He asserts his own integrity to the end, and he will live life on his own terms even if they do not measure up to what he thinks the terms ought to be. Yet Job does not commit suicide in his misery—he lives in spite of the contradictions in existence. Ahab, too, clearly sees the options and chooses himself defiantly: " 'Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I

stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins and all hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! *Thus,* I give up the spear!'" (*MD,* p. 468).

In conclusion, the similarities between Job and Ahab are more basic than are the differences. It seems to me that Melville and the writer of *Job* are creating characters which reveal solutions to fundamentally the same problem, that of human meanings in a universe of mystery and contradiction. Assuming, on the basis of scholarly opinion, that *Job* was written in the post-exilic period, probably in the mid-sixth century B. C., the author of *Job* must have been trying to decipher what could be known of a God who had become utterly transcendent and remote. Hebrew trandition had by this time affirmed an Absolute with certain definite characteristics, such as oneness, redemptive purposefulness, and goodness. But the circumstances of the Exile raised fundamental questions as to the nature of God. Was He unable to help the Hebrews? Did He no longer care? And if He was truly absent from the universe as post-exilic theology made Him, what could man know of Him? Quite obviously, some philosophers said, the lesson of the Exile was that man alone is responsible for taking care of himself.

Melville, too, lived in a period when one world-view was disintegrating and another had not yet replaced it. There were no Absolutes in the same way there had been in the past; there were only historically qualified answers. In Ahab Melville suggested one way out of the dilemma of existence: try to wrest meaning from the Unbounded or die heroically in the attempt.

Given the interpretation of Job and Moby Dick set out in this paper, the two seem basically alike. However, at least one difference is significant. Ahab insists on attacking the whale; he could not leave Leviathan alone as Job did. Perhaps because Ahab reflects a nineteenth-century America, he had to take direct action. Americans of the period seemed to believe in progress and manifest destiny based on aggressive human action. They mythologized the sturdy, individualistic men who opened the West and conquered the unknown. Progress comes only when the obstacle (frontier, hostile Indians, etc.) is removed, and no one removes it but man himself. Ahab claimed that his soul was grooved so that he could do no other than throw himself against the whale.

Job, on the other hand, had no notion of progress in history. He comes face to face with the demonic, utters a cryptic comment, and

underneath the obvious words makes a pact with himself. He did not find it necessary to contest the closed doors; he chose to live with the situation. One may argue that the form of the literary works, that one is poetic questioning and one is exciting, active odyssey, makes Job less aggressive than Ahab. However, the forms were chosen on the prior understanding of what the world was like. To have Job hurl himself at Leviathan would have accomplished nothing for the Oriental because there was nothing better in the future. But for Ahab the unknown called for direct assault because things get better if men act decisively to remove any obstacles.

Fundamentally, though, Job and Ahab were alike. They both lived in a world in which old understandings no longer fitted the circumstances. When God's integrity and human integrity were seen as mutually exclusive categories, as they were in the Hebraism Job inherited and the Calvinism Melville got through his mother's influence, Melville and Job opted for maintaining the dignity and capability of man. He can and must be responsible for choosing his own meanings and working out his own destiny, even in the face of the god's anger.