Penetration

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Recommended Citation
Close, Jennifer (1994) "Penetration," The Promethean: Vol. 3 : Iss. 1 , Article 27.
Available at: http://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean/vol3/iss1/27

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Penetration

Peaceful waters lie still but
Anger subsists submerged just
Beneath the surface.
Meaning is absent.

Searching is frustration
And in the end the swells of horrid truths
Break deliberately on the shore and
Dissipate—only to regenerate—
Into unrelenting waves of monstrosity.

Naughty boys in New York pools get
Break deliberately on the shore and
Kinetic dancing lures their killer...

In a gulp to large to comprehend!

Dissipate—only to regenerate—
Anger subsists submerged just
Pierce

But millions of krill are gone
But peaceful waters lie still.

Jennifer Close

High Myth &
The Failed Hero in
Melville's Benito Cereno

by Randy Bush

Author's note: For those not immediately familiar with this wonderfully dark Melville piece (as I was not before last year) here's a little map: Amasa Delano is a Spanish American ship's captain who finds a seemingly derelict vessel and, discovering life, goes aboard to offer help. The story, based on an actual account of a bloody slave revolt aboard a ship, is one of incredible tension and dread as the surviving crew members attempt to signal help while under the scrutiny of their African "masters." Don Benito Cereno, captain before the rebellion, is now a pawn of the slaves' diabolical leader, Babo.

Let me say, immediately, that my purpose herein is neither to address racial motifs nor to argue the point of Babo's being in command or Benito Cereno's being, like Bartleby, unable to face a real presence of evil. Any Melville bibliography will yield a half-dozen or so pieces that deal with either theme. And nearly every article or anthology I've found has examined resemblances between Don Benito and Charles V and between the "black friars" of the San Dominick and the real Dominican black friars of the Inquisition. I will argue that to approach Benito Cereno as an example of "high" myth (or myth that draws upon universal archetypes), to take another look at it from, say, a "Campbellian" angle, is at least as important as its more common interpretations. For this reason, then, while I applaud the relevance of studying Melville's many allusions to his "crucifixion" and "resurrection" on the ship's "beak," Lord Babo holds power over both body and soul [163-169]. After Aranda's skeleton had been riveted to the bow, according to the negroes, "the negro Babo was he who traced the inscription of "star wars" emperor. He is no play-actor but is the god of the Pit.

Barbara Baines would agree. She presents Babo as a demonic mastermind whose ultimate work of vengeance is to trick the whites into sharing a perverse "eucharist" in which they partake of the secretly prepared flesh of Aranda, one of Benito Cereno's officers, before his "crucifixion" and "resurrection" on the ship's "beak." Lord Babo holds power over both body and soul [163-169]. After Aranda's skeleton had been riveted to the bow, according to the negroes, "the negro Babo was he who traced the inscription below it...the negro Babo was the plotter from first to last; he ordered every murder, and was the master and keel of the revolt" [Melville 2518].

We need not reach far to envision him as Monster of the Pit and as Lord of Dread. Babo is no prank-playing Trickster but is the epitome of evil. He is more the Satan of the Bible or Tolkien's barely mentionable Lord of Darkness than he is...