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ISRAEL POTTER: MELVILLE'S ANTI-HISTORY

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For reasons easy enough to discover, *Israel Potter: His Fifty Years of Exile* is one of the most thoroughly overlooked full-length works by any major writer of the last two centuries. Herman Melville himself insisted that there would be "very little reflective writing" in *Israel Potter,* certainly "nothing weighty;"[1] the simplicity of the plot and apparent transparency of its meaning seem to leave the enterprising critic little to do; and, most important, the text is highly derivative, drawing, as Melville concedes in his dedication, "almost as in a reprint" on Henry Trumbull's earlier *Life and Remarkable Adventures of Israel R. Potter.* Generally critics have treated *Israel Potter,* Melville's only novel written expressly for serialized publication in a magazine, as a work written quickly and largely for profit after the popular disaster of *Pierre,* at best an improved version and at worst a mere reiteration of an earlier, obscure narrative.

While *Israel Potter* clearly is among neither the most ambitious nor the most successfully realized of Melville's novels, it is nonetheless considerably more sophisticated and more typical of its mature author than is often imagined. The period of its composition, characterized by such works as *Pierre,* "Bartleby the Scrivener," and *The Confidence Man,* was for Melville a time of fairly consistent ironic commentary and formal experimentation during which everything written is—like the Confidence Man himself—more than it merely *appears* to be. So too is *Israel Potter.* Melville's elaborate insistence on the lack of artistic originality in the book, on its debased status as a mere "reprint," along with what Michael Kammen describes as the "sarcastic" tone of the entire narrative,[2] should in truth suggest that yet another sleight-of-hand is being attempted. *Israel Potter* may begin by retelling Trumbull's anecdotal biography, but it ends, much more interestingly, by both assuming a place in and parodying one of the central traditions of nineteenth-century literature, the tradition of historical fiction, or more generally, imaginative history. Melville's novel about his country's rebellion against Britain is itself a wry rebellion against the confident, largely conservative beliefs of British historical literature.

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In the decade before *Israel Potter* was initially conceived in 1849, Charles Dickens published *Barnaby Rudge,* Thomas Carlyle *Past and Present,* Charlotte Bronte *Shirley,* and minor novelists like Harrison Ainsworth, G. P. R. James, and Bulwer Lytton a flood of mediocre historical romances; the years between the conception of the novel and its appearance in *Putnam's Magazine* in 1854 saw most notably the publication of William Thackeray's *Henry Esmond* and John Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*; in the subsequent ten years Dickens published *A Tale of Two Cities,* George Eliot *Romola,* Charles Reade the immensely popular *Cloister and the Hearth.* At no time before or since has the desire to recreate the past in imaginative literature of all kinds been more powerful or widespread. And, at least among the more important writers, this desire produced a collection of works remarkably consistent in vision, form, and purpose. George Eliot, defining in the 1870s what she calls "historic imagination," articulates in advanced but characteristic terms the conception of the ideal historical narrative:

> The exercise of a veracious imagination in historical picturing seems to be capable of a development that might help the judgement greatly with regard to present and future events. By veracious imagination, I mean the working out in detail of the various steps by which a political or social change was reached, using all extant evidence and supplying deficiencies by careful analogical creation. How triumphant opinions originally spread—how institutions arose—what were the conditions of great inventions, discoveries, or theoretic conceptions—what circumstances affecting individual lots are attendant on the decay of long-established systems,—all these grand elements of history require the illumination of special imaginative treatment.[3]

The phrase "veracious imagination" and the union of "extant evidence" and "analogical creation" suggest that historical writing should be neither completely factual nor completely imaginary but somehow should combine concrete facts with the artist's shaping vision. These facts should range in scale from the most mundane—"circumstances affecting individual lots"—to the most extraordinary—"the conditions of great inventions, discoveries, or theoretic conceptions"—bringing together in historical writing a rigorous particularity and an awareness of the grand or exceptional. The imaginative historian should concentrate on what Eliot elsewhere calls "pregnant" moments,[4] moments of "political or social change" or conflict that give rise to subsequent ideas, systems, and occurrences. History, finally, should draw from the past some moral, psychological, or spiritual meaning that transcends the specific historical moment and therefore may "help the judgement greatly with regard to present and future events." In terms sometimes strikingly similar, Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens, Browning, and others had during the previous four decades defined the aims of their historical recreations.

Since there is evidence that Melville had read Sir Walter Scott, James Fenimore Cooper, Carlyle, Dickens, and Thackeray by the time he wrote *Israel Potter,*[5] it seems reasonable to assume that he was at least roughly familiar with the tradition of imaginative history and that, on some level, he was reacting to that tradition in writing his own explicitly historical narrative. That his reaction should be critical and parodic is not surprising. The central assumption of most nineteenth-century imaginative historians is that the past can be reliably "read," at least by the inspired artist, and made to yield eventually some ahistorical meaning that applies with special force to the present and future. The ending of "Bartleby" alone—"Upon what basis it rested, I could never ascertain; . . . how true it is I cannot now tell"—reveals that reading the past is at best an uncertain and at worst a reductive and misleading enterprise. His mature work, perhaps the most deliberately deceptive of the age, together embodies the belief that truth and meaning are elusive, not easily derived from evidence of any kind, and liable to be missed by even the most careful observer. Melville would not be sympathetic to Carlyle's confident assertion that history is "the true Fountain of Knowledge; by whose light alone . . . can the Present and future be interpreted. . . ."[6] This is precisely the kind of interpretive assurance that *Israel Potter* is designed to frustrate.

The most influential British writers of imaginative history, particularly Scott, Carlyle, Ruskin, and Dickens, share a number of further assumptions likely to seem unacceptable to Melville. Their work, despite occasional revolutionary leanings, is fundamentally conservative, concerned with preserving the values while avoiding the errors of the past; as an American, and as the author of a novel about rebellion, Melville naturally looks to previous generations with neither the nostalgia of Scott nor the overt adoration of Carlyle and Ruskin. Because historical novelists like Scott and Dickens, moreover, hold firmly to a belief in the possibility of progress, the inevitability of just resolutions, and the gradual improvement of individual lots, the historical trajectory in *Waverley* or *A Tale of Two Cities* is decidedly upward. Melville reveals no such belief, at least in *Israel Potter.* As Alexander Keyssar points out, "the most fundamental truth of the book . . . is the perception that the common man's expectations of happiness are rarely, if ever, fulfilled,"[7] and it ends not with the usual conciliations and improvements but with the protagonist "repulsed in efforts" and "faded out of memory." Perhaps most important, the British writers describe a world in which individuals in the past, and by implication those in the present, can beneficially or adversely affect the course of events; without such faith, the writing of instructive history would be fruitless. Melville, by contrast, "contented himself with portraying a world in which men who act and men who are

acted upon are equally liable to frustration and defeat,"[8] and would thus have been unlikely to find much purpose in the exhortations and moral lessons of conventional historical literature, or to write such literature without attempting to undermine conventional wisdom.

The success of *Israel Potter*, as of all parodies, depends first on the establishment of clear similarities to the form being subverted. This seems partially to account for Melville's insistence on the almost criminally derivative character of a work that in fact represents an imaginative combination of material drawn from a wide variety of historical and documentary sources. As Roger McCutcheon has shown, *Israel Potter* is "not derivative at all. . . . Melville's additions make up roughly about two-thirds of the book;"[9] Alan Lebowitz, minimizing the reliance on Trumbull even further, insists that the last three-quarters of the novel are "almost entirely Melville's own invention."[10] Information and impressions were drawn from Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography,* Ethan Allen's *Narrative,* Cooper's *History of the Navy of the United States of America,* and Robert Sands' *Life and Correspondence of John Paul Jones,* and the final, melancholy episodes of the story seem wholly Melville's own. *Israel Potter* is no less "imaginative" than many carefully researched historical novels or than Robert Browning's *Ring and the Book,* which draws its plot and characters from a seventeenth-century Florentine manuscript.

Clearly Melville goes out of his way to over-emphasize his own lack of originality. That he was "by nature self-deprecatory concerning his art"[11] and that he had been wounded by the poor reception of earlier works are by themselves insufficient explanations for such an over-emphasis, since no similar disclaimers are published along with other productions of the same period. More convincing is the argument that Melville, in typical fashion, was mimicking and carrying to an ultimate extreme the tendency of many historical novelists to insist on the authenticity and factual foundation of their narratives. Scott begins *The Heart of Mid-lothian,* as he does many of his novels, not with the tale itself but with a framing episode designed to give a sense of the age and actuality of the story. Dickens claims in the 1849 Preface to *Barnaby Rudge* that many of his details "have their foundation in Truth, and not in the Author's fancy," that many of his facts "were stated, exactly as they are stated here, in the House of Commons." [12] *Henry Esmond* opens with a preface supposedly written by the fictional hero's daughter. And *Israel Potter,* in a dedication addressed to "His Highness the Bunker-Hill Monument" and signed by "The Editor," is said to preserve, with only "a change in the grammatical person" (p. vii), the protagonist's autobiographical story. Melville's fakery has been taken more seriously than Scott's or Thackeray's because he is a more ingenious counterfeiter, be-

cause he is humbly apologetic rather than defensive, but when seen in the context of other works of historical fiction it appears equally transparent. The assumption of "The Editor" that "the merit of the story must be in its general fidelity to the main drift of the original narrative" (p. viii) both echoes and ironically criticizes the judgment implied by this tradition of fictional pretense. If the value of a novel is proportionate to its historicity, Melville will present the most valuable novel possible, "a reprint."

Melville again follows tradition to a point in his inclusion of both the "circumstances affecting individual lots" and the pivotal moments and grand characters of history. Potter's life, generally that of the anonymous commoner, manages to include as well participation in the Battle of Bunker Hill and the seafight between the *Bon Homme Richard* and the *Serapis,* and coincidental encounters with Benjamin Franklin, John Paul Jones, King George III, and Ethan Allen. There is something comic in this fortuitous series of historically meaningful experiences, as if Melville were deliberately exaggerating the propensity of the traditional hero of historical fiction to be a perfectly placed eavesdropper and eyewitness. There is something comic too in Melville's handling of the usual counterpoint between common circumstances and climactic events. The fictional pattern established by Scott and adopted by Dickens and Thackeray calls for an extended, rather slow build-up to a dramatic event like the Battle of Bothwell Bridge or the Gordian Riots which is ultimately presented as an elaborate narrative set-piece. Melville's build-ups, suitably leisurely and meticulous, end each time in a frustrating anti-climax, in a refusal to satisfy the reader's desire to participate vicariously in history (comparable to the refusals in "Bartleby" and *The Confidence Man* to explain the mysteries of behavior). After introducing the skirmish at Bunker Hill, the narrator casually assumes that "everyone knows all about the battle. Suffice it that Israel was one of those marksmen whom Putnam harangued as touching the enemy's eyes" (p. 13). "And now," he notes later, "we might shortly have to record our adventurer's part in the famous engagement off the coast of Coromandel, between Admiral Suffren's fleet and the English squadron, were it not that fate snatched him on the threshold of events" (p. 84). Even the extended description of the confrontation with the *Serapis* is curiously devoid of detail: "Elsewhere than here the reader must go who seeks an elaborate version of the fight, or, indeed, much of any regular account of it whatever. The writer is but brought to mention the battle, because he must needs follow, in all events, the fortunes of the humble adventurer whose life he records" (pp. 120–21). Again and again, the conventional pattern is begun but, with a disingenuous apology, left incomplete.

Israel Potter's historical giants suggest a similar attempt to under-

mine ordinary expectations. The idea of earthly destiny as partially or even largely shaped by what Carlyle calls "the great men who have worked here"[13] dominates English historical literature during the first half of the nineteenth century. "A man of ability, infinite talent, courage, and so forth;"[14] Carlyle's description of Cromwell might serve as well for Scott's Duke of Argyle, Thackeray's Marlborough, Eliot's Savonarola. Even morally dubious figures like Dickens' Lord George Gordon are given a stature, almost a radiance, befitting one of the leads in a national or international drama. Melville, by contrast, "perceived hero worship as counter to the American grain."[15] Though his Benjamin Franklin is introduced with all the fanfare of a Carlylean hero—"It seems as if supernatural lore must needs pertain to this gravely ruddy personage. . . . Old age seemed nowise to have dulled him" (p. 39)—the impression is almost immediately undercut: "But when Israel stepped within the chamber, he lost the complete effect of all this; for the sage's back, not his face, was turned to him" (p. 39). Franklin turns out to be sly, intelligent, witty, ridiculous, and generally no more supernatural than one's eccentric and entertaining uncle. John Paul Jones, "a rather small, elastic, swarthy man, with an aspect as of a disinherited Indian Chief in European clothes" (p. 56), enters the novel in chase of a coquettish chambermaid; George III, "the magnanimous lion" (p. 31), speaks with the repetitive childishness of a cartoon character. These mythic shapers of Carlyle's "Universal History" are described with sarcastic reverence by the narrator but are in actuality as frail and as subject to external control as anyone else and seem only by chance to have been placed at the center of memorable events. Paul Jones is not more capable than Israel Potter but more fortunate: "The cruise made loud fame for Paul, especially at the court of France, whose king sent Paul a sword and medal. But poor Israel, who also had conquered a craft, and all unaided too—what had he?" (p. 113).

Like many prototypical historical novels, *Israel Potter* focuses primarily on the causes and effects of revolutionary conflict, and like those novels too it embodies that conflict in the personal struggles of its protagonist. One of the more striking consistencies among the works of Scott and his successors is the reliance on a hero whose life, as Avrom Fleishman notes, "is shaped by world-historical figures and other influences in a way that epitomizes the processes of change going forward in the society as a whole."[16] Particularly in the opening chapters of the novel, Melville underscores Potter's role as representative early American ("farmer, hunter, trapper, clearer-of-the-wilderness, surveyor and peddlar,"[17]) example of "that fearless self-reliance and independence which conducted our forefathers to national freedom" (p. 9). " 'Are all your countrymen like you?' " asks an English knight, " 'if so, it's no use

fighting them'" (p. 26). The moral and emotional ambiguities of the revolution, pitting the colonies against nurturing motherland and tyrannizing oppressor, are acted out in the personal adventures of one man, who during the course of his life serves on both sides and never seems wholeheartedly committed to either. His Biblical name further directs attention to his blatantly archetypal status.

But again Melville subtly complicates what begins as a relatively conventional portrayal. Though the Waverley-like heroes of historical fiction are commonly vapid, Potter manages to carry the ordinary vapidity to an extraordinary extreme. In his own story he is a passive, almost invisible figure, controlled less by his own will than by the inclinations of others and the most random combinations of circumstances.[18] The fortunes of this mythic American, this example of "fearless self-reliance and independence," are for the most part "comically pathetic."[19] Each time a new character appears in the novel, moreover, he seems to seize from Potter the title of "representative man." Franklin, "Jack of all trades, master of each and mastered by none," is "the type and genius of his land" (p. 48); "civilized in externals but a savage at heart, America is," one is told, "the Paul Jones of nations" (p. 120); the "western spirit" of Ethan Allen is "(for no other is, or can be) the true American one" (p. 149). There exists, it seems, not one embodiment of America but a virtual club, each of whose members is radically different from the others. Rather than failing, as Harry Henderson suggests, to be "altogether consistent or clear,"[20] Melville once more appears to be parodying the simplifying vision of most historical fiction, questioning the belief that there ever can be a single "type" that defines a complex era or diverse culture just as he regularly questions the belief that there is a "truth" or "essence" to which any complicated individual or situation can be reduced.

Melville's most interesting response to tradition in *Israel Potter* may be on the thematic level, where he amplifies and subtly alters two of the classic themes of British historical fiction. "Essentially," writes Steven Marcus, "*Barnaby Rudge* contemplates only one kind of personal relation—that of father and son."[21] With some qualification, the same might be said of *Waverley, Old Mortality, Henry Esmond,* and even *Past and Present,* where relations between sons and actual or surrogate fathers dramatize—sometimes metaphorically, sometimes literally—social, political, and psychological conflict. The Oedipal struggle between father and son neatly mirrors the ambivalence of the revolutionary confrontations usually at the heart of the historical novel, so that, in the classic example, Edward Waverley's rebellion against England becomes as well a rebellion against his guardian and the pressure of family honor. As one would expect in largely conservative texts, the rebellion against paternal authority is rarely absolute. Rather than separating himself en-

tirely from fathers or rulers, the protagonist sifts through a group of more or less adequate mentors before arriving at a state of acceptable subservience. The conciliatory endings of Dickens and Scott call for the establishment of social and familial order headed by figures of beneficent power, even if those figures are themselves former rebels.

Charles Watson has argued in detail that the impulse to escape from the restrictions of paternal authority is the "central psychological theme" of *Israel Potter*.[22] Very early in the novel, in a passage without analogue in Trumbull, one is told that "ere, on just principles throwing off the yoke of his king, Israel, on equally excusable grounds, emancipated himself from his sire" (p. 7) and is thus able to make the connection between paternal and governmental power. Israel deems "his father's conduct unreasonable and oppressive" (p. 7), imagines it as a form of "tyranny" (p. 8), and escapes. Like the hero of conventional historical fiction, he then begins a search for a parental surrogate, considering, as Watson notes, "country gentlemen, statesmen, officers, kings and governments" and existing "in a state of uneasy tension between submission and rebellion,"[23] between a hunger for a source of love and protection and a yearning for individual freedom. But here as elsewhere Melville is substantially more radical and pessimistic than his predecessors. For Israel there is no discovery of ideal authority, only a series of disappointments culminating in his rejection by the fatherland for whose existence he fought. By each surrogate he is in turn embraced, used, and ultimately abandoned. At the close of the novel, when an old and forgotten Israel is addressed as "father" by a stranger, he responds to the word itself with ironic bitterness:

> " 'Father!' here," raking with his staff, "*my* father would sit, and here, my mother, and here I, little infant, would totter between, even as now, once again, on the very same spot, but in the unroofed air, I do. The ends meet. Plough away, friend" (p. 169).

In traditional fashion he returns at the end to his place of beginning, but, most untraditionally, he returns burdened by the recognition that his original lost father has never been satisfactorily replaced. The fate of this particular Everyman suggests that, in Melville's view, people are all condemned in one way or another to eventual isolation and disappointment.

The struggle against isolation becomes a struggle to escape literal and figurative imprisonment in many classic historical novels, where the prison serves as a resonant image and the tension between imprisonment and the desire for freedom as an organizing theme. The prison, as Foucault has pointed out, became during the nineteenth century an image of peculiar force and visibility,[24] and not surprisingly it stands in many of the major novels of the time as an embodiment of economic entrapment, psychological repression, and oppressive social control. For historical

novelists, concerned with the pull between historical inevitablity and the potential for even one person to shift the current of events, prisons and prison-breaks were especially suggestive. The action in both *Barnaby Rudge* and *A Tale of Two Cities*, for instance, builds to an explosive prison revolt, during which desperate individuals battle against a maelstrom that seems irresistible and without controlling principle. Inevitably, however, the violence subsides, order is restored, and the worthy and unworthy take their appropriate places on either side of the prison wall. If one's historical existence is potentially imprisoning, there at least exists—not in every case, and not always fairly—the possibility for escape and for a measure of personal freedom: Carton dies, but Darnay survives and prospers.

Though there is no actual Newgate or Bastille in *Israel Potter*, literal and symbolic imprisonment are implied on virtually every page. " 'Somehow,' " Israel laments fairly early in his adventures, " 'I'm bound to be a prisoner, one way or another' " (p. 52). He is "driven from hole to hole like a fox in the woods" (p. 29) by soldiers, farmers, patrons of inns. He is placed in irons aboard an English frigate, locked by Franklin in a French hotel room, and, most dramatically, secreted in a coffin-like closet originally designed to punish inmates of a religious retreat:

> The customs of the order ordained, that when any inmate should be first incarcerated in the wall, he should be committed to it in the presence of all the brethren; the chief reading the burial service as the live body was sepulchred. Sometimes several weeks elapsed ere the disentombment. The penitent being then usually found numb and congealed in all his extremities, like one newly stricken with paralysis (p. 71).

This moment of absolute paralysis—reminiscent of Bartleby's death in the Tombs—defines Israel's status as "Melville's extreme version of imprisoned man"[25] and demonstrates, again, Melville's relentless tendency to darken the vision of the traditional historical novel. The struggle between imprisoning circumstances and the desire for freedom is in *Israel Potter* overwhelmingly one-sided. Against the powerful forces dictating the direction of his life, Israel's weak attempts to assert his will have virtually no chance to succeed. Each leap for freedom, as momentarily exhilarating as Don Benito's spasmodic leap into Delano's lifeboat, proves only an entry into a worse state of imprisonment, and the final "escape" from England back to the American homeland proves the darkest disappointment of all. For Scott and Dickens the avoidance of historical inevitability, the determination of one's own fate, is difficult but possible; for Melville, in this novel, it is unimaginable.

The focus on isolation and imprisonment helps explain the decidedly unpatriotic tone of a novel ostensibly about an unsung hero of the American Revolution. From the sarcastic dedication to the bleak finish,

Israel Potter is clearly a harsh "parody of patriotism,"[26] not because Melville finds the goals of the Revolution wrong, but because he finds them naive, unobtainable, and, by mid-century, forgotten. By the time America is called, in the novel's penultimate chapter, "the fortunate Isles of the Free" (p. 166), the epithet can only be understood ironically because Israel's story has demonstrated that for several reasons the common American is neither more fortunate nor essentially more free than the common European. First, the differences in the novel between independence and subservience are less national or political than economic. Israel has more in common with the poor English farmers and sailors he encounters than with renowned Americans like Franklin or Jones. Second, the passage of time tends relentlessly to frustrate and erase from memory even the most admirable of ambitions, so that Israel returns in 1826 to an America already indifferent to his Revolutionary exploits. Finally, the most profound level of imprisonment in the novel results from each character's existence as a discrete, individually isolated human being and cannot be overcome by a shift in government or political allegiance. Because there can be no successful revolution against the nature of humanity, Americans should not congratulate themselves too smugly on their elect, uniquely privileged status.

In the end, despite the authorial disclaimers, it does not seem difficult to discover something "weighty" in *Israel Potter* or to place the novel in the context of Melville's other contemporaneous works. Like *Pierre* it parodies and criticizes an established mode of thought; like *The Confidence Man* it is deliberately deceptive and centered about a chameleon-like protagonist; like "Bartleby" it bemoans the inescapably tragic fate of humanity. What is difficult is locating, in this supposed entertainment, any source of positive value. Israel is a Confidence Man whose changes in identity are dictated by others, a Bartleby without even a well-meaning lawyer to mourn his fate. If one recalls that he was created at a time when Melville was being forced by "universal castigation"[27] to redirect his artistic impulses, was hiding behind the disguise of anonymity in magazines, and was failing to publish or even complete two proposed novels, one must be tempted to understand him on some level as a bitter authorial self-portrait. And in this light Melville's dismissals of *Israel Potter* need to be re-seen. The novel may well have been too revealing rather than too derivative, too dark rather than too frivolous, to be acknowledged by its author as a production distinctly his own.

Notes

[1]Quoted in Walter E. Bezanson, "Historical Note," in *Israel Potter: His Fifty Years of Exile*, by Herman Melville (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press and The Newberry Library, 1982), p. 182. Subsequent references to this edition of *Israel Potter* will be given in parentheses in the text.

[2]Michael Kammen, *A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), p. 224.

[3]George Eliot, "Historic Imagination," in *Essays of George Eliot*, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963), p. 446.

[4]Eliot, p. 447.

[5]See Harry B. Henderson, III, *Versions of the Past: The Historical Imagination in American Fiction* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), p. 146; Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), p. 275; Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *Melville's Reading: A Check-List of Books Owned and Borrowed* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1966), p. 9.

[6]Thomas Carlyle, "On History," in *Selected Essays* (New York: Dutton, 1972), p. 85.

[7]Alexander Keyssar, *Melville's Israel Potter: Reflections on the American Dream* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969), p. 47.

[8]Edward H. Rosenberry, *Melville* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 108.

[9]Roger P. McCutcheon, "The Technique of Melville's *Israel Potter*," *SAQ*, 27 (1928), 163.

[10]Alan Lebowitz, *Progress into Silence: A Study of Melville's Heroes* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1970), p. 174.

[11]Thomas C. Carlson, "The Twin Parables of Melville's *Israel Potter*," *ATQ*, 41 (1979), 90.

[12]Charles Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge* (New York: Penguin, 1973), p. 41.

[13]Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 1.

[14]Carlyle, *Heroes*, p. 208.

[15]Hennig Cohen, "*Israel Potter*: Common Man As Hero," in *A Companion to Melville Studies*, ed. John Bryant (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 282. Cohen also notes that Melville borrowed a copy of Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship* in the summer of 1850 (see p. 282).

[16]Avrom Fleishman, *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1971), p. 11.

[17]Henderson, p. 139.

[18]Cohen points out that Potter is "seldom in control of his destiny. He wanders through the landscape, not changing it, but adapting to it" (p. 305). Rarely, I would add, with much practical success.

[19]Edgar A. Dryden, *Melville's Thematics of Form: The Great Art of Telling the Truth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1968), p. 146.

[20]Henderson, p. 147.

[21]Steven Marcus, *Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), p. 184.

[22]Charles N. Watson, Jr., "Melville's *Israel Potter*: Fathers and Sons," *SNNTS*, 7 (1975), 563.

[23]Watson, p. 563.

[24]See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977), pp. 231–33.

[25]Lebowitz, p. 182.

[26]Kammen, p. 224.

[27]Bezanson, p. 178.