Waiting for the Impossible Messiah: Melville's *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities*

SASAKI Eitetsu

"Save me, Pierre—love me, own me, brother; I am thy sister!"

"Oh, my brother, my dear, dear Pierre,—help me, fly to me; see, I perish without thee;—pity, pity,—here I freeze in the wide, wide world."

Introduction
I. Hegelian Master-Slave Dialectics and Foucauldian Knowledge
II. A Different Power Dynamism
III. A Different Mimicry
IV. The Triangle of Desire
V. Socio-Historical and Biographical Background
   A. Melville's Own Sibling Problem
   B. Melville's Messianic Expections
Conclusion

Introduction

In reading of *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (1852), the fiction written by Herman Melville (1819–91) one year after the publication of *Moby-Dick,* we are

Keywords: Nathaniel Hawthorne, René Girard, The Triangle of Desire, Mimetic Sibling Rivalry, Messiah

— 53 —

embarrassed by the implied narrator's depiction of Lucy, the **ex-fiancée** of the protagonist Pierre. Lucy suddenly intrudes upon Pierre and Isabel in the penultimate section of the story, virtually forcing Isabel, Pierre's elder illegitimate half-sister, back to her inferior status. Lucy thus becomes superior to Isabel, but her victory, if it can be called as such, is short lasting.

Isabel proposes to Pierre, "See, I will sell this hair; have these teeth pulled out; but some way I will earn money for thee!" (333)[1]. Through her proposal, and by boldly flaunting her jealousy-madness, she forces upon Lucy the realization that Isabel, in her link to Pierre by marriage, is superior to Lucy, in her link to him as a cousin:

> Isabel had backward glided close to the connecting door; which, at the instant of his embrace, suddenly opened, as by its own volition.
>
> Before the eyes of seated Lucy, Pierre and Isabel stood locked; Pierre's lips upon her cheek. (334)

My interest is not limited to the sudden transposition of the superior-inferior status in the portrayal of Lucy or the apparently stereotypical portrayals of both women, Lucy and Isabel. Rather, I am attracted, with some embarrassment, to the fatal drama that Isabel, Lucy, and the three Pierre Glendinnings are thrown into the hierarchy-upheaval drama where the inferior defeats the superior.

This drama appears to be brought about by an unsettled power dynamism that totally engulfs these two women, a dynamism from which Pierre cannot escape. Mindful of this dynamism or not, Melville activates the peculiar power dynamism by constellating the three characters, Isabel, Lucy, and Pierre, in

such volatile circumstances. Throughout most of the story Isabel succeeds in keeping Lucy out of the private affectionate area Isabel shares with Pierre as his sister and wife. In the penultimate section, however, Lucy momentarily takes the upper hand. These configurations are indeed disruptive.

What is the author's (un)conscious message in leaving the power position of these three main figures volatile? What is his aim in disrupting the narrative lines with (an) embarrassingly awkward constellation(s)? If Melville's awkwardness in adding this almost final touch to the story is analogous to a Freudian slip of the tongue, and Freud is correct in contending that a slip of the tongue reveals the speaker's true colors, and the Deconstructionist critics are correct in discerning what the author hides as something uncomfortable and embarrassing coming out from a fissure in the text, this is an issue worth investigating. In this paper I would like to accomplish two things: first, to expose the inconsistent character figuration, disruptive narrative deployment, and unstable superior-inferior power relationship in *Pierre*, and second, to clarify Melville's hidden, probably urgent but simultaneously incontrollable need for this apparently awkward writing.

To begin, let us check how Lucy's character has been interpreted. Pierre's mother, Mary Glendinning, misunderstands the multifaceted and delusional Lucy: she "could not but perceive, that even in Lucy's womanly maturity, Lucy would still be a child to her" (59). It might be useful, in briefly reviewing some of the prior research, to recognize how Lucy has been (mis)understood. Feminist criticism would be a touchstone for the analysis of Lucy. A feminist analysis, if done well, could furnish us with clues for interpreting this apparently untidy drama. Let us take, for instance, the comments on Lucy by the feminist critic Joyce W. Warren: "Lucy is frozen in girlhood," and, "Lucy's

agonizing experience after Pierre's desertion effects no maturation but only marbleizes her in her maidenhood" (121). A similarly specious but erroneous type of analysis is repeatedly applied to Isabel. More often than not, Isabel has been traditionally categorized as the sexually perverted "Dark Lady." The "Dark Lady" in the American literary context corresponds to the *femme fatale* in the *fin de siècle* European context (Dijkstra). Both women, American or European, destroy men and sometimes victimize innocent girls, or "Fair Virgin[s]," as Leslie Fiedler describe them in *Love and Death in the American Novel*. One cause for this misreading may stem from the gender-wise stereo-typical mode of interpretation that dazzles even the feminist critics. In short, feminist criticism neglects to elucidate the repeated reversal of the superior-inferior relationship.

My discussion and analysis in this paper will proceed in the following steps. First, I will review how the superior-inferior power relationship or Hegelian master-slave mechanism works in the mind of Babo, the ringleader of the slave uprising in "Benito Cereno" (1855). The Hegelian master-slave (superior-inferior) theory properly explains why the black slave upheaval in "Benito Cereno" succeeds to a certain extent but fails in the end. I will therefore consider whether the Hegelian theory also applies to the problem of the disturbing character (mis)arrangement in *Pierre*. Next, I will attempt to clarify this problem by referring to the mechanism of mimetic sibling rivalry, or what the anthropologist René Girard characterizes as the Triangle of Desire. In the final stage of analysis, I will reconsider the significance of the repeated sibling conflicts, together with Melville's biographical facts, especially with regard to his relationships with his elder brother and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Ultimately, I will conclude that Melville must have been waiting in vain for the Messiah,

a force capable of ending the futile mimetic sibling conflict.

I. Hegelian Master-Slave Dialectics and Foucauldian Knowledge

When Pierre unilaterally annuls his engagement with Lucy, the daughter of a wealthy family, Lucy becomes inferior to Isabel, who gains superiority by drawing closer to Pierre. This conversely implies that Isabel, social outcast though she may have been, succeeds in manipulating Pierre into ousting Lucy. Unlike Pierre or Lucy, Isabel is a fatherless illegitimate child—unpropertied, ridiculed or otherwise ignored, olive-colored and black-haired, racially ambiguous, socially marginalized, and worse still, abused and expelled as a slut by the landlady (Pierre's domineering mother Mary). Isabel can naturally be expected to hold irrepressible resentment against those who are favored, i. e., her own sibling Pierre as well as Lucy. While Isabel becomes superior to Lucy and Pierre through her manipulation, is her resilient political will comparable to the black slave Babo's? For the moment we may tentatively assume that it probably is, given the slave Babo appears to represent the same thing to his master Cereno and the American Captain Delano that Isabel represents to Pierre and Lucy.

The unstable relationship between the superior and inferior in "Benito Cereno" reminds us of the master-slave (controlling-controlled/free-unfree) dialectic theory, the theory in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* formulated by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). Let us review what Hegel explains. The master seems to have established the status of self-government, or self-reliance, to borrow the motto of Emerson, and secured his own prerogative rights. The master, however, stays in a mere nominal position of

masterdom, virtually dependent on the slaves for their (apparently) devoted care. The slaves, meanwhile, can substantially reverse the hierarchy and perform as virtual masters. If only the slaves could see this mechanism and self-consciously dedicate themselves to the service of their master, they could paradoxically place themselves in a position higher than their master's. In "Benito Cereno," Melville equips Babo the ringleader of the slave uprising with a political awareness of this Hegelian mechanism.

The Hegelian master-slave dialectics seems to be closely relevant to Foucauldian knowledge. The master-slave or superior-inferior issue is remarkably political, and this political facet is directly linked to knowledge/information management. This implies, according to Michel Foucault, that the knowing agent (knowledge formulator/possessor/circulator) is equivalent to the power wielder. This equivalence is confirmed when we see Babo misusing Foucauldian knowledge while changing the power relation between the master and the slave.

Thanks to their Foucauldian knowledge, the black slaves (the inferior) can turn the table on the superior (the Spanish slave ship captain Benito Cereno and his crew) by leaving the American sealer captain Amasa Delano (equivalent to the master) ignorant of the slave uprising, and thus destroying Cereno's chance for rescue by Delano. The uprising ringleader Babo prevents his Spanish master Benito Cereno from sharing the knowledge or fact of the slave uprising with the American captain. Babo retains power by entirely controlling the circulation of knowledge.

If we take Hegel's master-slave dialectics at face value, we might expect that even slaves could create a state of equal, albeit ironic, inter-subjectivity as a prerequisite for a democratic society. Melville, however, seems as-

tute enough to perceive that the (ex-)slaves' newly acquired master position is neither stable nor guaranteed, but likely to be wrested back by their (ex-)master, their current inferior. The author remembers to stress what Hegel fails to detect: the chain of violence or the inescapable continuation of the master-slave dialectic movement. Aware of the futility of Hegelian master-slave dialectics in realizing a color-blind democracy, Melville exposes the falsehood in what seems to be freedom, independence, and autonomy. Ultimately, Babo is captured and "dragged to the gibbet at the tail of a mule" (116). Melville is too realistic and too pessimistic about the post-slavery society to believe in democracy.

What about Isabel in *Pierre*? Perhaps Isabel is the omniscient being because only Isabel knows what Pierre's/Isabel's father was like before he married Pierre's mother. The driving force of the story or the force Isabel wields over Pierre and Lucy may therefore seem analogous to the force Babo wields over his white superiors. If Babo is a stage director of an apparently beautiful master-slave scene, Isabel is omniscient of all affairs concerning life with Pierre. This scenario tempts us to apply Hegelian/Foucauldian theory to *Pierre*. Isabel the social outcast takes the place of Lucy the upper middle class girl, but Isabel is threatened, albeit momentarily, with a loss of her status as the only one with Pierre. Can the Hegelian/Foucauldian theory explain this phenomenon, the repeated reversal of the superior-inferior power relationship as exemplified by Isabel and Lucy? Is the master-slave/superior-inferior dynamics the driving force that keeps the story going? The answer is "No," for reasons that will later be explained. Or is there any other hidden dynamism that propels the personas in *Pierre* in an unexpected direction? The answer here should be "Yes," as will later be proved.

How about Lucy？ "I could murder myself, Pierre, when I think of my pre-vious blindness," asserts Lucy. She takes on the semblance of a champion of Emerson's claim in "Nature": "the blind man…gradually restored to perfect sight"（50）, the literary counterpart to the Foucauldian panopticon seer. Lucy, complicated as feminist critics describe her to be, can be compared, as Isabel is, to Plotinus Plinlimmon, the mysterious man who presides over the commu-nity, the community made up of social outcasts in the Church of the Apostles. Declaring, "Now, when still knowing nothing, yet something of thy secret I, as a seer, suspect"（309）, Lucy reminds us of Plinlimmon, a seer or knower in the ruling status. We can tentatively argue that as a knower（or, to be cor-rect, clairvoyante）, Lucy wields Foucauldian power over Pierre. This argu-ment gains credence from the name Lucy, a derivation from light（/reason/lo-gos/knowledge）.

Does Lucy's assertion－"I could murder myself, Pierre, when I think of my previous blindness"－prove that the story is based on the issues of Foucauldian knowledge and Hegelian master-slave dialectics？ The answer is "No," as we will later see.

What counts most in this Hegelian/Foucauldian situation is the inferior's correct understanding of both the circumstances he is in and the problem of who controls the power to know. If the inferior acquires what Foucault calls "knowledge," then the prerequisite conditions for this Foucauldian－or Hegelian－de-hierarchization to occur are fulfilled. As for Lucy, she remains ignorant of the decisive knowledge that Pierre's father begot Isabel before marriage. Not until the final scene in the jail, where she overhears Isabel wail, "[N]ot thou art the murderer, but thy sister hath murdered thee, my brother, oh my brother！"（360）does Lucy learn that Isabel and Pierre are siblings. Far

from being satisfactory in meeting the Foucauldian condition, Lucy has been kept out of the loop.

Another Hegelian/Foucauldian condition is that the inferior plans his or her strategy in advance, deliberately implementing it and constantly checking the process. Lucy does not seem to plan any strategy. She merely flees from her parental home to beg Pierre for permission to stay with him and his fake wife. Lucy freezes in terror when she overhears Isabel fiercely taunting Pierre for his caution and challenging Lucy's innocence.

> [Pierre] whisperingly and alarmedly exclaimed－"Hark！[Lucy] is coming.－Be still."
>
> But rising boldly, Isabel threw open the connecting door, exclaiming half-hysterically－"Look, Lucy；here is the strangest husband；fearful of being caught speaking to his wife！" (333)

Here, the question that arises in discussing *Pierre* is whether or not, either or both of the parties concerned, can actually grip the power to know. While the inferior, either Lucy or Isabel, successfully replaces the superior, Lucy is only half-aware or even wholly unaware of the superior-inferior mechanism or Foucauldian knowledge system. Given this incomplete power to know, we suspect that we will be unable to analyze *Pierre* with Hegelian/Foucauldian theories.

Our suspicion deepens when we recall that in "Benito Cereno," the drama unfolds in the public realm and the strife of the inferior (slave) against the superior (master) is political. Unlike "Benito Cereno," the entire scene of *Pierre* is set in the domestic realm, the realm where the unconscious is activated.

"Benito Cereno" deals with an almost purely political issue while *Pierre* describes something partly political and partly anthropological, archaic, and uncontrollable－something that affects the emotional, primitive, and infantile aspects of our minds. Does this mean that we need a different tool to analyze the story?

II. A Different Power Dynamism

A closer look at Lucy (/Isabel) will help us clarify how the power dynamism unfolds in *Pierre*, which in turn will verify whether the Foucauldian/Hegelian power dynamism effectively applies to this story. Because Plinlimmon, an outsider split from society, and Lucy, a miserable daughter spurned by her mother, both lack social advantages, both are unworthy of possessing Foucauldian knowledge or power. The same, for that matter, can be said of Isabel, another outsider whom Pierre's mother Mary threatens to expel. Mary actually expels Delly Ulver, the daughter of Mary's sharecropper family in whose house Isabel lives.

We can also argue that the name Lucy, coupled with the family name Tartan, which sounds like Tartrus (Hell), evokes the image of Lucifer, the fallen angel expelled from paradise. This association suggests that Lucy (as well as Plinlimmon and Isabel) cannot be possessor(s) of Foucauldian power/knowledge.

The implied narrator also describes both Lucy (/Isabel) and Plinlimmon as mysterious, with mysterious features at odds with reason, logos, or knowledge, elements that the possessors of Foucauldian power are supposed to have, elements that we see overestimated in the Enlightenment and periods of nascent science. Lucy is not in a prerogative position but rather in a sanc-

tuary: "[A]s if [Lucy's] body indeed were the temple of God, and marble indeed were the only fit material for so holy a shrine, a brilliant, supernatural whiteness now gleamed in her cheek" (328), "her head sat on her shoulders as a chiseled statue's head" (328). Just as we see with Plinlimmon, the presider of the semi-Utopian socialist commune in the Church of Apostles, there appears to be a sacred aura around Lucy. Isabel, for that matter, is goddess-like in the eyes of Pierre: "Was not the face [Isabel's face] — though mutely mournful — beautiful, bewitchingly?" he ruminates. "How unfathomable those most wondrous eyes of supernatural light!" (107). We are unsurprised to see that Lucy and Plinlimmon are both unworldly because in a way they are identical beings. The unworldly dimension that Lucy (/Isabel) and Plinlimmon have in common leads them not to the realm of reason, clarity, consciousness, and Foucauldian knowledge, but to the realm of unreason, vagueness, unconsciousness, and un-Foucauldian unknowing-ness, the realm to be explored by anthropology, psychology, and theology.

Indeed, we are tempted to interpret the story on the basis of the power and knowledge relation. We should not however, overlook the insidious influence of ideology. The land-grabbing imperialistic ideology of Manifest Destiny makes both Lucy and Isabel voracions for love and power. Here, I should quickly point out that, endowed with distinguished imperialistic features, Lucy's (/Isabel's) love appears to be misleading. Lucy has a possessive love for Pierre, and though she may not be conscious of it, her way of temporarily winning him back from Isabel is imperialistic. Even before Isabel appears, Lucy tempts and challenges Pierre to know and possess her: "Read me through and through" (40), she demands, in language similar to Isabel's. In the first letter she writes to him, Isabel implores: "Read no further. If it

suit thee, burn this letter; so shalt thou escape the certainty of that knowledge…. Oh, my brother, my dear, dear Pierre, －help me, fly to me; see, I perish without thee; －pity, pity, －here I freeze in the wide, wide world" (64).

Thus, Lucy "reclaim[s] Isabel's terrain [Isabel's position as the wife of Pierre]" (Dimock 169), puts the discourse of land grabbing imperialism (the Manifest Destiny) into practice, and makes Pierre "a prey to all manner of devouring mysteries." From the standpoint of New Historicism, Wai Chee Dimock explicates that, with the proclivity to monopolize, some of the characters in Melville's works, Isabel and Lucy included, are shown to be possessed unawares by the possessive nature of love under the sway of nineteenth-century imperialistic ideology. Given the American individualism in the age of nascent imperialism, we may justifiably assume that Lucy's tactics can be explained with a geopolitical model of human relations. Love －or, correctly speaking, what appears to be love－in the mind of Lucy, is imbued and spoilt with imperialism. Pierre cannot entirely escape from the domestic imperialism of Lucy (or Pierre's domineering mother, to whom Lucy is a pet). What ruins Lucy is what Lucy (mis)understands love to be. The same can be said of Isabel, who prevents Pierre from wooing Lucy. What appears to be "love" in the three protagonists in *Pierre* can never deepen, but rather ends in tragedy. Their "love" hides a capitalistic/imperialistic/land (heart/emotion)-grabbing (exploiting) will, the kind of greedy intention that, Dimock argues, can be glimpsed from time to time.

Lucy's apparently aggressive love, however, does not necessarily mean that she intends to be a Babo-like political-minded hierarchy-destabilizer. Nor does it mean that she occupies the ruling position. As Dimock indicates, Lucy is

perhaps merely unknowing of the circumstances of the day : the hustle spirit nurtured by Manifest Destiny. The problem that remains unexplored by Dimock is the significance of Lucy's unconsciousness in allowing her love for Pierre to be imperialistic. In other words, there must be some other factors driving her to behave as such. Controlled by some psychological mechanism, Lucy－for that matter, Isabel as well－cannot possess a well-controlled self-will or recognize the imperialistic character of her love toward Pierre.

From these considerations, we may adopt a theory different from the Foucauldian ideological or Hegelian master-slave theory. This theoretical shift is further validated by the fact that there are not just two parties involved, a control and controlled or a have and have-not, but three, as will be later shown. To consider what theory best applies for the analysis of *Pierre*, we will pay special attention to the tactics that Lucy and Isabel, either being the inferior, can use in consolidating their advantageous positions.

III. A Different Mimicry

The clue for this question－what theory best applies for the analysis of *Pierre* － is found in the inferior's [Lucy's] unconscious mimicry of the superior's [Isabel's] behavior and features. In the analysis below, Lucy's style of mimicry will turn out to differ from Babo's.

As far as "Benito Cereno" is concerned, the Hegelian/Foucauldian analysis tool proves to be effective by vividly exposing the following fact. Babo *knows* that the ideology formulated by the upper-middle class imposes demands upon Delano that seem to be too strong and too tenacious for Delano to recognize, or seem to be hard enough to afford Delano an understanding of the working of this ideology, or the Sambo ideology. Babo misuses this fact. Innocently

and ignorantly, Delano enjoys the prerogative that the ideology ensures. Delano likes to see "the docility arising from the unaspiring contentment of a limited mind, and that susceptibility of blind attachment sometimes inhering in indisputable inferiors [black slaves]" (84). This becomes possible when Babo overstresses his forced identity as an unintelligent black slave by fore-grounding the particular facet of slave, that of being loyal to and dependent on his white master, and thus letting himself appear, to the innocent but gullible American captain, as a "Sambo" incapable of rising up in revolt. With his "brain, not body, [Babo] had schemed and led the revolt" (116). "[T]he negro Babo, perform[s] the office of an officious servant with all the appearance of submission of the humble slave" (110) in order to deceive and disarm Delano. Babo dramatically evinces the mimicry schema of the displacement of the superior by the inferior in the scene where he shaves his master's mustache.

> Setting down his basin, the Negro searched among the razors, as for the sharpest, and having found it, gave it an additional edge by expertly stropping it on the firm, smooth, oily skin of his open palm; he then made a gesture as if to begin, but midway stood suspended for an instant, one hand elevating the razor, the other professionally dabbling among the bubbling suds on the Spaniard's lank neck. Not unaffected by the close sight of the gleaming steel, Don Benito nervously shuddered, his usual ghastliness was heightened by the lather, which lather, again, was intensified in its hue by the sootiness of the Negro's body. (85)

Thus, Babo puts into practice what the Postcolonialist Homi Bhabha theorizes

upon mimicry.

The mimicry style of Lucy appears to slightly differ from Babo's. By assuming and reclaiming artless infantility and "angelic childlikeness," the very components that constitute Isabel's identity, Lucy writes an "artless, angelical letter" to Pierre (311). Imitating the way Isabel calls herself "poor Bell" (154 *et passim*), Lucy calls herself "poor Lucy" (310). Lucy's tactics are to imitate her rival, her superior in love, Isabel. Lucy thus stands even with Isabel, and the identities of the two women blur as a consequence. This leaves us with the identical two beings: just as Isabel invests herself with "wonderful enigmas" (138), so Lucy gives Pierre an epiphanic presentiment, "a mysterious, inscrutable divineness" (317) as a preliminary device for taking possession of Pierre. Here we should again bend an ear to Dimock's hypotheses that "Lucy has…become…a second Isabel" (172).
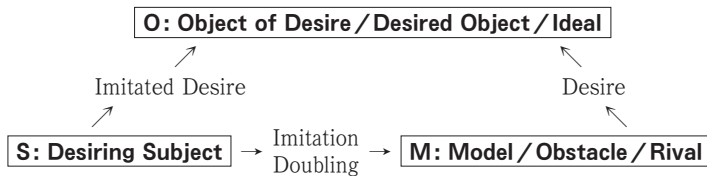
The inferior's/Lucy's (half-)unconscious mimicry strategy to supplant the superior/Isabel is (half-)unconsciously adopted. Her mimicry diverges from the highly political and therefore highly motivated postcolonial/political mimicry; it is a type of mimicry explicated by the Freudian structuralist anthropologist René Girard. In the following, we will briefly summarize Girard's Triangle-of-Desire theory and try to explain why Melville dares to insert apparently disruptive episodes and awkward storytelling in *Pierre*. Let us quickly review what the disruptive episodes in question are like. First, Pierre's ex-fiancée Lucy suddenly reappears in the penultimate section and behaves as if usurping the wifedom from the would-be wife Isabel. Second, the identities of not just these two women, but also other personages, for instance Pierre and his ancestors, become indistinguishable. The next chapter will explain this second phenomenon. With these episodes, Melville pays the price of confus-

ing his readers, or rather, confusing both his readers and the characters in his story.

IV. The Triangle of Desire

As mentioned in the previous chapter of this paper, René Girard theorizes on the mechanism by which the inferior/disfigured can turn the tables on the superior by (un)consciously mimicking his imaginary rival or obstructer. In the following we will see this mimicking mechanism, which sets in motion the ménage à trois—or, to borrow Girard's words, the Triangle of Desire—schema composed of three parties: the Desiring Subject, the Rival, or the Model to be imitated by the Subject, and the Object of Desire. The figure below shows how the power relationship is constructed in the mind of the inferior.

[Figure]

$$\boxed{\textbf{O: Object of Desire / Desired Object / Ideal}}$$

Imitated Desire　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Desire

$$\boxed{\textbf{S: Desiring Subject}} \xrightarrow{\substack{\text{Imitation}\\\text{Doubling}}} \boxed{\textbf{M: Model / Obstacle / Rival}}$$

The analysis of this schema will help clarify, on the one hand, how Melville intends to allow Lucy to unknowingly have the temporary upper hand, and on the other, how Melville spurs Isabel to achieve her aim by endowing her with a strategy partly recognizable but entirely uncontrolled. The characters concerned are Pierre and Isabel, a married couple, and Lucy, the ex-fiancée and lover of Pierre.

According to Girard, one of the two beings, tentatively designated as **S** (the Desiring Subject), tries to imitate his rival, whom **S** perceives to be a posses-

sor of the object (capitalized and shortened as **O**) **S** desires. **S** categorizes this rival as his Model (**M**) (designated as **M**). Incidentally, **S** also perceives **M** to be superior to **S**. The significant point is that **S** and **M** are symbolically lookalike or sibling-like, and appropriately, the three main characters in *Pierre* are sibling-like: Pierre and Isabel are siblings; Pierre and Lucy are cousins.

　　S perceives **M** to be worthy of being imitated, because **S** thinks that imitating **M** [/possessor of **O**] is the shortest way to obtain **O**. To **S**, however, **M** seems to stand in the way of obtaining **O**. **M** is not conscious of **S**'s animosity. In fact, **M** holds no spiteful intention against **S**, who perceives the (psychological) reality quite differently. The ultimate goal of **S** is gradually but necessarily redirected from obtaining **O** to imitating **M**. This change is facilitated by the psychological mechanism of **S**, which emotionally leads **S** nearer to **M**, despite and because of **S**'s suspicion of **M**'s ill will against **S**. More often than not, there arises the case where **M** unknowingly helps **S** forge an **M**-**S** sado-masochistic symbiosis, **S** as masochistic and **M** as sadistic. In another case, the rivalry (imagined by **S**) between **S** and **M** becomes so heated as to trigger a conflict. In the worst case scenario, the conflict escalates to such a degree that **S** endeavors to put **M** to death. Girard argues that this mimetic rivalry lasts eternally, and he warns that mimetic rivalry, if escalated to an exorbitant degree, becomes a threat to society.

　　Girard labels the constellation of **S**, **M**, and **O** as the "Triangle of Desire," a psychological structure that sets the mimetic rivalry into ever-lasting motion. In this economy, **S** has already lost his subjectivity or autonomy because **S**, despite the definition of subject as the person thinking, deciding, willing, desiring, performing, and controlling, does not maintain his own will or realize his own true desire. Desire, or more accurately, something mistaken for de-

sire, is conjured in the mind of **S** only after the "Triangle of Desire" or mimetic system starts functioning. To repeat, we see here no self-will or self-originated desire, but instead are convinced of the processes by which **S** is driven and reduced to the de-subjectivized mimetic being, and the mimetic system is cathexisized. **S**（is driven to）endeavor（s）to imitate the way **M** behaves, or **S** pretends to look the same way **M** appears. **S** and **M** begin to resemble a pair of symbolical twin-siblings or doubles, hence the possible conflict between the two appears to be a（quasi-）twin-sibling dispute. In the mind of **S**, the identities of the two beings, **S** and **M**, could and should be fused so that **S** will equal **M** in every respect.

Because **S** and **M** are merged in a mimetic sibling rivalry, binarism is nullified. Hence chaos looms large. As long as the patriarchic system effectively functions in maintaining the hierarchy, the potential chaos stirred by the mimetic sibling rivalry is kept at bay. But sooner or later, the conflict over which of the doubles becomes superior, **S** or **M**, disintegrates the patriarchic hierarchy. Or, on the contrary, the weakened patriarchy prepares the way for sibling strife and the activation of the Triangle of Desire. If the patriarchy disintegrates, the strife between or among the siblings heats up. Freud also realized that when the paterfamilias dies, his sons are likely to strive for the patriarchic authority and stir up chaotic turmoil. Yet according to Girard's criticism, Freud undervalues the seriousness of the mimetic side of the sibling rivalry.

Let us now observe a sign of the disintegration of（the aristocratic）patriarchy. The most crucial part to be explained in considering this issue is where Pierre, Isabel, and Lucy happen to enter a gallery where both Pierre and Isabel intently gaze into a portrait titled, *"No. 99. A stranger's head by an unknown hand,"* "hung among long columns of such names as Rubens, Raphael, Angelo,

Domenichino, Da Vinci, all shamelessly prefaced with words, 'undoubted' or 'testified'" (349). Readers instantly understand that all of the works in the gallery are fake and valueless. What degrades the authenticity of their biological father is the very fact that "[b]y some mere hocus-pocus of chance, or [by] subtly designing knavery" (350), the picture overlaps the exact image of Isabel's (/Pierre's) father. The picture was drawn "by an unknown hand," and Isabel, it is assumed, was begotten out of wedlock by an unknown man— presumably Pierre's father. The picture has no worth, because the painter is unknown. This indirectly implies that the lookalike of the portrait, Pierre's father, who before marriage illegitimately fathered Isabel, is beneath a gentleman's dignity.

Just when Isabel and Pierre are smitten with this picture, "a very tolerable copy" of "The Cenci of Guido" grabs Lucy's attention. The well-known theme of Cenci is the violence upon the daughter by the despotic paterfamilias [incest] and the revengeful killing of the paterfamilias by the daughter and her younger brother [parricide and incest]. These very acts somehow conjure the image of the siblings, Pierre, who burns the father's portrait, and Isabel, who marries Pierre. That these two pictures, *No. 99* and "Cenci," "exactly fac[e] each other" "from the opposite walls" (351), implies that the "stranger's head" depicted in *No. 99* is directly related to that of Francesco Cenci's. These symbolically identical figures, one in the figure of "stranger's head" and the other in the unpainted figure of "Francesco Cenci," invoke the image of Pierre's/Isabel's father. Hence, Isabel's putative and Pierre's confirmed father is further degraded.[2]

The image of the degraded paterfamilias also recalls Pierre's grandfather, General Pierre Glendinning, an Indian-killing Revolutionary War officer, or a

war hero whose wartime atrocities are dismissed. Incidentally, all of the three men concerned are given the same name, Pierre Glendinning. One may recall that the youngest of the three Pierres had once passionately adored his father and grandfather, but all three Pierres are equally degraded.

The condition thus becomes ripe for the disintegration of fixed identity, the collapse of the aristocratic patriarchal hierarchy, and hence the activation of the Triangle of Desire. These circumstances enable Lucy, the girl divested of her previous prerogative position as Pierre's fiancée, to attempt to retrieve the superior position she once enjoyed before Isabel appeared. These circumstances, moreover, help Isabel gain paternal love through her dead father's son, Pierre.

Girard expounds on his theory by indicating the existence of mimetic rivalry in the novels of Stendhal, Flaubert, Proust and Dostoevsky. If we see this Girardian mimetic rivalry mechanism activated in Melville's *Pierre*, we may allocate the three roles, **S**, **M**, and **O**, to the three figures in the story. We can hypothesize three ways of casting the three personas, Pierre, Isabel, and Lucy. Structuralism, when applied to literary works, occasionally draws criticism for its reductive interpretation. Yet here in *Pierre*, Melville maximizes and triples the potential of interpretation with the three patterns of cast allocation, cunningly circumventing the otherwise expected disapproval.

In constellation ①, we see Pierre's ex-fiancée Lucy as S_L, Isabel as M_I, and Pierre as O_P. Pierre is the only male loved by the two females－Lucy, and Isabel, who has already obtained Pierre('s love), the being analogous to M_I in the eyes of Lucy. Lucy is relegated to S_L. S_L boldly interferes with the mock-married life of M_I and O_P for the purpose of (momentarily) replacing M_I. Girardian mimesis is made possible here primarily because Isabel has already

been promoted from a social outcast to the wife of a privileged young man, demonstrating the dismantling of the previous social hierarchy. According to Girard, the mimetic conflict continues in a perpetual cycle, thus convincing us that Melville's apparently awkward storytelling should naturally allow Lucy to reappear in the penultimate section, as a matter of course.

In the penultimate section in question, Pierre is awe-stricken with Lucy's Goddess-like solemnity. "[A]s if [Lucy's] body indeed were the temple of God, and marble indeed were the only fit material for so holy a shrine" (328). With "a brilliant, supernatural whiteness now gleam[ing] in her cheek," "her head sat on her shoulders as a chiseled statue's head" (328). In the mind of Pierre, this excerpt evinces Lucy's conversion or sacralization into a similitude of Pierre's dead father, the saintly/godly figure. This similitude becomes more persuasive when we recall how Pierre's father is enshrined in Pierre's "fresh-foliaged heart": "There had long stood a shrine," "of marble—a niched pillar, deemed solid and eternal," in which "stood the perfect marble form of his departed father" (68). Lucy also becomes more easily compatible with Pierre's father, because both figures belong to wealthy aristocratic patriarchal families. Lucy's similitude to Pierre's father makes her more easily *re*-acceptable to Pierre, and she half-consciously understands this advantage. In these circumstances, Pierre becomes more acutely guilt-stricken for the atrocious action he carried out against his dead father: the son burns the father's portrait. Pierre soothes his guilty feelings towards his father by setting Lucy on the divine pedestal where Pierre's father was once enshrined.

More important, Lucy unconsciously imbues herself with the features particular to Isabel, who appears, at the very moment when Pierre happens to see and hear her life story, like a goddess in a shrine. Lucy, in other words,

imitates Isabel in pretending to be a goddess.

> To Pierre, the deep oaken recess of the double casement, before which
> Isabel was kneeling, seemed now the immediate vestibule of some awful
> shrine, mystically revealed through the obscurely open window, which
> ever and anon was still softly illumined by the mild heat-lightnings and
> ground-lightnings, that wove their wonderfulness without, in the un-
> searchable air of that ebonly warm and most noiseless summer night.
> (140)

Lucy (and Isabel, as well) can take advantage of these peculiar circum-
stances, where the aristocratic patriarchy reaches the verge of disintegration
in mid-nineteenth-century New England. Lucy gains this advantage by sacri-
ficing the innocent enjoyment of the prerogative in the aristocratic patriarchy,
which is being replaced by the capitalistic patriarchy of nascent imperialism,
and by the social outcast, Isabel herself. Pierre admits Lucy to his hideaway,
the old building formerly used for the Church of Apostles, albeit without see-
ing her audacious intention to join the newlywed couple, fake though it is.
This Hamlet-like indecision of Pierre's, an attitude vacillating between love for
Isabel and lingering attachment to Lucy, is unsurprising when we call to mind
Pierre's lack of confidence in carrying through with his initial plan to save his
half-sister, and his sense of guilt in voluntarily disinheriting himself and sym-
bolically killing his father by burning his portrait. Lucy's unconscious ill will is
unmistakable here. Her strange deed of cohabitating with Pierre and his cur-
rent fake wife Isabel is intended as a substantial mischief against them.

The largest part of the story develops along the line of the following constel-

lations ② and ③. In constellation ②, we regard Isabel as S_I, Lucy as M_L, and Pierre as O_P. Seeing O_P and M_L engaged, S_I covets their status and replaces M_L to overtake the prerogative position. Isabel sends an imploring letter to Pierre through the hands of "a hooded and obscure-looking figure" (61), virtually forcing Pierre to stop wooing Lucy. As we have seen, S_I and M_L, who behave similarly to each other in their relation with O_P, are lookalikes, and therefore sibling-like. S_I successfully replaces M_L to occupy the position that M_L once enjoyed, and as a result mimics M_L, acting the part of Pierre's fiancée, or rather his wife.

Constellation ③ simultaneously unfolds. Here, Pierre's father is O_{PF}, who shares the same name. Isabel, as S_I, tries to retrieve the paternal love of O_{PF} from Pierre, her younger brother, designated as M_P. S_I and M_P are siblings. Hence, the siblings rival for the love of their father. Incidentally, S_I in no way mimics her rival M_P. S_I is kept from doing so not simply by the gender difference, but partly because she intuitively senses the following. First, the mimetic strategy is impossible or ineffective in circumstances where the hierarchy is still somehow maintained; second, her object of desire can be obtained within the patriarchic hierarchy; third, she is half aware that the current patriarchy is still valid; and fourth, she is unable to remain in the same social position as her brother. S_I tries to retrieve the paternal love, but the father in question is already dead. To make up for this, S_I tries to possess her father substitute, her half-brother and namesake of her/his father, Pierre Glendinning. Her conduct drives herself and her brother to tragedy.

From the above considerations, we can see that constellations ② and ③ illustrate Isabel's resentment. Placed outside of the domestic circle, Isabel deplores:

> I felt the complete deplorableness of my state ; that while thou, my brother, had a mother, and troops of aunts and cousins, and plentiful friends in city and in country－I, I, Isabel, thy own father's daughter, was thrust out of all hearts' gates, and shivered in the winter way. (158)

Isabel bears a grudge against the upper-middle-class white family, the family best represented by Lucy and Pierre. In her childhood, Isabel was put in the custody of, perhaps, tenant farmers or servant couples, who molested her.

> It was the woman that gave me my meals ; for I did not eat with them. Once they sat by the fire with a loaf between them, and a bottle of some thin sort of reddish wine ; and I went up to them, and asked to eat with them, and touched the loaf. But instantly the old man made a motion as if to strike me, but did not, and the woman, glaring at me, snatched the loaf and threw it into the fire before them. I ran frightened from the room. (116)

Isabel's awareness of political will differs from Lucy's, because Lucy is almost wholly ignorant of the affair until the very end of the story. This is clear when she hears the truth that Isabel and Pierre are married despite their sibling status, "Lucy shrunk up like a scroll, and noiselessly fell at the feet of Pierre" (360). Isabel, however, makes no use of her recognition of her own circumstances. This differentiates her from Babo, who strategically uses what the Postcolonialist Homi Bhabha describes as mimicry. Unlike Babo, Isabel is caged within the unconscious Triangle-of-Desire mechanism.

According to Girard, those who are defeated in sibling strife are likely to be-

come charismatic tyrants. The Freudian notion of Compensation seems to explain this transformation of the defeated. Captain Ahab, who loses his leg in his fight with Moby Dick, represents the charismatic tyrant. In that the whale and monomaniac captain are symbolically two tyrants competing for power at sea, they can be regarded as symbolical siblings. Both are monstrous and tycoon-like. In *Pierre*, Isabel appears, to Pierre and readers as well, to be a monstrous, dictatorial being, because she is defeated in the competition for paternal love. Melville's insatiability in depicting sibling strife also emerges in his posthumous novella, *Billy Budd*, where Claggart nurtures obscure enmity toward his quasi-sibling, Billy Budd, as a rival for the love of the father figure, Captain Vere (Sasaki, "Homosocial Pretension"). Claggart behaves like a shadow commander, wielding threatening power over Billy and even over the real commander, Vere.

V. Socio-Historical and Biographical Background

A. Melville's Own Sibling Problem

Something in Melville's peculiar circumstances seems to have irresistibly forced him to (un)consciously adopt a Girardian schema in *Pierre*. In the nineteenth-century "democratized" American middle-class white society, where the Beings like God/Father/father were divested of substantial authority, children were enabled to demand equality in the outdated patriarchic family. Hence, the mimetic conflict between the (quasi-)siblings emerged in a struggle for the power that their father once monopolized.

One can find similar cases in the Old Testament. Perhaps the best representations are the episodes of sibling rivalry, between Jacob and Esau, and between Joseph (the eleventh son of the aforesaid Jacob) and his ten elder step-

brothers. In both cases the patriarch becomes too old to retain power over his sons, and the younger sibling succeeds in receiving the birthright from the senile patriarch. Moreover, the biblical Ishmael (whose name Melville assigns to the narrator of *Moby-Dick*) is, like Isabel, an illegitimate child born to a slave-mother, and is expelled into the desert by, Sarah, the mother of Isaac, the second begotten son of his father, Abraham. These biblical episodes are repeated in Melville's *Pierre* with the first-born Isabel deserted and the second-born Pierre favored by their morally questionable ungentlemanly father. The same can be said of the symbolic siblings, Billy Budd and Claggart, the winner and loser in the competition over the paternal love of Captain Vere. We have a justifiable reason for perceiving in Melville an inclination to see his own reflected image in the figures of the defeated, i. e., Isabel and Claggart.

When his elder brother Gansevoort was alive, Melville was personally involved in a mimetic rivalry just like that entangling Pierre, Isabel, and Lucy in the story. The young Herman saw with loathing his parents' favoritism toward Gansevoort, who outshone Herman in every respect. When the author begot two sons, he showed exactly the same partiality his parents had shown. Melville and his wife Elizabeth counted too much on their first-born son Malcolm, who committed suicide in 1867 due to his parents' unbearable expectations. The long-slighted second-born, Stanwix, left home to die in the gutter in 1886 (Cohen and Yannella). Melville must have understood that he had been captured in the vicious circle but was powerless to rise above it or escape.

By the mid-nineteenth-century, Puritanism had already lost its momentum and had been replaced by the feminized and sentimentalized kitschy culture where secularized Christianity, along with various types of mysticism such as

Gnosticism and Swedenborgianism, became popular. Melville, meanwhile, had to face the godless modern "democratic" society where everyone was demanding equality. Melville realized that they yearned for a fake democracy and in reality were competing for superiority over others.

At the brink of community disintegration or the Puritan hierarchic society in the mind of Melville, its members are, according to Girard, very likely to resort to lynching rituals to restore social order. When members of the community face a hierarchy-disturbing phenomenon such as a minority's movement for its own rights, a kind of movement symbolically likened to equality-demanding sibling strife, they are prone to victimize those outside of their group, and in so doing, are likely to resuscitate their own myth for group solidarity. Melville probably intuited that the disastrous results of the mimetic sibling rivalry would bring about misdirected mock-democracy and heighten the possibility of lynching or the oppression of minorities. He described this in the execution scene of Billy Budd.

This scenario is no different from the conflicts described in *Pierre*. One may infer that the identities of Lucy, Isabel, and Pierre might be liquefied under the disintegration of pre-capitalistic aristocratic patriarchy. All three beings merge into one being: hence Lucy [Pierre's cousin] ≒ Isabel [Pierre's sister] ≒ Pierre, hence the disintegration of identities or identity-supporting patriarchal hierarchic society in the nascent "democracy". Recall that this kind of identity-merging phenomenon is prefigured in Chapter 5 of Book IV, where Pierre exclaims the passage from *Canto* 25 of the *Inferno* by Dante: "Ah! how dost thou change, /Agnello! See! thou art not double now, /Nor only one!" (85). Pierre－or Melville if you like－might be half aware of the problem of double personality/identity, but from the Girardian perspective we might see the

セ

truth not simply as the problem of double personality, as Pierre laments here, but as a problem of multiple personalities.

The equation of Lucy to Isabel and Pierre－the merger of the first two beings has been made possible through their mimicry behavior－implies that if Lucy has an imperialistic mindset, then both Pierre and Isabel are imbued with the same toxicant. The deadliest is Isabel, a racially ambiguous fatherless girl impelled by the need to be imperial and toxic out of revengeful desire against the white upper middle-class society, the society represented by Pierre and Lucy. The hierarchic community thus descends into chaos.

B. Melville's Messianic Expections

Anthropologically speaking, the community in crisis seeks victims in the lynching rituals. Between the 1950s and 1960s, the white supremacist group the KKK (Ku Klux Klan) committed acts of aggression against the supporters of the civil rights movement. One of the well-known incidents was cinematized into *Mississippi Burning* (1988). According to Girard, the victims are likely to be transformed into sacred beings in the community: the best example is found in Jesus Christ. Even in the 1920s and 30s, before the Civil Rights Movement had begun, William Faulkner (1897–1962) exposed the South deserted by God. In *Light in August* (1932), Faulkner appropriately and prophetically assigned the name Joe Christmas to the tragic man of mixed blood who was lynched for his sexual intercourse with Joanna Burden, the middle-aged daughter of a family of New England abolitionists.

The Gospels in the New Testament, Girard theorizes, helped to stop the continuation of outrageous rituals because Jesus Christ, as a mediator, assumes the role of the victim in all the unjust violence, acting for the sake of his

believers regardless of whether they belong to the same community. Christ, according to Girard, makes full use of this special sacred power to stop the chain of violence fomented from the mimetic sibling competition. Girard's reference to Christ as the last resort to stop this vicious circle is quite understandable when we consider that once the Triangle-of-Desire mechanism is set in motion within our unconscious realm, the realm we cannot step into, the force driving this mechanism becomes disastrous and out of control—or monstrous, in the vein of Moby Dick.

Some of the characters partially endowed with this potential to be savior figures in Melville's works may be the marginalized figures such as Pip, Ishmael, and Billy Budd. Yet none of these figures are potent enough to be called a Savior; on the contrary, they are the ones to be rescued. Pip is not a savior, but a mere black boy rescued from drowning by Ahab. Nor is Ishmael, the sole-surviving crewmember saved by the ship appropriately named *Rachel* (the biblical woman wandering in search of her lost children), a savior. Both, however, fail to stop Ahab from his insane hunting, which implies that a Christ-like Messiah would never appear in this modern world. Billy Budd, meanwhile, is executed in the penultimate scene of his story in a way that reminds us of Christ. He stops short, however, of saving his beloved father substitute or the mentally and emotionally debilitated Captain Vere. In *Pierre*, the nonexistence of a Christ-like figure spurs Pierre to misjudge himself (Sasaki, "Mock-Christ") and Isabel to be "in nature close to God" (108). Through the implied narrator, Pierre defiantly declares "in the Enthusiast to Duty, the heaven-begotten Christ is born" (106), so that he may try in vain to be like a savior to Isabel, who implores, "Save me, Pierre—love me, own me, brother; I am thy sister!" (107). Pierre cannot be a savior but allows the vindictive cir-

cle to keep going, and Lucy intrusively appears before Pierre and Isabel to take the place of Isabel.

In his own life Melville expected the idealized figure correspondent to Christ to emerge in the figure of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Yet Melville was virtually deserted by Hawthorne and fatally wounded as a consequence. The only way left for Melville was to let Hawthorne see his emotional injury. Melville must have done this in letting Hawthorne "read me through and through" (40) in *Pierre*, where the author compares himself to the illicit daughter Isabel. Isabel is deserted by her biological father Pierre Glendinning and forced by Lucy to endure the possible crisis of being deserted again by the father's son with the same name, Pierre Glendinning.

In a sense, *Pierre* can be interpreted as an epistolary work, as a letter addressed invisibly to Hawthorne, who had written *The Scarlet Letter* only two years before the publication of *Pierre*. If Hester and Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter* become equal to the letter A, then Pierre also "becomes an incarnation of [the] 'lettering'" (Bercocitch 300), in this case, the lettering of "Horologicals and Chronometricals," the pamphlet presumably written by Plinlimmon.

> Pierre must have ignorantly thrust [the pamphlet] into his pocket, in the stage, and it had worked through a rent there, and worked its way clean down into the skirt, and there helped pad the padding.... [H]e himself was wearing the pamphlet" (294).

In a way, the wearer of the *letter A* also corresponds to the *scarlet* [sexually promiscuous, in this case incestuous] woman Isabel, who cries in her *letter* to

Pierre:

> Oh, my dear brother－Pierre！ Pierre！－could'st thou take out my heart,
> and look at it in thy hand, then thou wouldst find it all over *written*,
> this way and that, and crossed again, and yet again, with continual lines
> of longings, that found no end but in suddenly calling thee. (158, my
> italics)

This *letter* is written by the tempting Isabel, the woman comparable to the bib-
lical Jezebel, the sinful queen to the king of Israel, Ahab. Just as Hester is de-
fiant to authority, so is Jezebel/Isabel. Hence, Isabel corresponds to Hester,
both representing the letter A as Anti-Authority. Isabel's resoluteness recalls
Hester's when Isabel "[t]hus speaking [to Pierre], one hand was on her
bosom, as if resolutely feeling of something deadly there concealed" (332).

Thus, the entire story of *Pierre* corresponds to the letter As of Hester and
Dimmesdale. The author displayed his pain to Hawthorne through *Pierre* as an
oblique revenge, forcing Hawthorne to feel the same sort of penitence Pierre
would have felt, had he not read Isabel's letter: Pierre "may hereafter, in some
maturer, remorseful, and helpless hour, cause thee a poignant upbraiding"
(64). In portraying Isabel, Melville links her emotional or sibling problems to
his own: just as Isabel is betrayed twice by those whom she loves, her father
and her sibling, so was Melville by his own father and Hawthorne. Melville
had to endure the desertion twice, by his own father Allan and by the same-sex
lover Nathaniel Hawthorne as a father substitute. Melville harbored resent-
ment against Hawthorne throughout his entire life.

Conclusion

Pierre laments after recognizing the presence of his sister Isabel：

> Is it possible, after all, that spite of bricks and shaven faces, this world we
> live in is brimmed with wonders, and I and all mankind, beneath our garbs
> of common-placeness, conceal enigmas that the stars themselves, and
> perhaps the highest seraphim can not resolve？（138-39）

The "enigma" he refers to is the Girardian Triangle-of-Desire mechanism. Initially, I presupposed that Melville's aim in inconsistent character figuration and disruptive narrative deployment would have something to do with the combined negative effect of the Foucauldian knowledge power, the Hegelian master-slave dialectics, and the imperial nature of possessive love in the nascent capitalism. This surmise turns out to be incorrect. Rather, another mechanism operates in *Pierre*: the mimetic sibling rivalry, the rivalry set in motion by the so-called Triangle of Desire, the mechanism formulated by the Structuralist Anthropologist René Girard. The Girardian Triangle of Desire is made up of three parties：**S** [Desiring Subject], **O** [Object of Desire], and **M** [Imitated Model]. In *Pierre*, where three young figures appear, the Girardian theory applies to three combinations. The application of the theory to *Pierre* affords the possibility that Melville attempted to disclose the futility and endless nature of mimetic sibling strife, with no one to stop this vicious circle of revengeful strife. Thus, Melville exposes the dynamics of sibling strife in *Pierre* as the root cause of the tragedy. In my future research I also plan to investigate the possibility that *Moby-Dick* is another story of sibling strife.

The keen author, it seems, was (half-)aware that the story line of *Pierre* is awkwardly disrupted by the sudden reappearance of Lucy. Yet the author had no other way but to leave Lucy's reappearance as it was. The nature of the Triangle of Desire, or the power triggered by sibling strife, disables the characters in the fiction, as well as the author himself, from controlling how the vicious circle goes. Melville's exposure of the powerlessness was also deliberate.

Girard posits that only Jesus Christ can definitely stop the chain of mimetic sibling violence. This explains the repeated strivings among Pierre, Isabel, and Lucy. No one is there in *Pierre* to take the role of the Messiah, just as there was no one to do so in the real world. Melville was betrayed by Hawthorne, and had expected from Hawthorne as much. At the end of Melville's posthumously published novella *Billy Budd*, Billy comes very close to a Christ-like figure. Yet Billy is incapable of saving Captain Vere, who executes him despite, or out of, half-paternal, half-homosexual love and later dies, raving repentantly, "Billy Budd, Billy Budd." Neither was the author in his real life able to find someone who could be a Messiah. When preparing *Pierre,* Melville faced harsh criticism by those who were unable to appreciate *Moby-Dick*. He vainly sought for a Messiah-like figure in the person of Nathaniel Hawthorne, a contemporary in whom he expected to find a like-minded spirit, but by whom he was spurned. This experience of Melville's overlaps with that of Isabel, who seeks a Messiah in Pierre as she receives the message within: "Call him! Call him! He will come!－so cried my heart to me" (159). The issue of waiting for the impossible Messiah had obsessed Melville throughout his entire life. His desire visibly came out through the ruptures in the text or the disruptive story line. This problem became all the more complicated for

Melville when, in the course of preparing *Pierre*, he lost Hawthorne.

Notes

1) All subsequent references to this story will be parenthetically included in this paper. Herman Melville, *Pierre: or, The Ambiguities*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern UP; Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1971.
2) To Nathaniel Hawthorne as well, the image of Beatrice Cenci was haunting. In one of his apprenticeship works, "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844), Hawthorne named the tragic heroin after the historical figure Beatrice Cenci, and again in his later work, *The Marble Faun* (1860), he referred to the picture of Beatrice Cenci.

Works Cited

Adamson, Joseph. *Melville, Shame, and the Evil Eye: A Psychoanalytic Reading*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Bode, Carl, ed. *The Portable Emerson*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1981.

Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Cohen, Hennig and Donald Yannella. *Herman Melville's Malcolm Letter: "Man's Final Lore."* New York: Fordham UP and The New York Public Library, 1992.

Dijkstra, Bram. *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*. New York: Oxford UP, 1986.

Dimock, Wai-chee. *Empire for Liberty: Melville and the Poetics of Individualism*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Nature." *The Portable Emerson*. Ed. Carl Bode. New York, Penguin, 1981.

Fiedler, Leslie A. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. New York: Anchor Books, 1992.

Foucault, Michel. *Kyoki no Rekishi: Kotenshugijidai niokeru*. Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1977.

Girard, René. *Yo no Hajime kara Kakusarete Irukoto.* Trans. Takeo Koike. Tokyo: Hosei UP, 1984.

————. *Boryoku to Seinarumono.* Trans. Yukio Furuta. Tokyo: Hosei UP, 1982.

————. *Mimesis no Bungaku to Bunkajinruigaku: Futatsu no Tachiba ni Shibararete.* Trans. Toshio Asano. Tokyo: Hosei UP, 1985.

————. *Migawari no Yagi.* Trans. Toshikazu Oda and Shigeki Tominaga. Tokyo: Hosei UP, 1985.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter.* 1850. Vol. 1 of Centenary Edition. Eds. William Charvat et al. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1962.

————. *Mosses from an Old Manse.* 1846. Vol. 10 of Centenary Edition. Eds. William Charvat et al. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1974.

————. *The Marble Faun.* 1860. Vol. 4 of *Centenary Edition.* Eds. William Charvat et al. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1971.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Phenomenology of Spirit.* Trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.

Melville, Herman. *Pierre: or The Ambiguities.* Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern UP; Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1971.

————. *Moby-Dick; or The While.* Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern UP; Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1988.

————. *The Piazza Tales.* Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern UP; Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1987.

————. *Billy Budd, Sailor (An Inside Narrative).* Eds. Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Sealts, Jr. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1962.

Sasaki, Eitetsu. "Homosocial Pretension No More—Lovelessness in the Cognoscenti: Melville's *Billy Budd* as a Camp Story." *English Review* 20 (2006): 57-100.

————. "Mock-Christ, Mater Tenebrarum, and Hawthorne: Disastrous Deification in Melville's Domestic Metafiction, *Pierre, or The Ambiguities.*" *English Review* 24 (2009) 55-91.

Warren, Joyce W. *The American Narcissus: Individualism and Women in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction.* New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1989.

Waiting for the Impossible Messiah：
Melville's *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities*

SASAKI Eitetsu

In reading at the penultimate section of Melville's *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities,* we cannot help feeling dismayed at Lucy's intrusive reappearance at the hideout where the two siblings, Pierre and Isabel, reside as a fake couple. Up until this stage, Isabel, the racially ambiguous illegitimate girl, has been successful in replacing Lucy, the daughter of a wealthy family, and establishing the affectionate though incestuous relationship with Pierre. Isabel then loses, albeit temporarily, her status of superiority over Lucy. In *Pierre* we find again and again the hierarchy-upheaval dramas where the inferior defeats the superior. In this paper I have attempted to investigate the author's (un)conscious message in leaving volatile the power position of these three main figures.

I presupposed that if Isabel's resilient political will was comparable to the black slave Babo's in "Benito Cereno," I could explicate Melville's inconsistent character figuration and disruptive narrative deployment as the combined negative effect of the Foucauldian knowledge power, the Hegelian master-slave dialectics, and the imperial nature of possessive love in the nascent capitalism. It turns out, however, that the force driving the story－or driving Pierre, Isabel, Lucy, and Melville, for that matter－is the mimetic sibling rivalry, the rivalry set in motion by the so-called Triangle of Desire, the mechanism formulated by the Structuralist Anthropologist René Girard.

The application of the Girardian theory to *Pierre* clarifies that the sibling strife, combined with the mimetic rivalry, can spur the three main figures, Pierre, Isabel, and Lucy－especially the latter two－to their tragic end. Girard contends that it is only Jesus Christ who can stop the vicious circle of sibling

mimetic strife. Isabel reveals herself to be a Messiah seeker in *Pierre*. Her confession to Pierre, "Call him [Pierre]! Call him! He will come!—so cried my heart to me," proves that she hopes Pierre to be the same. After defiantly declaring himself "the heaven-begotten Christ," Pierre is disqualified as a savior for Isabel. Only shameful death in the dark prison awaits the two siblings as fake husband and wife.

Isabel seeks a Messianic figure in her dead father, Pierre Glendinning, or in her younger brother, Pierre Glendinning, as the incarnation of her father. Melville was similarly obsessed with the sibling problem of resentment against his own brother. Melville sought a Messianic figure, similarly but slightly differently, in Hawthorne, a figure outside of his family. While preparing *Pierre,* Melville needed to soothe the pain he endured from harsh criticism of his previous book, *Moby-Dick,* for being nonsensical.

The Messiah does not come to Isabel, or for that matter to Melville. The former only finds herself stuck with a feeble half-brother, Pierre, while the latter found himself rejected by Hawthorne. Unlike Ishmael, who is saved by the whaler Rachel, Melville was not saved or emancipated from the sibling trauma until his death.