

# In Some Enchanted Way, Inverted

Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*

By Noah Connolly Barron

Thesis Advisor: Jay Fliegelman  
Second Reader: Brett Bourbon

STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
HONORS ENGLISH  
Spring 2004

*The Republic*

Didn't Plato ban philosopher-professors,  
the idols of the young, from the Republic?  
And diehard republicans? It wasn't just  
the artist. The Republic! But it never was,  
except in the sky-ether of Plato's thought,  
steam from the horsedung of his city-state--  
Utopia dimmed before the blueprint dried. . . .  
America planned one . . . Herman Melville  
fixed at that helm, facing a pot of coals,  
the sleet and wind spinning him ninety degrees:  
"I must not give me up then to the fire,  
lest it invert my fire; it blinded me,  
so did it me." There's a madness that is woe,  
and there is a wisdom that is madness.

*Robert Lowell, 1967.*

|

*For Sarah*

## TABLE of CONTENTS

• <b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
• Chapter One: <b>INVERSIONS of SIGNIFIER</b>	
Part I: <b>CONCEIT and ASPECT</b>	<b>6</b>
Part II: <b>NAMING</b>	<b>17</b>
• Chapter Two: <b>INVERSIONS of the SIGNIFIED</b>	
Part I: <b>SCALES of MAGNITUDE</b>	<b>30</b>
Part II: <b>SUBSTITUTION of IDEAS in an ORDERED SYSTEM</b>	<b>35</b>
• <b>RE-INTRODUCTION: A Reflexive Inversion of My Very Own</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>THE PYRAMID PROBLEM</b>	<b>41</b>
• <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY / WORKS CITED</b>	<b>52</b>