

Herman Melville and *Moby Dick*



But it is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation. He who has never failed somewhere, that man cannot be great.

—Herman Melville



Contents

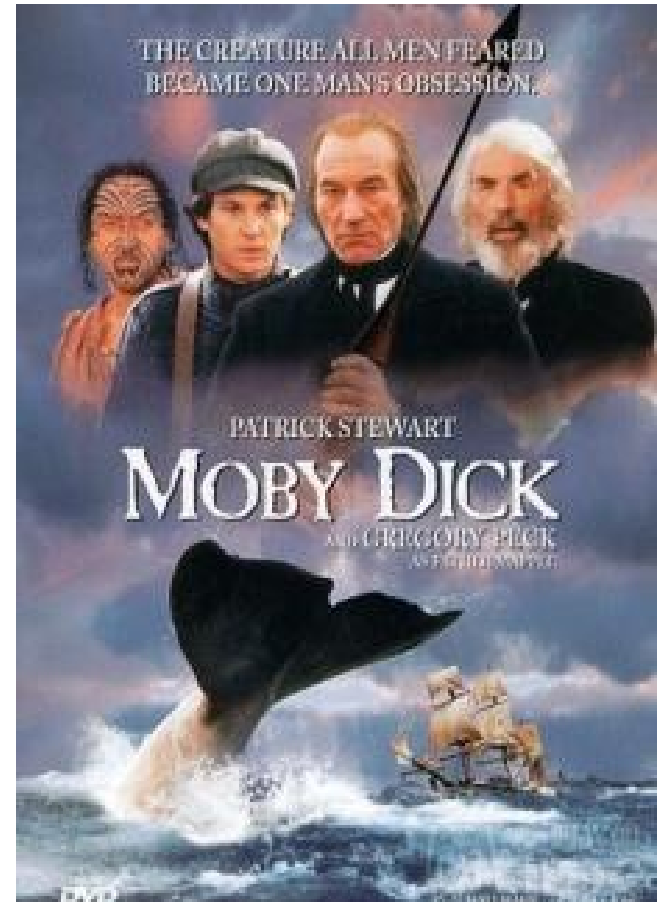
I. Biographical Introduction

II. Major Works

III. Melville's Theme and View

IV. *Moby Dick*

V. Topics for Discussion



Biographical Introduction

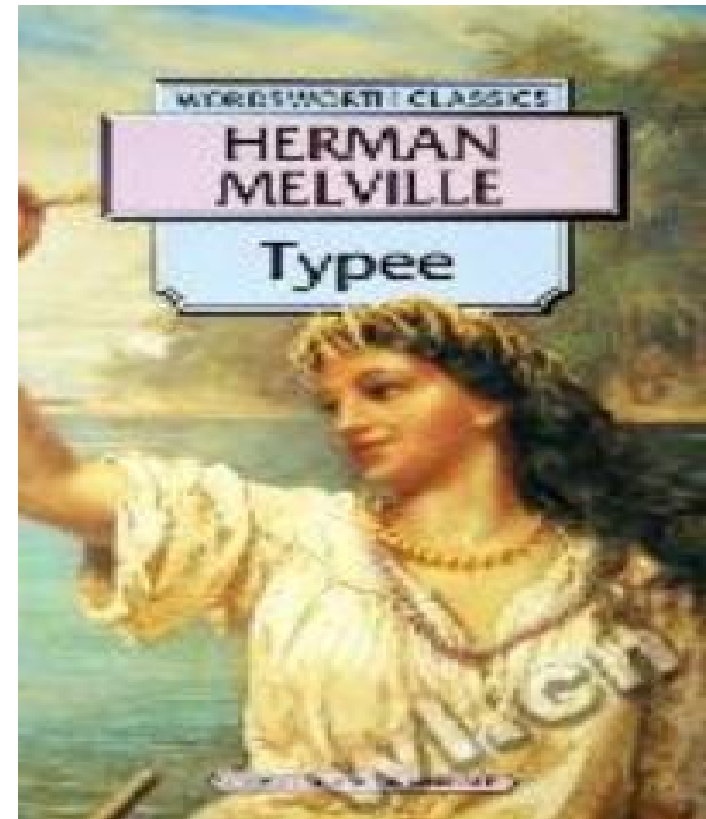
- Born on August 1, 1819 in New York, the third of 8 children. His father became bankrupt and insane, dying when Melville was 12.
- He didn't receive formal education.
- His sea experiences and adventures furnished him with abundant materials and resulted in five novels that brought him wide fame as a writer of sea stories.
- In 1850, he met Hawthorne and they became good friends.
- Died of heart failure on September 28, 1891. His fame was recognized after his death.



Herman Melville

Major works

- *Typee* (1846)
 - *Omoo* (1847)
 - *Mardi* (1849)
- } from his adventures among the people of the South Pacific islands
- *Redburn* (1849) : an account of his voyage to England
 - *White-Jacket* (1850): on his brief career in the navy.
 - *Moby-Dick* (1851); or, *The Whale*
 - *Billy Budd* (1891): a sign that he had resolved his quarrel with God



Melville's Theme and View

- a. Melville held a black view of the world.
- To him, the world is at once Godless and purposeless. Man in this universe lives a meaningless and futile life. Man can observe and even manipulate in a prudent way, but he cannot influence and overcome nature.
- b. Theme of alienation.
- To him, alienation exists in life on different levels, between man and man, man and society, and man and nature.
- c. Another theme Melville employed and shared with Cooper and Hawthorne is "rejection and quest".
- Melville's heroes were forever trying to escape from their corrupted societies and into a better place to live.



Moby Dick

MOBY DICK



Ishmael er en ung mann på jakt etter eventyr. Men når han tar jobb på hvalfangerskipet Pequod, innser han at det blir mer eventyrlig enn han noen sinne kunne ønske seg. Kapteinen ombord er Ahab. En mystisk man med arvene sinke og treiben, to smertefulle minner fra hans kamp mot en gigantisk, hvit hval noen år tidligere. Snart oppdager Ishmael at kapteinen balanserer på kanten av galenskap. Han er besatt av å hevnes på hvalen, som har fått navnet Moby Dick, men som av Ahab kalles «Djevelen selv». Han drives av et instinkt så sterkt at han er beredt til å ofre alt: skipet, fangsten, sitt eget liv - og alle andre!

USA PICTURES PRESENTS A WORLD WIDE NETWORK AUSTRALIA PRESENTS UNITED KINGDOM AUSTRALIAN CO-PRODUCTION
 PRODUCED BY "MOBY DICK" HENRY THOMAS WITH TED LEVINE AND GREGORY PECK AS FATHER BODDLE
 COSTUME DESIGNER ROBIN COOPER CAREY THOMAS PAUL COOPER TONY KEMPIN GORDON HALL
 MUSIC BY ROBERT BALDI, SR. FRANK YOUNG CYPRIAN TREV FUCHS
 EDITOR FRANK RODDAM KIDS NOBLE PRODUCED BY STEVE WOLSTEN
 DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANTON DIETHELM AND FRANK RODDAM
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BY PETER W. MERRILL
 DIRECTED BY FRANK RODDAM

Nominert til fem EMMY priser!

MOBY DICK

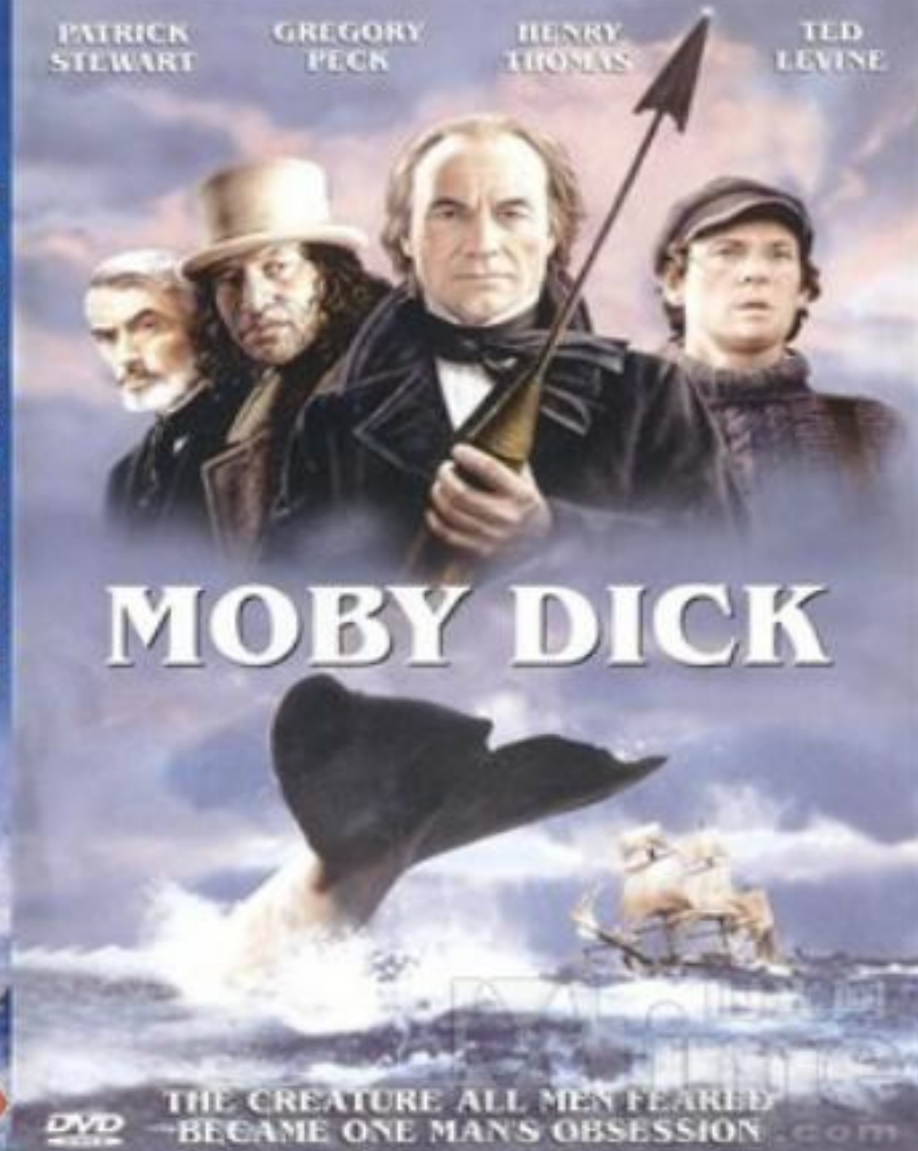
PATRICK STEWART

GREGORY PECK

HENRY THOMAS

TED LEVINE

MOBY DICK



THE CREATURE ALL MEN FEARED
 BECAME ONE MAN'S OBSESSION

ORIGINALTITTEL: MOBY DICK, KATEGORI: EVENTYR, SPELETER: 140 MIN. PRIS: 199,-

LYDSPOR: ENGELSK, STEREO UNDERTEKSTER: NORSK, DANSK, SVENSK, FINN

STATENS FILMTILSYN

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

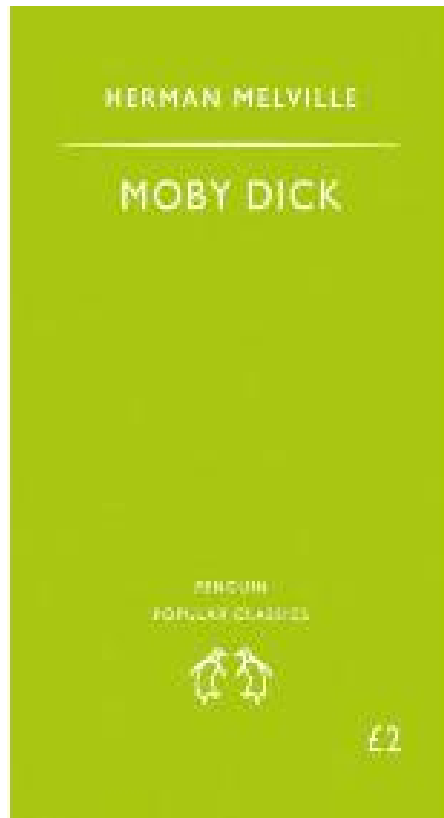
ALDERSGRANNSKILT

REGISTRERT I NORSK FILMREGISTER, 13404

7 0 9 0 0 0 1 7 3 4 0 4 6

1.888

ALDERSGRANNSKILT



- It is an encyclopedia of everything, history, philosophy, religion, etc.

It's one of the world's greatest masterpieces.

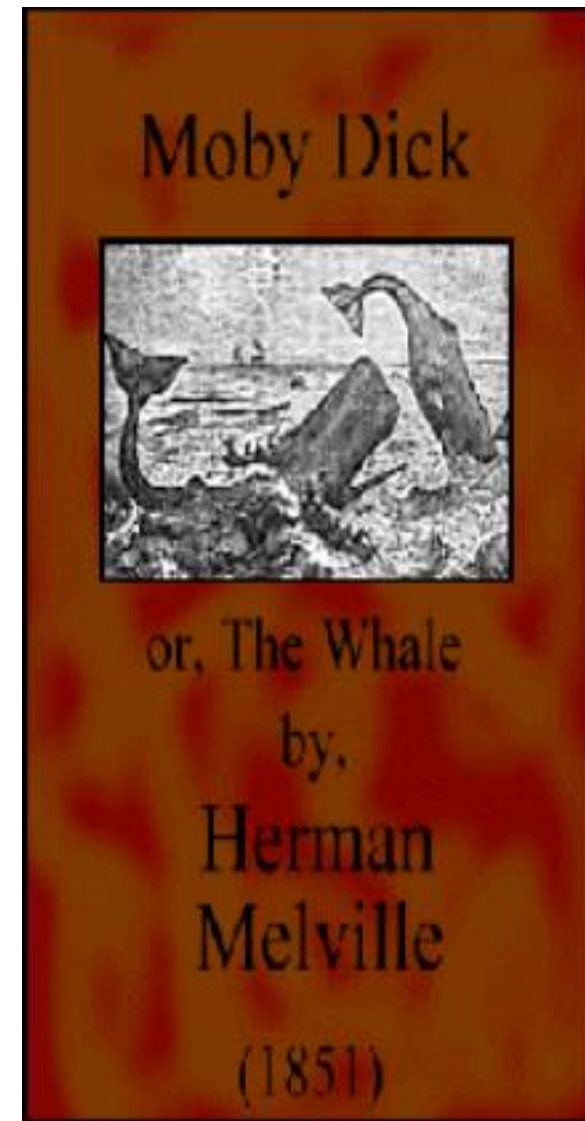
It is regarded as the first American prose epic.

In addition to a detailed account of the operations of the whaling industry. It is also a

Shakespearean tragedy of man fighting against overwhelming odds in an indifferent and even hostile universe.

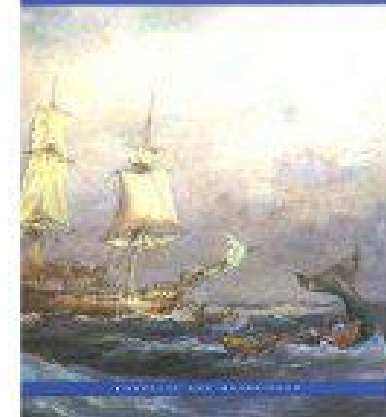
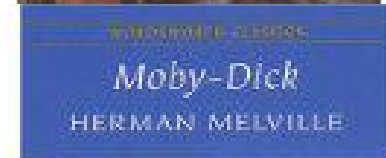
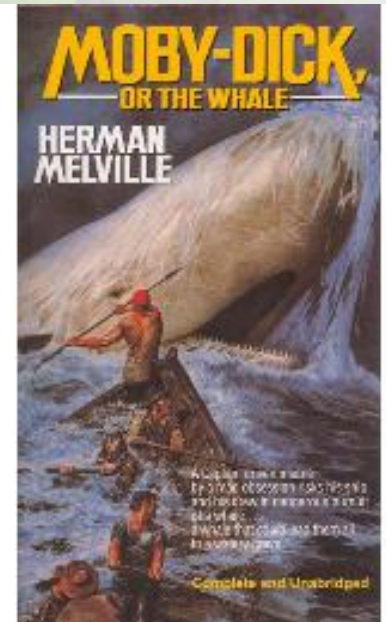


- The story is not complicated, dealing with Ahab, a man with an overwhelming obsession to kill the whale which has crippled him, on board his ship *Pequod* in the chase of the big whale. The dramatic description of the hazards of whaling makes the book a very exciting sea narrative and builds a literary monument to an era of whaling industry in the nineteenth century.
- But *Moby Dick* is not merely a whaling tale or sea adventure, considering that Melville is a great symbolist. It turns out to be a symbolic voyage of the mind in quest of the truth and knowledge of the universe, a spiritual exploration into man's deep reality and psychology.



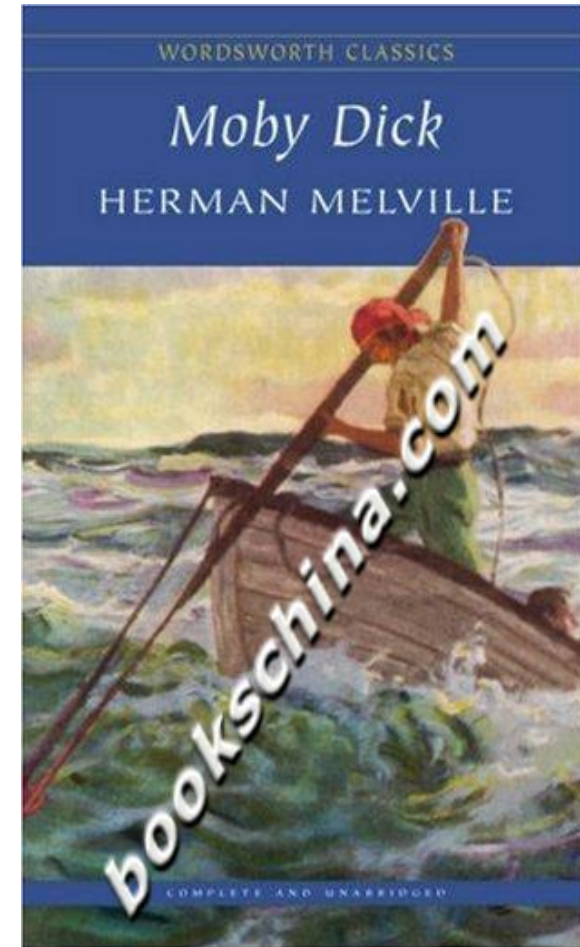
Settings

- The action early in the novel takes place in New Bedford and Nantucket, Mass.
- Later, the action takes place at sea on the *Pequod*, a weather-beaten ship, and on whaling boats sent out from the *Pequod*.
- The novel ends when the whale destroys the *Pequod* and another ship, the *Rachel* picks up Ishmael, who survived by floating on a coffin.

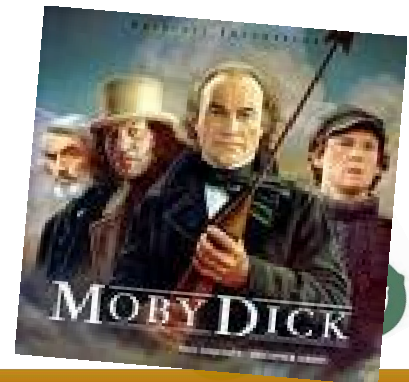


Major characters

- **Ishmael** — The narrator, and a junior member of the crew of the *Pequod*.
- **Ahab** — Captain of the *Pequod*. Ahab lost his leg to Moby Dick. He is single-minded in his pursuit of the whale, using a mixture of charisma and terror to persuade his crew to join him.
- **Moby-Dick** — The great white sperm whale. Moby Dick, also referred to as the White Whale, is an infamous and dangerous threat to, symbolizing the forces working against Ahab

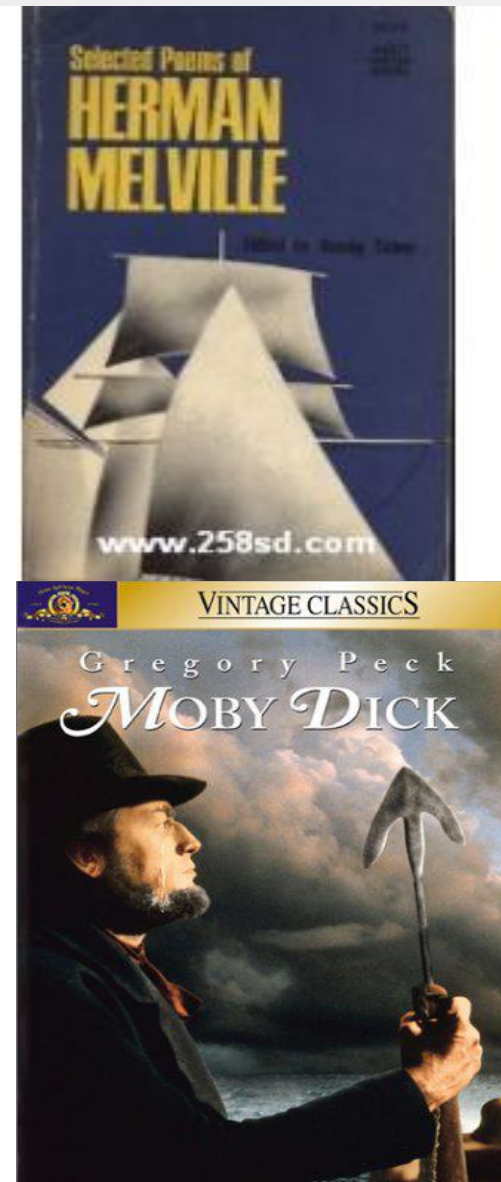


- **Starbuck** - The first mate of the *Pequod*. Starbuck questions Ahab's judgment, first in private and later in public. He is a religious man who believes that Christianity offers a way to interpret the world around him, although he is not dogmatic or pushy about his beliefs. Starbuck acts as a conservative force against Ahab's mania.
- **Stubb** - The second mate of the *Pequod*. Stubb, chiefly characterized by his mischievous good humor, is easygoing and popular. He proves a bit of a nihilist, always trusting in fate and refusing to assign too much significance to anything.



Plot Summary

- Moby-Dick is the enormous white whale who torments Captain Ahab in the novel *Moby-Dick* (1851). Ahab is obsessed with finding and killing Moby-Dick, having lost a leg in a previous encounter with the whale, and Ahab's burning desire for revenge really is the center of the story. At novel's end, Ahab finds and attacks Moby-Dick, but the terrible whale takes Ahab, his ship *Pequod*, and nearly all its crew down to a watery grave with him.
- Melville based his tale, in part, on the sinking of the real-life whaling ship *Essex* in 1820. *Moby-Dick*'s first line is famously short: "*Call me Ishmael.*" Ishmael is the book's narrator and the only survivor of the *Pequod*'s encounter with Moby-Dick.



Characterization

Ishmael

- He resembles his namesake in the Bible, who is the illicit child of Abraham and his maid, implying he is a wanderer and an outcast.
- an outcast to look for truth
- the only one to have a belief in humanity
- the only survivor
- the way of Ishmael, the way of life;

Ahab

- Ahab has a namesake in the Bible, who is a cruel Israeli King. Ahab is also cruel.
- the captain of the whaling ship, *Pequod*
- a Greek or Shakespearean hero
- a devil, with a strong desire for revenge
- the way of Ahab, the way of death;



Topics for Presentation 1

- Analyze the character of Ahab.
- Do you think that he is a tragic hero?

Ahab is also combination of both evil and good. He is a hero for fighting against the whale (if the whale is evil) and also a destroyer for destroying the nature (if the whale is innocent).



Topics for Presentation 2

- The symbolism in *Moby Dick*.



Symbolism



The Pequod

—It is the ship of the American soul. The *Pequod* is the microcosm of human society.

The voyage

—The voyage itself is a metaphor for "search and discovery, the search for the ultimate truth of experience."

Moby Dick

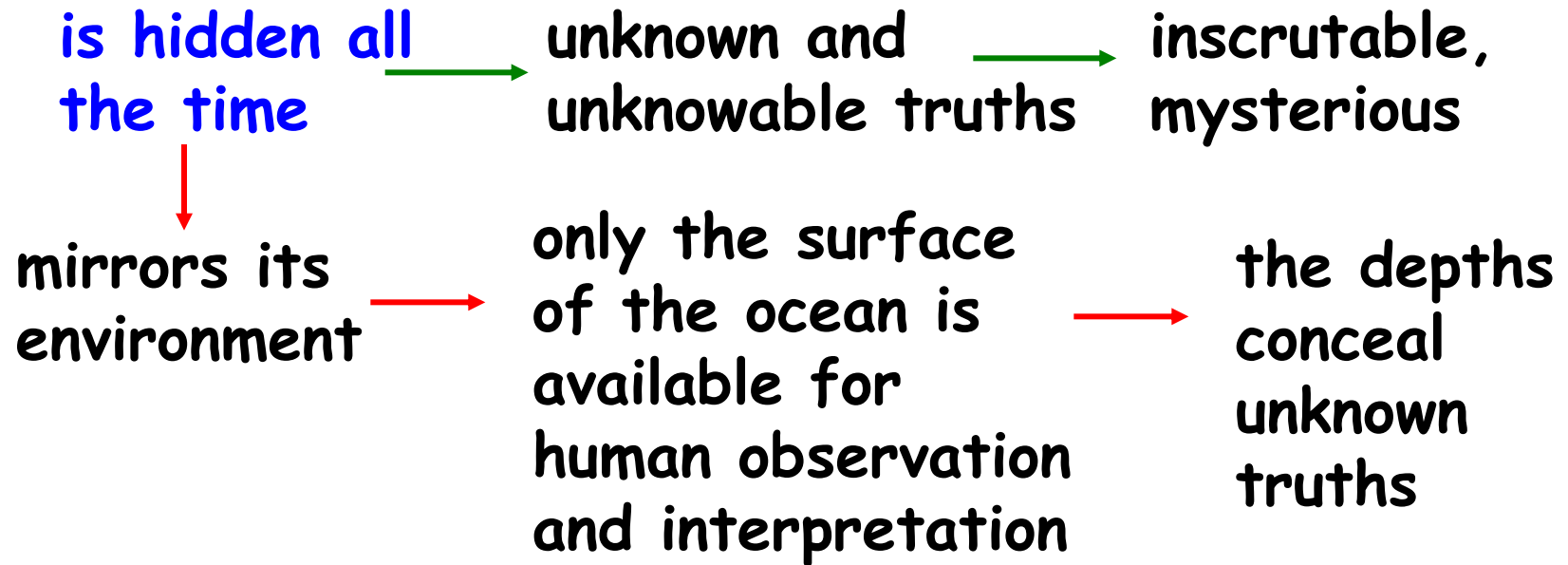
—the whale, is the most conspicuous symbol in the book. It is capable of many interpretations.

Its whiteness

—It is a paradoxical color, signifying as it does death and corruption as well as purity, innocence, and youth. It represents the final mystery of the universe which man will do well to desist from pursuing.



Moby Dick



a metaphor for the human relationship with the Christian God: God is unknown and cannot be pinned down.



Is Moby Dick Good or Evil?

A. For Melville, Moby Dick symbolizes nature, for it is complex, unfathomable and beautiful as well.

B. For Melville, as well as for the reader and Ishmael, the narrator, Moby Dick is still a mystery, an ultimate mystery of the universe, inscrutable and ambivalent, and the voyage of the mind will forever remain a search, not a discovery, of the truth.

C. For Ahab, however, the whale only represents evil. So, the symbolic meanings of Moby Dick are ambiguous. It is the symbol of both holy and evil things.



Themes of *Moby Dick*

- 1) Melville's black view : the sense of futility and meaninglessness of the world. Man cannot overcome nature. Once he attempts to seek power over it he is doomed.

The adventure of killing Moby Dick is meaningless. Ahab tries to control it, which leads to his doom.

modern life → the loss of faith,
the sense of
futility → well
expressed
in *Moby
Dick*



2) The theme of alienation: Melville sensed this major theme existing in the life of his time, between man and man, man and society, and man and nature.

Ahab cuts himself off from his family, stays away from his crew, hates Moby Dick and becomes a devil rushing to his doom.



3) loneliness and suicidal individualism (individualism causing disaster and death)

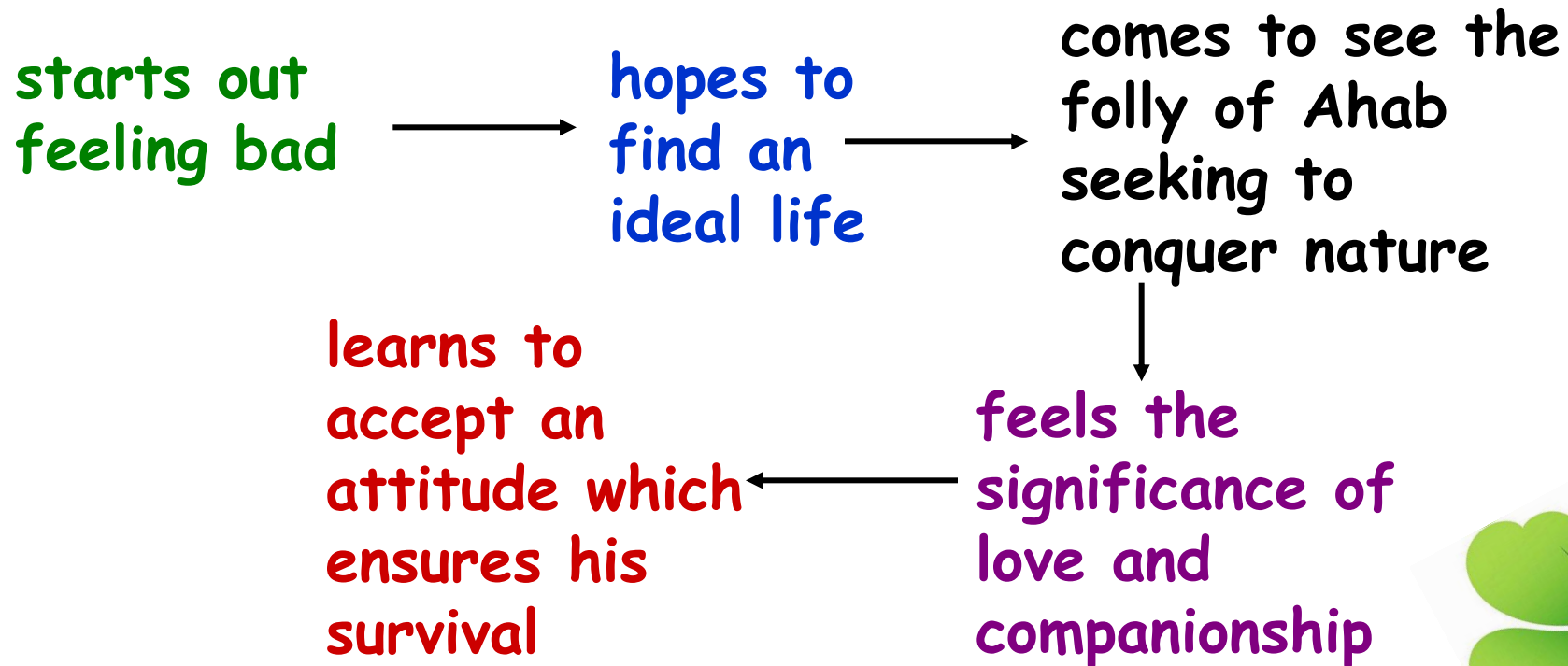
Moby Dick is a negative reflection upon
Transcendentalism

a victim of
extreme
individualism

← Ahab: too much of a self-reliant
individual to be a good human
being



4) rejection and quest :voyaging for Ishmael has become a journey in quest of knowledge and values.



Writing style

1. Symbolism

The *Pequod*, voyage, Moby Dick, names of characters, such as Ahab and Ishmael.

2. Ambiguity

Melville manages to achieve the effect of ambiguity through employing the technique of multiple view of his narratives, while indicating the author's unwillingness to commit himself, definitely helps to create a symbolic meaning.

3. Dramatic style (use stage direction)

4. Omniscient author (knowing everything in the novel)

5. Flashback



Comments on *Moby Dick*

- Symbolism is not the only way in which Melville has articulated, shaped, and presented the mighty theme of the book, Melville's great gifts of language, invention, psychological analysis, speculative agility, and narrative power are fused to make *Moby Dick* a world classic.
- The skillful use of Ishmael both as a character and a narrator gives the novel a moral magnitude; the manipulation of the whaling chapters for some philosophical speculation makes the novel more than symbolic.
- Different levels of language use and styles turn the whole book into a symphony with all the musical instruments going on to form a melody; and moreover, Melville's knowledge of epic and tragedy, the highest literary genres helps him produce a great tragic epic, with Ahab at the center as a tragic hero, who burns with a baleful fire, becoming evil himself in his thirst to destroy evil.



Topics for Discussion

- What do you think of “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” ? Will you be revengeful when you are hurt by the evil power?
- How is ecological balance revealed in *Moby Dick*? (view of harmony, view of ecological balance)
- Harmonious view between Man and Man, Man and Nature
- Respect the nature's law, otherwise human beings will be punished by nature.



思政启发



人与自然和谐共生



Homework

- Preview Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *A Psalm of Life*
- Topics for Presentation
- 1. The beauty in *A Psalm of Life* (rhyme, meter, rhetoric devices, etc.,.)
- 2. What kind of person is the speaker of this poem? What is the tone and the theme?.



References

- Herman Melville. *Moby Dick*. Penguin books, 1994.
- <http://www.aboutbibleprophecy.com/p122.htm>
- <http://www.answers.com/Jonah>
- <http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/bassr/218/projects/lawrence/lawrence.htm>
- <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mobydick>
- 常耀信编. 《美国文学简史》，南开大学出版社，1990.
- 赫尔曼·麦尔维尔：《白鲸》，曹庸译。上海：上海译文出版社，1982年。
- 陶洁主编. 《美国文学选读》，高等教育出版社，2004.
- 吴伟仁编. 《美国文学史及选读》，外语教学与研究出版社，2004.
- 张伯香. 《英美文学选读》，外语教学与研究出版社 1999.

