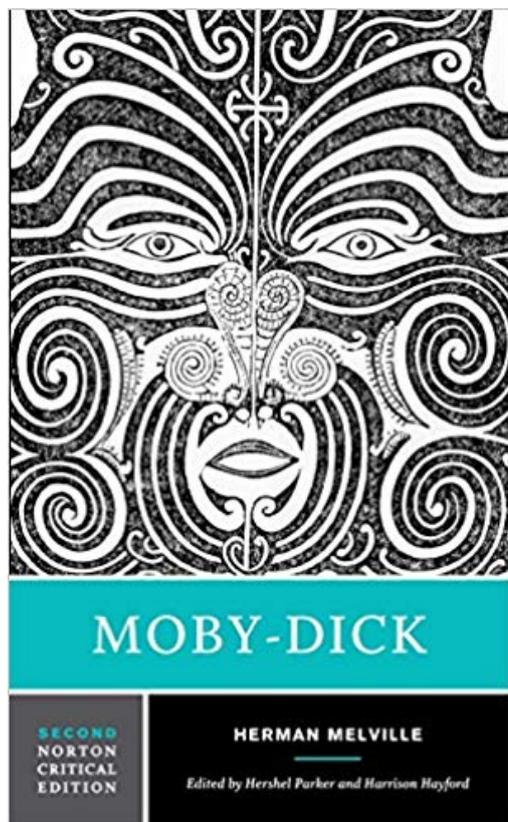


Moby-Dick (Second Edition) (Norton Critical Editions) by Hershel Parker, Harrison Hayford, Herman Melville



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ISBN:	0393972836
ISBN13:	978-0393972832
Author:	Hershel Parker, Harrison Hayford, Herman Melville
Book title:	Moby-Dick (Second Edition) (Norton Critical Editions)
Other Formats:	doc azw txt docx
Pages:	752 pages
Publisher:	W. W. Norton & Company; Second edition (July 27, 1999)
Language:	English
Size PDF version:	1405 kb
Size ePub version:	1209 kb
Size fb2 version:	1887 kb
Category:	History & Criticism

For this Sesquicentennial Norton Critical Edition, the Northwestern-Newberry text of Moby-Dick has been generously footnoted to include dozens of biographical discoveries, mainly from Hershel Parker's work on his two-volume biography of Melville.

A section of "Whaling and Whalecraft" features prose and graphics by John B. Putnam, a sample of contemporary whaling engravings, as well as, new to this edition, an engraving of Tupai Cupa, the real-life inspiration for the character of Queequeg. Evoking Melville's fascination with the fluidity of categories like savagery and civilization, the image of Tupai Cupa fittingly introduces "Before Moby-Dick: International Controversy over Melville," a new section that documents the ferocity of religions, political, and sexual hostility toward Melville in reaction to his early books, beginning with Typee in 1846. The image of Tupai Cupa also evokes Melville's interest in the mystery of self-identity and the possibility of knowing another person's "queenly personality" (Chapter 119). That theme (focused on Melville, Ishmael, and Ahab) is pursued in "A Handful of Critical Challenges," from Walter E. Bezanson's classic centennial study through Harrison Hayford's meditation on "Loomings" and recent essays by Camille Paglia and John Wenke. In "Reviews and Letters by Melville," a letter has been redated and a wealth of new biographical material has been added to the footnotes, notably to Melville's "Hawthorne and His Mosses." "Analogues and Sources" retains classic pieces by J. N. Reynolds and Owen Chase, as well as new findings by Geoffrey Sanborn and Steven Olsen-Smith. In "Reviews of Moby-Dick" emphasizes the ongoing religious hostility toward Melville and highlights new discoveries, such as the first-known Scottish review of The Whale. "Posthumous

Praise and the Melville Revival: 1893-1927" collects belated, enthusiastic praise up through that of William Faulkner. "Biographical Cross-Light" is Hershel Parker's somber look at what writing Moby-Dick cost Melville and his family. From Foreword through Selected Bibliography, this Sesquicentennial Norton Critical Edition is uniquely valuable as the most up-to-date and comprehensive documentary source for study of Moby-Dick.



Reviews of the **Moby-Dick (Second Edition) (Norton Critical Editions)** by Hershel Parker, Harrison Hayford, Herman Melville

Windforge

I read Moby-Dick several times in college almost forty years ago. Now I'm taking a night class and reading it with life experience of forty years. Awe is the feeling that constantly gets evoked as I read. Why awe?

Capacious. That is the word that repeats again and again in my head. Moby-Dick is a vibrantly colored hot air balloon that keeps growing in size as I read it. First, Melville's subject is the sperm whale, the largest creature on earth. But we don't just learn about the sperm whale but about all whales. Then we learn about whaling and its nobility. Here is where it gets very interesting. We participate in whaling, its skill, equipment, courage, risks and economy AND about how it results in the gruesome destruction of the whale. We feel the horror inflicted on the whales and we feel the nobility of the activity that slaughters them. Melville doesn't allow us to avert our eyes either to the daring of whaling or to the viciousness of the slaughter. That is where the book inflates even more because he holds both perspectives equally which is a much larger place than if he had taken sides.

The book also foreshadows modernism by using a variety of narrative techniques; theater, pure narration, encyclopedic explanations and subjective interior monologues. Melville is constantly breaking up the narrative with omniscient recitations of fascinating information about his subject matter. And like Ulysses or the Waste Land, he piles on the reference to Shakespeare, the Greeks, Christianity and the Hebrew traditions.

There are many references with regard to Ahab and the Whale regarding evil and Satan. Yet Ahab has great respect and reverence for Moby Dick. Ahab himself knows he is obsessed and but can have great compassion like his feelings for the lowly addled Pip. So yes there is evil afoot in the book but it isn't the kind that that creates simple polar opposites. As Ahab describes Moby-Dick (has) `an inscrutable malice sinewing through it' that describe the book as well. There is evil and there is also goodness that coexists in the book making the reader feel that he has to take sides. If the reader resists this temptation he or she will experience the awe of a deep and ever expanding mystery.

Weernis

A very enjoyable listen. Well narrated and takes a long time to get through, my two main

requirements for an audiobook :). I tried reading this when I was young (luckily never given it as an assignment) and it is a tough read. Herman Melville was a master of the poetic phrase and it is beautiful to listen to but a trudge to read imho. A true American classic of the dangers of revenge and mob mentality. It also provides a time-machine like glimpse into the powerful American whaling industry and once again demonstrates the American concept (for good or bad) that whatever the world does we will outstrip it. I was especially pleased with the authors (narrators) view on the belief that mankind could never kill enough whales to endanger their numbers in the ocean and provides an interesting analogy separating their killing from the American Buffalo. Sadly, little did he know of where technology and seafaring were headed just a few decade later. I spent .99 for the kindle book and got the audio for free so I count it as money well spent.

Shem

Nathaniel Philbrick is a brilliant writer. His prose is flowing and clear, and he has chosen his excerpts from this towering work well. His enthusiasm for MOBY DICK is infectious and he has managed to overcome my hesitation about jumping into a long work of nineteenth century fiction. I have started reading MOBY DICK, and I will persevere!

So why four stars and not five? The final chapter of this wonderful book seemed vague and the concluding paragraphs felt like a contradiction to every valid point in the previous pages. It is almost as though the editor said to Philbrick: "Geez, you can't end the book on such a dark note. Put in a rainbow, or something." Melville was a complex, needy and troubled person, as this book recognizes. He was probably bipolar (although the word is never mentioned), and certainly had a strong streak of depression in his personality and life experiences. That Melville somehow clung to youthful dreams through the end of his life is just a little too improbable. That a scrap of paper found by Melville's family after his death is the evidence of such hope is very weak evidence indeed. That he managed to live out his life in obscurity after failing to achieve family harmony, financial success or artistic recognition does not suggest hope as much as resignation. Philbrick is certainly entitled to this opinion, although for me, as a reader of this tiny gem of a book, it seemed a falsified conclusion, unworthy of all of the sensitive and almost poetic content in the rest of the book.

Malakelv

This review is for the Norton Critical 150th Anniversary Edition. I've read several other versions, as this is one of my favorite books, and this edition would easily be in my Top editions to own. Despite being a paperback and filled with supplemental material, I was surprised at how compact it is. The annotations and illustrations really add to your reading enjoyment of this classic novel.

Zeks Horde

I knew I could never get through reading the novel so I bought the audio version intending to listen to it in my car while out and about. Instead, my husband and I listen to it while traveling in the car on long trips. This turned out to be a great idea because we can both listen to it and it makes the time fly by on long drives. We love it!

When it says "performed by Frank Muller" they aren't kidding. He doesn't just narrate, he does the voices of each character and he makes it all sound so interesting. Frank Muller is a true talent at audio books.

As for the story, it is a classic with surprisingly humorous parts. Slogging though the book would've been a chore for me and I'm glad I found a way to experience the story of Moby Dick that I find thoroughly enjoyable. I highly recommend this audio book.

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