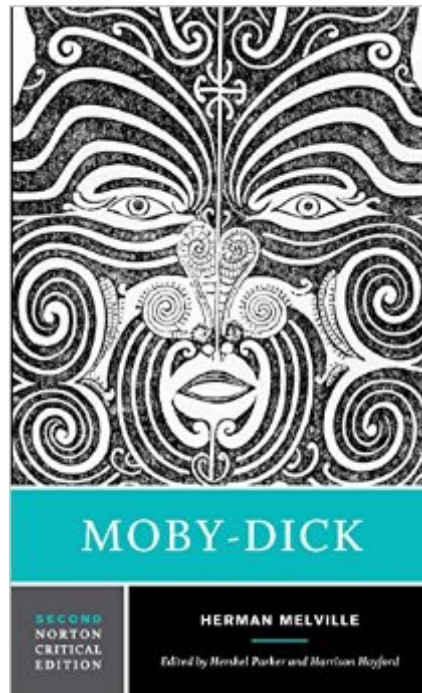


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# Moby-Dick (Second Edition) (Norton Critical Editions)



## Synopsis

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 religious, 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*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Unless you are a naval historian or a Melville scholar, you probably won't have a rewarding (or even comprehensible) time with Moby-Dick at this remove unless the edition you're using comes with a good set of footnotes. Here's the skinny on the various editions currently on shelves: THESE HAVE FOOTNOTES ON THE PAGE ITSELF: \* Charles Feidelson, Jr.'s annotated edition. Unquestionably the most all-around useful edition of Moby-Dick ever printed. Generous and highly useful footnotes right on the page, covering lexical, allusional, and cross-referential items. Two disadvantages: you may at times feel put upon by Feidelson's interlarded interpretations, and the thing is totally out of print. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964. ISBN: 067260311X \* The "Norton critical" edition, edited by Parker and Hayford. The edition most widely employed by scholars. Stingier with the footnotes than Feidelson, but still a good second choice. Many useful essays at the end. The layout of the text is a bit hard on the eye, though. Make sure you get the SECOND edition, from 2001. ISBN: 0393972836 \* The "Barnes and Noble Classics" edition. The footnotes for the most part are skimpy and confined to obscure vocabulary, not cultural and literary allusions. ISBN: 1-59308-018-2 THESE HAVE A FOOTNOTES SECTION IN THE BACK OF THE BOOK: \* The "Oxford World Classics" edition. About 11 pp. at the end. ISBN: 0-19-283385-5 \* The "Modern Library" edition. About 13 pp. at the end. ISBN: 0-679-78327-X \* The "Penguin Classics" edition. About 15 pp. of notes at the end by Tom Quirk. ISBN: 0-14-24.3724-7 (This is their fancy hardbound version: see next item.) \* The "Penguin Classics" edition. About 15 pp.

Finishing "Moby Dick" goes up there with my greatest (and few) academic achievements. It was a gruelling read, but---in the end---completely worthwhile. I've been reading it for 6 months. I started over the summer, during an abroad program in Oxford, and I remember sitting outside reading when one of the professors came over, saw what I was reading, and said: "It's a very strange book, isn't it?" Looking back, that might be the best way to describe it. The blurb from D.H. Lawrence on the

back cover agrees: Moby Dick "commands a stillness in the soul, an awe...[it is] one of the strangest and most wonderful books in the world." Now there are those who will say that the book's middle is unbearable---with its maddeningly detailed accounts of whaling. Part of me agrees. That was the hardest to get through. But, still, even the most dull subject offers Melville an opportunity to show off his writing chops. He's a fantastic writer---his text most resembles that of Shakespeare. And, like one Shakespeare's characters, Melville sees all the world as a stage.

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