

HERMAN MELVILLE



A Retrospective of His Works
on the 150th Anniversary of *Moby-Dick*
Shown in the Chapin Library of Rare Books
Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts
May 7 - September 20, 2001

Herman Melville: A Retrospective on the 150th Anniversary of *Moby-Dick*

THE PRESENT YEAR, 2001, is the 150th anniversary of the publication of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*. It was his sixth book, and during his lifetime not a critical success. Only after the centennial of his birth in 1919 and the publication of *Herman Melville: Mariner and Mystic* by Raymond M. Weaver (1921) were the author and his masterpiece given wider attention. Since that time, *Moby-Dick* has appeared in dozens of editions, abridgments, and adaptations, and writings about it are legion.

Apart from its high standing in the ranks of American literature, *Moby-Dick* is also of local interest. Melville wrote the greater part of it at Arrowhead, a farmhouse in Pittsfield, Massachusetts to which he and his family moved in 1850 and which remained his home until 1863.

This exhibition commemorates the sesquicentennial of *Moby-Dick*, but also Melville's other literary achievements. The Chapin Library is fortunate to hold most of his writings in first editions, as well as several of the best illustrated editions of *Moby-Dick* and early writings about Melville. We are pleased to mount this exhibition as part of a two-year celebration of Melville and *Moby-Dick* initiated by the Friends of Herman Melville's Arrowhead and the Berkshire County Historical Society.



Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Narrative of a Four Months' Residence among the Natives of a Valley of the Marquesas Islands, or, A Peep at Polynesian Life
London: John Murray, 1846
First edition, second state, in cloth
Gift of Eleanor M. Metcalf

Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas
New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846
First American edition, in cloth
Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

In January 1841 Melville took ship aboard the whaler *Acushnet* bound for the South Seas. Whaling was a hard business, hard enough that Melville, with a companion, Toby, deserted when the ship reached the bay of Nukuheva in the Marquesas Islands. There the two men became prisoner-guests of the cannibal natives of the Valley of Typee. Toby escaped after a brief time, but Melville remained for four months, until being rescued by an Australian whaling vessel.

Melville was later to draw upon his personal experiences abroad and at sea in several of his books, including *Moby-Dick*. But the immediate results of his adventures in the Marquesas were a *Narrative*, better known by its American title, *Typee*, published in 1846, and a continuation, *Omoo*, in 1847. *Typee* especially made Melville notorious: here was a young writer who had visited Polynesia, made unflattering observations about missionaries, and bathed with unclothed native women! The American edition of *Typee* was slightly bowdlerized by its publisher, who then asked the author to further suppress its more scandalous elements. Melville did so for the "revised edition," to which he added a brief sequel, *The Story of Toby*.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas
New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1847
Revised edition, third printing
Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

Omoo: A Narrative of Adventures in the South Seas: Being a Sequel to the "Residence in the Marquesas Islands"
London: John Murray, 1847
First edition, in cloth
Gift of Eleanor M. Metcalf

Eleanor Melville Metcalf, the donor to the Chapin Library of several of the books in this exhibition, was Herman Melville's granddaughter, and herself

the author of *Herman Melville: Cycle and Epicycle* (1953) and editor of Melville's *Journal of a Visit to London and the Continent, 1849–1850* (1948).

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Mardi: and a Voyage Thither

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1849

First American edition, 2 vols.

Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

Mardi: and a Voyage Thither

Boston: The St. Botolph Society, 1923

From the Estate of Samuel E. Allen, Class of 1903

“Not long ago,” Melville wrote in his preface to *Mardi*, “having published two narratives of voyages in the Pacific [*Typee* and *Omoo*], which, in many quarters, were received with incredulity, the thought occurred to me, of indeed writing a romance of Polynesian adventure, and publishing it as such; to see whether, the fiction might not, possibly be received for a verity: in some degree the reverse of my previous experience.” *Mardi*, however, far from “verity,” is burlesque, nonsense, satire, allegory, as the hero of the work, Taji, and his Norse companion Jarl sojourn in Mardi, a realm of transcendental beauty, and then search around the world for the maiden Yillah. “From beginning to end,” wrote Meade Minnigerode, “*Mardi* is gloriously insane. One persists in the belief that Melville enjoyed every line of it, even in his most abstruse passages.” Raymond M. Weaver called it “undigested exuberance.” It was a failure with most critics, and sold poorly.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Redburn: His First Voyage: Being the

Sailor-Boy Confessions and Reminiscences of the Son-of-a-Gentleman, in the Merchant Service

London: Richard Bentley, 1849

First edition, 2 vols.

Gift of Eleanor M. Metcalf

Melville's autobiographical novel *Redburn* is based on a voyage he took in 1837 from New York to Liverpool and back in the merchantman *Highlander*. He was strong and brave, but young and naive, and did not know what to expect: life for a sailor in the fore-castle,

he found, was not that of a passenger in a comfortable liner. Nor was his first visit to a foreign shore the romantic experience he had imagined.

His memories were still vivid when he came to write about them in the summer of 1849, semi-fictionalized as *Redburn*. Although others have praised it, Melville in his journal of 1849 called *Redburn* “a thing which I, the author, know to be trash, and wrote . . . to buy some tobacco with.” His motives for writing were financial, but not so trivial: his wife was pregnant, and after the failure of *Mardi* his royalties had dwindled and his account with his publisher was overdrawn. *Redburn* was one of two books Melville wrote in the space of only four months, together with *White-Jacket*.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

White-Jacket, or, The World in a Man-of-War

London: Richard Bentley, 1850

First edition, 2 vols.

Gift of Eleanor M. Metcalf

Melville wrote *White-Jacket*, like *Redburn*, in the summer of 1849, with income badly needed, and it too was drawn on his own experiences, in this case of service aboard the American frigate *United States* from August 1843 to October 1844. Its narrator, a young seaman, is nicknamed “White-Jacket” after he buys a white peacoat in Peru. The book is a vivid account of life aboard a ship of war, of dark moments of terrible weather and punishments for minor misdeeds, as well as good humor and high spirits.

Obed Macy, 1762–1844

The History of Nantucket . . . Together with the Rise and Progress of the Whale Fishery . . .

Boston: Hilliard, Gray, 1835

First edition

Gift of Shane Riorden in memory of his mother, Mildred Blake

Melville quotes from Macy's book repeatedly in *Moby-Dick*. This is both the primary history of Nantucket and an important source for the history of whaling. Its author had first-hand experience and drew upon local records, many of which were later destroyed by fire and therefore are preserved only here.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Moby-Dick, or, The Whale

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851

First American edition, first binding

Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

Moby-Dick was first published in three volumes in London by Richard Bentley, with the primary title *The Whale* but lacking the brief epilogue which tells how Ishmael is saved. About a month later, this American edition appeared, in one volume. Praised in England but panned in the United States, it receded into the background of American literature until a revival of interest in Melville occurred some two decades into the 20th century.

Since that time there has been a prodigious amount of writing about *Moby-Dick*, most of it looking beyond its surface story of Captain Ahab's obsession with hunting a great white whale, and the experiences of Ishmael, Queequeg, Starbuck, Stubbs, and the other men of the whaler *Pequod* out of Nantucket, to the ultimate "meaning" of the work. However, there remains no single, definitive answer to this question, no one overarching interpretation – nor can there be, given a work with such a broad canvas, so cosmic a scope, so bottomless a well of thoughts, symbolism, and power.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Moby-Dick, or, The Whale

Illustrated by Rockwell Kent

Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1930

One of 1000 copies

Purchased on the Luther S. Mansfield Fund

Of the many illustrated editions of *Moby-Dick* this is the most famous, and to many eyes the definitive treatment. In 1930 Rockwell Kent was in his prime and at the peak of his powers. Well-travelled, a skilled draftsman with a distinctive style, capable of expressing great depths of feeling, he was the perfect illustrator for Melville's masterpiece. One of his pictures is on the cover of this handlist.

The Lakeside Press edition, issued in an aluminum slipcase (not shown), was the most elaborate physical presentation of *Moby-Dick* up to its time, and one of the finest examples of bookmaking in America.

Rockwell Kent, 1882–1971

Typed letter signed, to Lucy Eugenia Osborne, Custodian of the Chapin Library, Williams College

Ausable Forks, New York, 7 July 1945

Gift of J. Brooks Hoffman, M.D., Class of 1940

In this brief letter Kent explains that the design on the upper cover of the Lakeside Press *Moby-Dick* represents "an emptied goblet – the cup of life, if you like" above the ocean, but its relationship with Melville's work is to be felt, not explained.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Moby-Dick, or, The Whale

Paintings by LeRoy Neiman

Preface by Jacques-Yves Cousteau

Mt. Vernon, N.Y.: The Artist's Limited Edition, 1975

One of 1500 copies, printed at the Press of A. Colish

Gift of J. Jeffrey Shedd, Class of 1925

LeRoy Neiman, best known for his paintings of sporting events, here applies his flamboyant style to the hunt for the great white whale.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Moby-Dick, or, The Whale

Wood-engravings by Barry Moser

Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981

Library purchase

This edition of *Moby-Dick* was originally published in 1979 in a larger, deluxe format by the Arion Press of San Francisco. In keeping with printer-designer Andrew Hoyem's belief that illustration of characters or events in the book would inhibit a reader's imagination, Barry Moser depicted only vessels, ports, seas, whales, objects, tools, and the processes of whaling. The text is definitive, edited by Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Cetology: A Systematized Exhibition of the Whale in His Broad Genera: Natural History Excerpts from Moby-Dick

Edited and illustrated by Ronald Keller

New York: Red Angel Press, 1973

No. 19 of 100 copies, signed by the artist

Purchased on the Luther S. Mansfield Fund

“Already we are boldly launched upon the deep; but soon we shall be lost in its unshored, harborless immensities. Ere that come to pass; ere the Pequod’s weedy hull rolls side by side with the barnacled hulls of the leviathan; at the outset it is but well to attend to a matter almost indispensable to a thorough appreciative understanding of the more special leviathanic revelations and allusions of all sorts which are to follow.

“It is some systematized exhibition of the whale in his broad genera, that I would now fain put before you . . .” – *Moby-Dick*, ch. 32.

A.S.W. Rosenbach, 1876–1952

An Introduction to Herman Melville’s Moby-Dick: or The Whale

New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1924

First edition, no. 113 of 250 copies, printed by John Henry Nash

Purchased on the Luther S. Mansfield Fund

This appreciation of *Moby-Dick* was written by the great Philadelphia bookseller A.S.W. Rosenbach. “Melville created in *Moby-Dick* something that will survive as long as the sea itself, an incarnation that will grow more vivid, more permanent with the roll of the years. . . . In *Moby-Dick* Melville reached a point from which it was impossible to advance. He had thought much of the mysteries of life, he had plumbed the depths of the soul as few other men, Shakespeare and Goethe excepted; he saw with a vision that has been vouchsafed to almost no other.”

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

The Apple-Tree Table and Other Sketches

Introductory note by Henry Chapin

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1922

Purchased on the Luther S. Mansfield Fund

This volume reprints various prose sketches by Melville which previously appeared in magazines between 1850 and 1856. It is opened to “Hawthorne and His Mosses,” an appreciation of Nathaniel Hawthorne and his *Mosses from an Old Manse*, published soon after Melville and Hawthorne met in August 1850. Hawthorne had moved with his family to Lenox, Massachusetts in May 1850 and remained there until removing to Concord in November 1851. During that period he completed *The House of the Seven Gables*, while Melville – from autumn 1850, only a few miles away at Arrowhead in Pittsfield – enjoyed his friendship, and was energized by the contact, as he brought his masterpiece, *Moby-Dick*, to a close.

“Ravished in solitude by his alienation from his fellows,” wrote Raymond M. Weaver, “Melville discovered that the author of *The Scarlet Letter* was his neighbour. He came to know Hawthorne: and his eager soul rushed to embrace Hawthorne’s as that of a brother in despair. . . .” When *Moby-Dick* was published in 1851, it bore the dedication: “In token of my admiration for his genius, this book is inscribed to Nathaniel Hawthorne.”

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Pierre, or, The Ambiguities

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1852

First edition

Two copies, gifts of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869, and Eleanor M. Metcalf

In autumn 1851 Melville was in a sea of troubles. Apart from family and financial problems, hostile reviews of *Moby-Dick* had begun to appear in America (in contrast to praise from reviewers in England) and village gossip said that his book was “more than Blasphemous.” In the midst of all this he wrote *Pierre*, a psychological novel he intended to be greater than *Moby-Dick*, but which in the event was a disastrous failure and brought forth upon its author a still more vicious hurricane of critical abuse.

As Hershel Parker said in his introduction to the “Kraken Edition” (see following entry), “Melville was deluding himself that the reviewers and the public would welcome a novel about the growth of the mind of his rich young American hero, however romantic he made the blond conventional heroine, Lucy, and however gothic he made her dark rival, Isabel. Realistically speaking, there was no possibility that a book of Melville’s could succeed if it involved perversely ambiguous sexual roles (with a clear possibility of actual incest) and examined, even as a philosophical theory, the impracticability of Christianity.”

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Pierre, or, The Ambiguities

The Kraken Edition

Edited by Hershel Parker

Pictures by Maurice Sendak

New York: HarperCollins, 1995

Lent by Wayne G. Hammond

Pierre also confused its readers by incongruities between some of its final and its earlier parts. In book 17 Pierre is suddenly revealed to be an author, and we are treated to a satire of publishers and critics. Melville had planned none of this in advance, but wrote additional passages and chapters to vent his anger at vicious reviews of *Moby-Dick* that had just appeared, and to negative reactions to *Pierre* he had just received from his publisher, Harper & Brothers, and from a friend, the literary critic Evert Duyckinck.

In 1995 Hershel Parker published the “Kraken Edition” of *Pierre*, “a reconstruction of the text which Harper & Brothers grudgingly contracted to publish a hundred and forty-three years ago, in early January 1852, before Melville added many wholly unplanned pages on his hero as a juvenile author and then as a young man immaturely attempting to write a mature book.”

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Israel Potter: His Fifty Years of Exile

New York: G.P. Putnam, 1855

First edition

Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

Israel Potter is based on the *Life and Remarkable Adventures of Israel R. Potter* (1824), which purports to be the true story of a soldier in the American Revolution, captured by the British at the Battle of Bunker Hill. In Melville’s book Potter escapes, goes to London as a laborer, joins rebel agents in secret activities, meets contemporary figures such as Benjamin Franklin and John Paul Jones, takes part in naval affairs, and has other experiences. Finally he returns to America, is refused a pension, and dies in poverty.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Journal Up the Straits, October 11, 1856–May 5, 1857

Edited with an introduction by Raymond Weaver

New York: The Colophon, 1935

Designed by Bruce Rogers

Purchased on the Horace A. Moses Fund,
in memory of Fred Schlosser

Five years after the publication of *Moby-Dick*, Melville once again took ship, sailing to England and traveling then through Europe to Constantinople and the Holy Land. He was at a low point in his life: he was hungry at heart for understanding companionship; his writings were earning him only a pittance; and he had failed to gain, by any means, a consular appointment to some remote place, once again to retreat from the world, like Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*. As a boy he had dreamed of journeying to the Holy Land; now he did so in desperation, subsidized by his father-in-law. He returned after seven months with his health much improved, and with the journal here transcribed.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

The Piazza Tales

New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856

First edition

Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

The Piazza Tales includes “The Piazza,” an account of Melville’s Pittsfield farmhouse, Arrowhead; and five short tales which had previously appeared in *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine*: “Bartleby,” “The Lightning-Rod Man,” “The Encantadas, or, Enchanted Isles,” “The Bell-Tower,” and “Benito Cereno.” Raymond M. Weaver has said that the final three of these works

“show the last glow of Melville’s literary glamour, the final momentary brightening of the embers before they sank into blackness and ash.” However that may be, it is true that by the time of *The Piazza Tales*, at the midpoint of Melville’s life, his best literary achievements were already in the past.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Benito Cereno

Pictures by E. McKnight Kauffer

London: Nonesuch Press, 1926

No. 456 of 1650 copies

Bequest of Winfield E. Stumpf, Class of 1927

Benito Cereno

Foreword and afterword by Lawrance Thompson

Illustrations by Garrick Palmer

Barre, Mass.: Imprint Society, 1972

No. 220 of 1950 copies, signed by the artist

Library purchase

One of the “Piazza Tales,” *Benito Cereno* is the story of an American ship captain, Delano, who encounters a Spanish merchantman with an ailing commander, Benito Cereno, apparently under the care of a Negro servant, Babo. Although Don Benito tells of a storm and plague after sailing from Buenos Aires, it transpires that his cargo of Negro slaves in fact has mutinied. Captain Delano and his crew rescue Don Benito and take the Spanish ship by force.

Here two illustrators interpret the story in two very different ways: E. McKnight Kauffer with a fine line and soft colors, Garrick Palmer with boldness and – very appropriately, given the racial aspects of the story – strong contrasts of black and white.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Encantadas: Two Sketches

from *Herman Melville’s Enchanted Isles*

Pictures by Rico Lebrun, cut in wood by Leonard Baskin

Northampton, Mass.: Gehenna Press, 1963

No. 113 of 150 copies, signed by the artists

Purchased on the Luther S. Mansfield Fund

The Encantadas (“Enchanted Isles”) are the Galapagos Islands, six hundred miles west of Ecuador.

Of this treatment of two of the ten parts of Melville’s *Encantadas* Leonard Baskin wrote: “The *Encantadas*, beyond the irradiated quality of Melville’s prose, proved to be an apposite vehicle for the work of Rico Lebrun. Lebrun was a match for Melville, his wonderful work was driven from that same boiling essence that Melville erupted from, and Lebrun was propelled from the same furnace of unyielding probity; they were mighty. Lebrun responded to the first two sections [of Melville’s work] . . . with a prodigious set of drawings on cherry-blocks of primordial tortoises which I happily cut, my knife paying faithful fealty to his drawn lines. . . . These venerables are variously displayed; one becomes Atlas, finding the world ever more hideously difficult to bear, and another shows his skeletal cruciform, a mysterious but compelling revelation. Here also is the dragging ponderous immensity of the beasts and again they are grinding, hissing in mortal combat.”

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade

New York: Dix, Edwards, 1857

First edition

Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

The Confidence-Man is an unfinished novel, the last prose work by Melville printed in his lifetime. (He completed a novelette, *Billy Budd*, shortly before his death, but it was not published until 1924.) The action of *The Confidence-Man* takes place aboard a Mississippi riverboat, bound from St. Louis for New Orleans. A satire, it presents a pessimistic view of life in which distrust replaces confidence in the course of each episode.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866

First edition

Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

Melville dedicated this book of poems “to the memory of the three hundred thousand who in the war for the maintenance of the Union fell devotedly under the flag of their fathers.” “With few exceptions,” he explained

in a prefatory note, “the Pieces in this volume originated in an impulse imparted by the fall of Richmond. . . . Yielding instinctively, one after another, to feelings not inspired from any one source exclusively, and unmindful, without purposing to be, of consistency, I seem, in most of these verses, to have but placed a harp in a window, and noted the contrasted airs which wayward winds have played upon the strings.” In a prose “supplement” at the end of the volume Melville pleads for a charitable Northern attitude toward Reconstruction of the South.

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land
New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1876
First edition, 2 vols.
Gift of Carroll Atwood Wilson, Class of 1907

This long poem, inspired by Melville’s visit to the Holy Land in 1856 and including dialogues on the problems of religious faith, was in manuscript for some time before publication. Melville remarked resignedly in a prefatory note: “If during the period in which this work has remained unpublished, though not undivulged, any of its properties have by a natural process exhaled; it yet retains, I trust, enough of original life to redeem it at least from vapidity. Be that as it may, I here dismiss the book – content beforehand with whatever future awaits it.”

Herman Melville, 1819–1891

Timoleon, etc.
New York: Caxton Press, 1891
First edition
One of 25 copies
Gift of Eleanor M. Metcalf

Following a trip to San Francisco in 1860, Melville moved with his family from Arrowhead back to New York in 1863, and three years later became a customs inspector. In that low position, in almost complete obscurity, he spent the last years of his life. His death in 1891 passed virtually unnoticed. He did not cease to write in those final years, but published little, and two of his books of poetry – *John Marr and Other Sailors* (1888) and *Timoleon* – were printed in private editions limited to only twenty-five copies each.

Some of the forty-three poems in this book were inspired by Melville’s travels in Greece and Italy in 1856. But perhaps the most famous of this selection is the following:

In placid hours well pleased we dream
Of many a brave unbodied scheme,
But form to lend, pulsed life create,
What unlike things must meet and mate;
A flame to melt – a wind to freeze;
Sad patience – joyous energies;
Humility – yet pride and scorn;
Instinct and study; love and hate;
Audacity – reverence. These must mate,
And fuse with Jacob’s mystic heart,
To wrestle with the angel – Art.



WORKS BY OTHER AUTHORS RELATED TO *Moby-Dick*

Ulisse Aldrovandi, 1522–1605?

*Monstrorum Historia, cum Paralipomenis
Historiae Omnium Animalium*
Bologna: Typis Nicolai Tebaldini, 1642
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Neff,
from the books of Robert Carey, Jr., Class of 1920

The *Pseudophyseter* shown is a fanciful woodcut of the sperm whale, apparently derived from a cut in Konrad Gesner’s *Historia Animalium* (1588). Melville wrote in ch. 55 of *Moby-Dick*: “In the vignettes and other embellishments of some ancient books you will at times meet with very curious touches at the whale, where all manner of spouts, jets d’eau, hot springs and cold, Saratoga and Baden-Baden, come bubbling up from his unexhausted brain.”

Konrad Gesner, 1516–1565

Fischbuch
Zurich: Christoffel Froschower, 1575
Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

“Many are the men, small and great, old and new, landsmen and seamen, who have at large or in little, written of the whale” – *Moby-Dick*, ch. 32. Gesner’s

books on fishes also include other creatures that live in water, such as cetaceans. Here, in a German translation of book 4 of Gesner's *Historia Animalium*, four pictures of whales, owing more to legend than to science, are combined with a more realistic woodcut of men stripping a whale of its flesh.

The New-England Primer, Enlarged and Improved

Boston: Printed by Samuel Hall, [1789–1792]
Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

This children's primer is open to a woodcut of a whale, with the accompanying verse:

The *Whale's* the Monarch of the Main,
As is the Lion of the Plain.
He keeps the lesser Fish in awe,
And, Tyrant like, his will's his law.

William Shakespeare, 1564–1616

*Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies,
Histories & Tragedies*

London: Printed by Isaac Jaggard
and Ed. Blount, 1623
First folio edition
Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

Melville scholars Luther S. Mansfield (late of Williams College) and Howard P. Vincent remarked in detail in their 1952 edition of *Moby-Dick* the influence of Shakespeare's plays on that work, particularly *King Lear* – the parallel between the madness of Lear and that of Captain Ahab being especially notable.

The Holy Bible

Translated by Julia E. Smith
Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Co., 1876
Library purchase

John Milton, 1608–1674

Paradise Lost: A Poem in Ten Books

London: Printed by S. Simmons,
sold by T. Helder, 1669
First edition, reissue
Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

Moby-Dick contains over six hundred allusions to or quotations from the Bible, beginning in his prefatory “extracts” with five words from Genesis, “And God created great whales.” Most important perhaps is the parallel that Melville draws between his Captain Ahab and the prophets Jonah and Job: each of the three encounters a whale (or leviathan).

Milton too in several respects informed *Moby-Dick*, for example in the character of Ahab as a wicked genius like Satan in *Paradise Lost*. In chapter 28 of *Moby-Dick* Ahab is described as having “a slender rod-like mark” on his face: “Whether that mark was born with him, or whether it was the scar left by some desperate wound, no one could certainly say.” Compare *Paradise Lost*, book 1:

Dark'n'd so, yet shon
Above them all th' Arch Angel [Satan]: but his face
Deep scars of Thunder had intrencht, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under Browes
Of dauntless courage, and considerate Pride
Waiting revenge. . . .

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772–1834

“The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere”
in *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth
and Samuel Taylor Coleridge
London: Printed for J. & A. Arch, 1798
First edition, second issue
Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

Edgar Allan Poe, 1809–1849

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, of Nantucket
New York: Harper & Brothers, 1838
First edition
Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

According to Luther S. Mansfield and Howard P. Vincent, besides Coleridge's “Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” to which Melville directly refers in chapter 42 of *Moby-Dick* – “Bethink thee of the albatross, whence came those clouds of spiritual wonderment and pale dread, in which that white phantom sails in all imaginations?” – he “must have had in mind the magnificent final chapter of Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* . . . when he worked out the possibilities of white as ‘a colorless, all-color of atheism’

and inscrutable mystery. White inspired the same note of terror in Poe's climactic description of the approach to the South Pole. . . ."

Mansfield and Vincent also point out, in their annotated edition of *Moby-Dick* of 1952, that the prophetic stranger who accosts Ishmael and Queequeg in chapter 19 behaves much like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner.

Richard Henry Dana, Jr., 1815–1882

Two Years before the Mast:
A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea
 New York: Harper & Brothers, 1840
 First edition
 Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869

Dana's *Two Years before the Mast*, based on the author's own experiences at sea and on the California coast, was immensely popular, and inevitably subsequent literature of the sea was compared to it. Dana, for his part, wrote to Melville in late April 1850 to praise *Redburn* and *White-Jacket*, to which Melville replied: "[I] am more pleased than I can well tell, to think that any thing I have written about the sea has at all responded to your own impressions of it. Were I inclined to undue vanity, this one fact would be far more to me than acres and square miles of the superficial shallow praise of the publishing critics. And I am specially delighted at the thought, that these strange, congenial feelings, with which after my first voyage, I for the first time read 'Two Years before the Mast,' and while so engaged was, as it were, tied and welded to you by a sort of Siamese link of affectionate sympathy – That these feelings should be reciprocated by you, in your turn, and be called out by any *White Jackets* or *Redburns* of mine – that is indeed delightful to me."



WORKS CONSULTED AND QUOTED IN ADDITION TO THOSE ON EXHIBIT

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All of these works are in the Chapin Library. Additional writings about Melville, including the latest biographies and critical works, are held in the Williams College Library.