

Herman Melville—A bit of Biography

Born 1819

Massachusetts—Moves to New York, father dies when he is 12 yrs. Old.

Albany Academy (1837-1840)

Works as a surveyor on the Erie Canal, then as cabin boy on a New York ship to Liverpool (1839) –bases *Redburn: His First Voyage* on that experience.

Teaches school, then, in 1841, sails from New Bedford on the whaler, *Acushnet*—18 months on the ship, then deserted the ship in the Marquesas Islands, and lives with the Typee natives. (*Typee* based on his description of life there and a probably fictional relationship with Fayaway--)

Boards another whaler and left that ship in Honolulu, where he works as a clerk, then joins the crew of the USS *United States*, reaching Boston in 1844. (*Omoo* and *White Jacket*).

His novels were almost all first published in England, then in the U.S. *Typee*, *Omoo*, *White-Jacket*, and *Redburn* were all successful.

Marries Elizabeth Shaw (old Massachusetts family) in 1847. Four sons and two daughters. They settled in Pittsfield, MA where they managed their farm and Melville wrote. Meets Nathaniel Hawthorne, writes *Moby Dick* and *Pierre*—neither of which are successes.

1857-1860—lecture circuit, writes poetry.

1863-- Moves with his family to NYC. He publishes collections of poems after the Civil War, panned by critics.

1886—Gets a job as customs inspector for the City of New York and works at it for 19 years. Publishes poetry (*Clarel* and *Timoleon*—both epic poems).

Dies in 1891—The Times obituary called him “Henry Melville”

His novella *Billy Budd, Sailor*—published in 1924.

Melville's Fiction and Poetry

Typee (1846)

Omoo (1847)

Mardi (1849)

Redburn (1849)

White-Jacket (1850)

Moby-Dick (1851)

Pierre (1852)

Israel Potter (1855)

Piazza Tales (1856)

The Confidence-Man (1857)

Battle Pieces (1866) Poetry

Clarel (1876) Poetry

Marr and Other Sailors (1888)

Timoleon (1891) (Poetry)

Billy Budd (posthumous, 1924)

"I am tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote. I love to sail forbidden seas"(8) Or, Approaching *Moby Dick*"

Intertextuality

The Cetology Chapter

"And this is the Bibliographical system here adopted; and it is the only one that can possibly succeed, for it alone is practicable"(152).

“For small erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity. God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught—nay, but the draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash and Patience!”(157).

Frames of Reference

Philosophy

Economics—331/391

Religion—94-95

History--224

Science—extracts, cetology

Fate—7, 233 “Ship and boat diverged; the cold, damp night breeze blew between; a screaming gull flew overhead; the two hulls wildly rolled; we gave three heavy-hearted cheers, and blindly plunged like fate into the lone Atlantic”(115).

Family/human connection—57, 423

Allusions, Illusions, Interpretation—199—and interpretation—what is reality?

On “Cetology”

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Page Sizes—for Chapter 32 “Cetology”

Folio---- 12 x 19”

Octavo— 8 ¼ x 11 ½ “

Duodecimo-- 5 ½ x 7 ½ “

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