

This comprehensive listing of possible themes in Melville's *Moby Dick* is a compilation by former students of **Randall Bass** at Georgetown University. It is reproduced here with the permission of Dr. Bass.

The ideas here may provide a focus for discussion and research.

American Literary Traditions ***Moby-Dick* Project Titles and Branching Themes**

Thematic Clusters Included in This Chart:

- **Religion, Truth, and the Soul**

The Magnitude of *Moby Dick*

- *Ahab as Devil
- *Nature as God
- *White Whale as Jesus
- *Crew as Mankind
- *Biblical Quotes

Ahab's Body and Soul:

Led by Revenge

- *Revenge
- *Evil Thirst for Life
- *Body and Soul
- *Buddhist View

Seeking the Encounter with the Truth

- *Encounter of Ahab, Ishmael
- *Presentation of Whales
- *Sea as Existence
- *Melville's Search

A Passionate Soul in Hell

- *Passion Mistaken for Madness
- *Passion Breeds Life
- *Madness Spreads: the Pequod's Hierarchy
- *Industry and *Moby-Dick*

What is Worship?

- *Yahweh
- *Inexorable Self, Ahab as God
- *Yojo, Queequeg's God
- *Slavery

Religion, Myth, and Superstition

- *Ignorance
- *Suspicion

Seeing Through the Fog in *Moby-Dick*

- *Other Worlds
- *Truth and Clairvoyance
- *Incompatibility

The Awful Edict of God and the Intrepid Effort of the Soul

- *Driven to Madness
- *A Reversal of Fortune
- *A Branded Man
- *The Fountain and the Forge
- *The Tragicality of Human Thought

Spirituality and the Role of Religion

- *Allegiance to Ahab's Madness
- *The Christian Influence
- *Pagan Frame of References
- *Lord of the Flies

Madness and Monomania

The Nature of Madness

- *A Vengeful Monomania
- *A Tortured Soul
- *A Godless Riot
- *Beat Madness

Into the Depth of Madness

- *Storms
- *Deception and Layers
- *Darkness and Light
- *"In Defense of Madness"

The Madness of Captain Ahab

- *Monomania
- *Ahab's Gloomy Soul/the Question of Religion
- *The Blackness of Darkness

The Religion of Madness

- *Anguish, Morbidity of Nature
- *Tragically Great
- *Mortality of the Disease
- *Monomania, and Religion

Individuality, Community, Isolation

The Interdependency of Mankind

- *Interdependency
- *Individuality
- *Free Will
- *Unmerited Death

The Whiteness of the Crew

- *Togetherness of Individuals
- *Bosom Friends
- *Crew of Individuals
- *Ahab's Crew

The Desolation of Solitude

- *The Slavery of Monomania
- *The Walled Town of a Captain's Exclusiveness
- *Nourishment of the Soul
- *The Story of Jonah

Whiteness, Otherness, Difference, and Duality

Imperialism: The Underlying Force that Drives Moby Dick

- *Religion
- *Multiculturalism and American Superiority
- *Superstition

Beauty and Terror: A Duality in Moby-Dick

- *The Binary in Whiteness
- *The Binary in the Whale
- *The Binary in God

The Problem of Whiteness in Moby Dick

- *The Blackness in Whiteness
- *The Whale as Religious Intermediary
- *Finding Truth in Contrast
- *Fate

"What Evil Magic": Cannibalism in Herman Melville's Moby-Dick

- *Queequeg qua Cannibal
- *Cannibalism & Slavery
- *Ahab, A Hungry Master
- *The Politics of Economic Cannibalism

Challenging Traditional Associations of Whiteness

- *The Love of Hate
- *Humanity's Ethics
- *To Be or Not to Be
- *White's Evil

Walking on Life and Death

- *Standing in One Hell
- *The Material Counterpart
- *Death and Devils

**The Role of Duality
in Moby-Dick**

- *The Relativity of Meaning
- *Duality and Contrast as a Vehicle for Questioning
- *The Tao of Duality

Difference in Moby-Dick

- *The Supernatural
- *Whiteness/Blackness
- *Divinity/Religion

Order, Chaos, and Fear

**The Central Issue of Fear
in Moby-Dick**

- *Fear of the Unknown
- *Fear of Savage and Untamed Beings
- *Courage and Bravery as Opposites of Fear

Calm Amidst the Storm

- *The Lasting Calm
- *Failed Attempt to Seek the Calm
- *Surrounded by Disaster
- *The Human Spirit Tries to Remain

Complexity and Relativism

- *I'd Strike the Sun if it Insulted Me
- *Drowned Soul
- *A Blighted Fruit Tree
- *Monstrous Pictures of People
- *Table of Contents and Additional Information

Free Will, Chance, and Fate

- *Free Will and the Monkey Rope
- *Queequeg's Coffin
- *Ahab & Fate
- *Melville's Experiences