

From Mocha Dick to Moby Dick: Fishing for Clues to Moby's Name and Color

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Melville's fictional whale Moby Dick appears to derive from the real whale Mocha Dick, yet the differences in names and colors between these two suggest that Moby's name may be intimately connected to his symbolic role. One meaning of *mob* is 'to wrap in a cowl or veil'. Creating an adjective by adding -y produces *moby* 'having the qualities of being hooded, especially about the head', a definition reflected in Ishmael's "grand hooded phantom." *Dick* may be a shortening of *Dickens*, a euphemism for the devil. *Dick* may also suggest *Dicky* 'an officer acting on commission', an appropriate meaning for Ahab's and Starbuck's conception of Moby as God or an agent of God. Lexicons available to Melville reveal the meaning of the name and illuminate the characterization of Moby as both commodity and Zeus of the sea, both "dumb brute" and divine Leviathan.

The 1929 discovery of a narrative about a white whale named Mocha Dick began 70 years of speculation as to the extent of Mocha as Moby's prototype. The narrative, written by J.R. Reynolds in 1839, described a "renowned monster, who had come off victorious in a hundred fights...[and was] white as wool." Typical of the reaction of literary critics at the time was Garnett's remark that "Moby Dick...was but Mocha Dick in faery fiction dressed" (1929, 858). Critical editions of *Moby-Dick* often include the Reynold's narrative and today scholars generally agree that Melville probably knew of Mocha.¹ The obvious sibling qualities of the two whales has tended to center onomastic study on the name *Mocha Dick*, and subsequent research has attempted to demonstrate that Melville knew of Mocha Dick or, assuming this, to explain why *Mocha* changed to *Moby*.² The weakness of the Mocha

becoming Moby theory is that evidence of Melville's awareness of Mocha rests on the tautological argument that the similarities in the whales' names, appearance, and demeanor is evidence of that awareness. Furthermore, the similarities between the whales could be either coincidental, or both stories may have been shaped by folklore and myths known to both authors.³ Still, previous research has focused on *Mocha's* metamorphosis into *Moby*. Scholars usually point out that the name *Moby* is more "euphonious" than *Mocha*; furthermore, Mocha was dead, so Melville couldn't write a tale about a dead whale, and Mocha signified a color incongruous with Moby's appearance.⁴ Few theories connect Moby's name to a literary source Melville is known to have used or have searched for textual evidence establishing a relationship between the name and the whale's symbolic role.⁵

Current thought on the name is not equal to Melville's reputation as a neologist or to the grand scale of *Moby-Dick*. The white whale is a "grand god" (691), and the mythological proportions of Moby's battle with Ahab is comparable to the struggle of "Beowulf against Grendel, Prometheus against Zeus, and Lucifer against God" (Vincent 1965, 46). Since Melville's allusions and names typically augment his themes, the allusion to Mocha, if indeed there is one, seems an anomaly since few of his readers would recognize it. For Melville meaning certainly took priority over euphony, and if Mocha did in some way inspire the metaphysical Moby, then it seems likely the reasons for the name change would be as semantically complex as the whale is symbolically complex. The present onomastic inquiry explains the name *Moby Dick* in light of Melville's "abiding concern with personal names" (Cohen 1963, 85). It is guided by three conditions: to those obvious and implied meanings that existed in 1851; to sources Melville either owned or were available in the libraries he used; and to meanings for which there is textual evidence indicating Melville knew and used those definitions. A brief consideration of Melville's other names reveals his facility for incorporating them into a larger symbolic structure, a pattern he continued in naming his greatest protagonist. The evidence suggests that Melville chose the name *Moby Dick* to parallel Moby's origin, appearance and behavior.

Melville's emphasis on names in *Moby-Dick* begins with the opening line, "Call me Ishmael," and continues to the very end of the novel with "It was the devious-cruising Rachel, that in her retracing search after

her missing children, only found another orphan" (724). Indeed, it is not unusual to find in Melville's names multilingual puns as well as descriptions of a character's traits. Melville developed the names with associational wordplay, making them centers surrounded by parallel adjectives that define the circumference of his extended metaphors. Thus, he exploits the names' "connotative values to the point where they become a major underpinning of the work" (Cohen 1963, 93). Semantic ambiguity also enabled Melville to invest names with the capacity to perform diverse symbolic functions, while complex cognomens satisfied his delight "in arcane allusions and hidden meanings" (Staud 1992, 341).

To craft these meanings Melville often turned to his lexicons, and he used at least three English dictionaries while writing *Moby-Dick*: Webster's, Richardson's, and Johnson's. His quarto edition of Johnson included a history of the language and a grammar. Melville probably extracted his Hakluyt quote in "Etymology" from the 1844 edition of Richardson, which contained etymologies and literary extracts of words in context. In 1848 Melville purchased (for the third time in two years) Noah Webster's *American Dictionary*, but there were also twenty other English language dictionaries published in the United States between 1800 and 1850 (Burkett 1979, 273-4). Melville cites and uses *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, a travelogue containing a treatise on the descent and diversity of letters from Egyptian to English along with intriguing etymologies of places and people. He also made extensive use of the New York Society Library, which he joined on April 24, 1850, as well as the library of Evert Duyckinck, a collection which contained nearly 17,000 volumes and pamphlets at the time of its donation to the New York Public Library in 1879 (Lydenberg 1923, 101-02).

The connotative range of Melville's names in *Moby-Dick* is impressive. For lesser characters they are "realistic description[s] for [their] own sake" (Cohen 1963, 86). Dough-Boy is the steward, the "son of a bankrupt baker" (204) with a "pale loaf of a bread face" (200). Bulkington, with his "chest like a coffer dam" (41), is built like a ship's bulkhead. His name implies 'bull-king,' and later in the novel Bulkington rises as a demigod in "The Lee Shore" (Beaver 1972, 712). Names of more central characters describe their behavior and appearance. Stubb sports a stubby nose and smokes a stubby pipe. He is "stubbing his silly toes" (177) as well as his mind trying to comprehend his captain.

Starbuck, like *starboard*, is on the right side of reason and diametrically opposed to Ahab. Starbuck tries to buck Ahab's authority, but Ahab has "blasted all [Starbuck's] reason." Melville's *Webster's Dictionary* relates *buck* to Italian *bocco* 'the helm of a ship', (that part which controls direction).⁶ Narcissus, Jupiter, and Ahab allude to mythologies that shaped Melville's writing, and our comprehension of these allusions enrich our interpretation of the text. The obvious allusive qualities in names such as these occasionally mask an erudite but essential significance. For example, *Pequod* is an apparent reference to the Pequot Tribe exterminated by the Puritans. However, the word also hints at *pekod*, a Hebrew word referring in the *King James Bible* to a "Babylonian tribe" destroyed by God (Staud 1992, 341), and also at *Penguin*, the first ship to receive the news of Mocha's death in Reynold's Mocha narrative.

Melville's accumulative technique of symbolism in his use of *Pequot*, *Pekod*, and *Penguin* is typical of his onomastic genius. It seems improbable that he would have been cavalier about naming his greatest protagonist. As it turns out, *Webster's Dictionary* is central to understanding the relationship between *Moby* and *Mocha* and Melville's emphasis on Moby's white hump. In Melville's edition of *Webster's* we find the entry: "Mocha-stone; Dendritic agate; a mineral in the interior of which appear brown, reddish-brown, blackish or green delineations of shrubs destitute of leaves." An uninspiring definition, but right above the *Mocha* entry is "Mobled; Muffled; covered with a coarse or careless head-dress," and also "Moble; To wrap the head in a hood." Nearby is also *mob*, its second definition being "To wrap up in a cowl or veil." By adding -y to *mob* as a suffix, where -y means 'having the qualities of', as in *icy* or *snowy*, we get *moby*: 'having the qualities of being hooded, veiled, or covered, especially about the head'. It is the sperm whale's broad head that Melville repeatedly emphasizes: "Human or animal, the mystical brow is as that great golden seal affixed by the German emperors to their decrees. It signifies-God: done this day by my hand" (447). Thus, the snow-white wrinkled forehead affixed to Moby's broad firmament of a brow makes him the "grand hooded phantom" (30).

The universe and whale are ungraspable because they are unknowable, and Moby's name and "mobled" appearance symbolize the essential problem of our understanding either. In *Moby-Dick*, veils and hoods are both doorways and barriers to our knowledge of the sacred

and the supernatural. Like the mobcap on Moby's forehead, there is "an impenetrable veil covering our knowledge of the Cetacea" (179). Whiteness is "the very veil of the Christian's Deity" (263), and Moby is "shrouded in a thin drooping veil of mist" when he leaps from the sea (715). Just as veils separate us from our comprehension of the universe, so do they separate life from death. In "The First Lowering," Starbuck's boat was soon "running through a suffusing wide veil of mist" (300), presaging disaster in the encroaching squall. When Radney falls overboard "he is dimly seen through that veil" just before death finds him in the jaws of Moby Dick (342).

One critic (Sachs 1991) suggests Melville's pan-cultural names for the sperm whale are multilingual puns indicating Moby's veiled nature and his actual blackness. Melville writes: "This whale, among the English of old vaguely known as the Trumpha whale, and the Physeter whale, and the Anvil Headed whale, is the Cachalot of the French, and the Pottfisch of the Germans, and the Macrocephalus of the Long Words" (184). *Trumpha* suggests the French *tromper*, meaning 'to cheat', and Cachelot suggests *cache*, meaning 'to hide'. Therefore, "the sperm whale cheats and hides a lot" (Sachs 1991, 402). Sachs concludes that Melville's assertions of the whale's whiteness cloak Moby's overall blackness, and that the color is part of Melville's criticism of slavery and prejudice.⁷ The argument is a bit stretched, but one can find in a whale that was partially black against a larger backdrop of white a metaphor for American racial tensions during the nineteenth century.

There is textual evidence indicating that Moby may not be an albino. Melville's use of "mobled" as a namesake, and his ceaseless harping on Moby's "white" hump seems to diminish the significance of the hump's color. Why emphasize a white hump if the whale is entirely white? In his "Whiteness" chapter, Melville reduces the color to the "colorless, all color of atheism" until the hue symbolizes everything, and finally, nothing (264).⁸ The chapter-long definition in "The Whiteness of the Whale" obviates the standard function of a definition. Instead of creating meaning for the reader, Moby's whiteness comes to stand for a "dumb blankness, full of meaning" (405). Melville's juxtaposition of mutually exclusive meanings undermines any conceivable epistemology until his monomaniacal assertions of the whale's whiteness become unbelievable. Moreover, the following passage directly states that Moby's nick-

name—the “White Whale”—is more a consequence of snatched glimpses and long range sightings rather than his actual color:

...a peculiar snow-white wrinkled *forehead*, and a high, pyramidical white hump. These were his prominent features; the tokens whereby, even in the limitless, uncharted seas, he revealed his identity, *at a long distance*.... The rest of his body was *so streaked, and spotted, and marbled* with the same *shrouded hue*, that in the end, he has gained his distinctive appellation of the White Whale; name, indeed literally justified by his vivid aspect, when seen gliding at high noon through a dark blue sea, leaving a milky-way wake of creamy foam, all spangled with golden gleamings. (245) (*italics mine*).⁹

Moby’s whiteness is clearly tarnished with “shrouded hues.” His nickname, in fact, is only “literally justified” at a “long distance,” when his mottled aspect blends with the creamy foam and sparkling water to create its *blinding* effect.

It turns out that Moby more closely resembles the real whale, New Zealand Tom (Melville’s New Zealand Jack in *Moby-Dick*), who is “conspicuously distinguished by a white hump” (Vincent 1965, 189). Mocha may have also been less white than the Reynold’s account indicates. In an 1892 biography, Mocha was described as “a very large whale with a long scar across his head, which showed almost white on the gray-black background” (Stanonik 1962, 107). Moby’s pyramidical, white hump does indeed function better as a symbolic hieroglyph when contrasted with darker shades: it transforms the whale’s brow into a diadem establishing his divinity, and it becomes the link—as a mobbed hood—between his name, appearance, and ultimate inscrutability.

Just as Melville ties the whale’s appearance to the name *Moby Dick*, so does he elide Moby’s behavior with the more common definition of *mob*: “Mob; n. A crowd or promiscuous multitude of people, rude, tumultuous, and disorderly.” v. “To attack in a disorderly crowd; to harass tumultuously” (Webster 1850). *Mob* derives from Latin *mobilis*, meaning ‘movable, variable’. Like Melville’s elusive truth and elusive whale, a disorderly crowd is unpredictable and therefore, unknowable. A human crowd’s mob-like qualities are analogous to the sharks’ mobbing the dead whale’s carcass (388) and the whales’ mobbing Starbuck’s boat (494). Melville is finally incapable of comprehending the mobbing whales just as he is unable to comprehend the dead level

masses of men. His cantankerous relationship with what he perceived as an unappreciative audience mirrors the sailor's relationship with the uncontrollable forces of nature.¹⁰ In Father Mapple's sermon, Melville barely veils his criticism of a fickle reading public: "Woe to him who would not be true, even though to be false were salvation!... Delight is to him, whom all the waves of the billows of the seas of the boisterous mob can never shake from his sure Keel of the Ages" (80). It seems plausible that Moby symbolizes for Ahab/Melville the god/audience that is the object of their physical and intellectual hunt.

There are, as one would expect, several meanings for *dick* that Melville knew and developed.¹¹ *Dick* was slang for "declaration or affidavit," and *Moby-Dick* is Ishmael's wordy bragging, in effect, 'I was there, ladies and gentlemen, this man was there and saw all this with his own eyes'" (Mushabac 1981, 108). In "The Affidavit" we find Ishmael's testimonial to the veracity of far-fetched whaling stories and his argument for the actuality of other famous "Tom, Dick, and Harry" whales: Timor Tom, New Zealand Jack, Morquan, and Don Miquel. Melville likewise knew *dick* as an antonym of *affidavit*. *Grose's Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1796) lists "Dick: That happened in the reign of Queen Dick, i.e., never; said of any absurd old story." The euphemism is a Greek Kalend or Calend; that is, something that never happens. In *Mardi*, published prior to *Moby-Dick*, Melville names one character *Queen Calend*. He prefaces *Mardi* by stating that since his "true" stories were taken as fiction, then he would write a fiction to see if it might "be received for a verity: in some degree the reverse of my previous experience." *Mardi*, then, is a Greek Calend which happened "during the reign of Queen Dick;" *Moby-Dick* is Melville's affidavit that he is telling an untruth.

At least one slang dictionary (Farmer and Henley 1912) also defines *dick* as "using long words." In "Cetology" Melville gives "Macrocephalus of the Long Words" as another name for sperm whale. *Macrocephalus* signifies 'big head', a word Melville knew from the whale's scientific name, *physeter macrocephalus*.¹² According to Melville, then, a sperm whale was a 'big head of the long words'. Here he parodies those who use names to make the unknowable knowable. In this sense, his long "Cetology" chapter is a satirical and ultimately futile attempt at defining the many varieties of whales. It also spoofs Gray's complex taxonomies and long, Latin names. Despite the multitudinous cata-

loguing in Melville's "bibliographical system," the whale evades his intellectual harpoons. In a related meaning, *dick* was also slang for 'dictionary', a catalogue of long words. Both definitions continue Melville's running joke about big things which have, or should have, some big meaning. Ahab uses the unabridged version of *dick* as an epithet: "Omen? Omen? -the dictionary! If the gods think to speak outright to man, they will honorably speak outright; not shake their heads, and give an old wives' darkling hint" (405). Ahab asks of the dead whale's head "speak thou vast and venerable head" (405). Unfortunately for the captain, the only thing comparable to Moby's battering ram head is "The great genius of the whale...declared in his pyramidical silence" (448). In *dick* as 'dictionary', character and appearance unite as Melville illustrates the mobled nature of a tongueless cetacean whose forehead is "pleated with riddles" (448).

One of the riddles Melville wrestles with in *Moby-Dick* is the nature and source of good and evil. A name connoting 'God' or 'Deity', as well as 'devil', would complement his theme, since "of all these things the Albino whale was the symbol" (264). *Dickens* was "a vulgar exclamation in old writers for the Devil" (Webster 1850), and Ahab sees Moby both as a "white fiend" (621) and as the primal evil God permits in the world.¹³ But *Dick* is also a familiar pet form of *Richard*, a *dick* being a 'fellow, lad, or man', as in every "Tom, Dick, and Harry" (Mushabac 1981, 174), and "He is such a clever Dick." To the extent a mob's unpredictability is a devilish quality, these common expressions parallel the definition of *mob* in its dehumanization of the individual in a group.

Yet despite Ahab's conception of the whale as a mobled dickens, Starbuck senses an underlying, if not actual, divinity. Whether Moby is God, or merely one of God's creatures, Starbuck intuits that a hunt motivated by revenge is immoral and blasphemous. Moby rules the sea, as Melville asserts, by divine right, and the divine aspect of his name stems from the abbreviated *Richard* (Dick), a common name for kings and kingly characters. *Richard* is the union of the Saxon *ric* and *hard*. *Ric* means "great, noble, powerful, as well as rich, ...dominion" (Webster 1850, 954). *Hard* derives from the Saxon *heard*, meaning "firm, solid, difficult (not easy to the intellect) full of difficulties or obstacles" (Webster 1850, 534). Furthermore, Melville's sailing experience taught him *dickey* as "an officer acting on commission,"¹⁴

and he likely had the meaning in mind as he patterned Moby after Job's Leviathan and Jonah's whale. Was Moby, as Ahab asks, "agent or principal?"

Melville makes implicit Moby's divine nature: "in that full front view, you feel the Deity and the dread powers" (447). Moby's "broad firmament of a forehead," (448) suggesting heaven, also suggests Zeus the sky god, and the Greek word for heaven translates as "vaulted sky," (NAR 1851, 285).¹⁵ It seems an unlikely coincidence that in "Etymology" Melville provides and defines the Danish word for whale: "*hvalt*: arched or vaulted" (5). Whether or not there existed a real etymological relationship between these words did not concern Melville. His efforts were aimed at finding the accidents of striking orthographic similarity that enabled him to weave his linked analogies. Such similarities can be found in the Greek Delta's (Δ) pyramid shape which could be the icon inspiring Moby's diadematic, pyramidal hump (245). It is certainly not beyond Melville's imagination to see the shape of a whale in the Greek $\Delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$, meaning 'Zeus'.

Melville's dive into Greek yielded him *κητος* 'whale', defined as "of the spouting Cetacea...any sea monster or huge fish, ...of the monster to which Andromeda was exposed" (Liddell 1843, 949). Others provided a secondary meaning as "gulf, depth, abyss." Thus, his generic name describes both his nature and the watery world he plies.¹⁶ Moby is Melville's animate version of the pool into which Narcissus gazes, and the collateral meanings of his name provide an etymological corollary to the interpretive efforts of Ahab and his mates. The Pequod's crew seems doomed by their idiosyncratic perspectives of Moby's behavior (intentional malignancy vs. dumb brute), his appearance (mottled white and pleated with riddles), and his name (mob, mobled, devil, affidavit, dictionary, etc). The sea symbolizes the universe, and the whale symbolizes the universe incarnate. Each is a phantom because reason cannot fathom the infinite and paradoxical. The whale is like the doubloon Ahab compares to "a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self" (551). Moby is at once a devil (to Ahab), a commodity (to Flask) and a metaphorical Zeus: "exalted to Jove's high seat, the great Sperm Whale shall lord it" (448). It is this interpretive grasping at whale or world that leads to the Pequod's destruction. Only the lone survivor resists interpreting doubloon and whale, implying that salvation rests with an acquiescence

to one's inescapable ignorance. Of Narcissus Melville writes: "But that same image [of ourselves], we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all" (26). Do not jump in and drown, says Melville.

For the generic whale Melville records 67 real and fanciful names for whales in more than thirteen languages. We may assume he expended a similar energy in crafting a name for his most spectacular whale. Whether Melville knew of Mocha seems less relevant than the way in which he integrates the connotations of *Moby Dick* into the appearance, behavior, and nature of the creature it names. In the cognomen is a constellation of meanings that illuminate Melville's themes and provide some insight into Moby's symbolic role. But still, Melville's sea monster plies the abyss, a *κητος* in a *κητος*.

Notes

1. Melville's knowledge of Mocha remains unproven, but the possibility became more plausible with the discovery of a July, 1846 and a March, 1849 article which appeared in the same magazine that first published Reynold's account (Eby 1967, 277). As Eby points out, the fact that the *Knickerbocker* enjoyed "publicizing [Mocha] at every opportunity," and the reference to the original article would have caused Melville to "track it down." Melville's probability of having read the issue is high since the periodical in which it appeared was the most important New York review and a strong competitor of the *Literary World*, edited by Melville's friend Evert Duyckinck (Eby 1967, 279).

2. Those trying to prove Melville knew of Mocha include Mansfield-Vincent (1952); Eby (1967); and Hays (1976). Those trying to explain why *Mocha* changed to *Moby* include Harding (1957); Beaver (1972); Hays (1976); and Taylor (1985).

3. Melville could have been familiar with at least three other stories of a white whale other than Mocha, as well as an Indian myth of a giant and evil, white whale. Janez Stanonik (1962) has shown that the long literary and oral traditions of mythical and real whales provided ample opportunity for Melville to conceive of Moby without knowledge of Mocha. Yet Mocha was real, and the ubiquity of his reputation tends to preclude other possibilities, since Melville was a whaler during the years Mocha was wreaking havoc in the whale fishery.

4. See Taylor (1985) and Harding (1957), respectively. Mocha was not used to denote color until the 1890s when coffee began to be used as a flavoring in cooking (Barnhart 1988).

5. Luther Mansfield and Howard Vincent (1962) point out that the son of Lot by his elder daughter was called *Moab*, which in Hebrew means 'seed of the father'. "The whale (as Nature)...was the creature of God, and "Ahab and Moab were named together in 2 Kings I, I: 'Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death

of Ahab” (695). It is hard to see how a group of notorious idolaters is relevant to Moby’s name, since Melville portrays the *Pequod*’s crew as idolaters, not the whale.

Peter Hays uses the OED to point out that *Moby* is cognate (at least in Melville’s mind) with *principal mobile* and *Primum Mobile*. Moby is the “prime mover whose amputation of Ahab’s leg sets in motion the spheres of the novel.” Hays notes that Melville’s Shakespeare volumes gloss *mobled* as ‘muffled’; and further that Moby Dick is an effective symbol because he is “ambiguous, inscrutable, and thus muffled” (1975, 10). Melville’s dictionary lists *movable*, but not *prime* or *principal*. Moby’s coloration and the proximity of *Mocha* to *Mob* suggests *Webster’s* is Melville’s source for the name.

6. Consider *Starbuck* in light of the well-known inscription Melville wrote in his Shakespeare volumes. The relevant line is: “Madness and right reason, extremes of one.” Ahab’s madness is on the left; therefore, the dark side.

7. The argument partly stems from the idea that *Trumpra* was one of Melville’s coinages. It does not obviate Sach’s assertions that Melville learned the word from seventeenth century accounts of whaling recorded in *Purchas* (Rogers 1997). Others use more specific textual evidence to support the idea that Moby’s color is part of Ahab’s struggle with the white monster of racism. See, e.g., Brown (1969) and Morrison (1989).

8. Scholars have long recognized that Melville’s method of defining *white* as both sacred and profane in “The Whiteness of the Whale” is derived in part from Pierre Bayle, who, in his *Dictionary Historical and Critical* (1734), “balances the false religions in his [Bayle’s] skeptical scales, till the opposite qualities annihilate each other” (Bell 1951, 630). Despite his use of a marked Baylean method, however, Melville need not have looked farther than *Johnson’s Dictionary* for the idea that white might symbolize opposing values: “White: having such an appearance as arises from the mixture of all colours; snowy. Having the colour of fear; pale. Having the colour appropriated to happiness and innocence. Gray with age. Pure; unblemished; unclouded.”

9. I have been able to identify only two scholars who discuss this passage. James Nechas (1978) compares Melville’s artistic method to Moby’s color, finding the novel so streaked, spotted, and marbled “with partial explanations for the whale” that it gives “the final illusion of the dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows—a colorless, all-color atheism” (198). Janez Stanonik (1962) feels the passage indicates that “Melville slightly exaggerates when he calls Moby Dick a White Whale” (107).

10. One may find numerous examples in Melville’s *Letters* (1960). See, e.g., 128-29. Melville’s obscure allusions were his relying on “narrative masquerade to protect the messenger from a readership unwilling to tolerate the message” (Staud 1992, 354).

11. Because I could not find a source contemporary to Melville defining *dick* as ‘penis’, I exclude the meaning as a possibility here. The idea has been suggested by Dayton Cook (1978) and Jane Mushabac (1981, 174).

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12. Only *The Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* defines *dick* as “using long words.” It cites W.N. Glascock’s *The Naval Sketch-Book*, published in 1834, though Melville likely learned the sailor’s idiom at sea.

13. It is interesting to note that Melville’s *Webster’s* cites Shakespeare for both *mobled* and *dickens*. The first known use of *mobled* occurred in *Hamlet*, and of *dickens*, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (OED). Melville’s reading of Shakespeare in February, 1849 coincides with the third breaching of Mocha Dick in the *Knickerbocker* in March, 1849.

14. The OED crossreferences *dicky* with *dick*, suggesting a connection with *Richard* and the Dutch *dek*, meaning a ‘covering’ or ‘cover’. For *Dicky* as ‘officer’, the OED cites *Smyth’s Sailor’s Word Book*, 1867.

15. Bruce Franklin (1963) identifies the *North American Review* as one of Melville’s sources.

16. See John Pickering’s *Comprehensive Lexicon of the Greek Language* for the alternate definition: “the natural appellation of those large depths in the sea, frequented by whales, sharks, and such like” (1846, 749). Liddell and Scott (1889) could have been Melville’s inspiration for the idea of changing the sea monster of the Andromeda myth into a whale, thereby making Perseus “the first whaleman” (466). Previous research attributes Melville’s treatment of Perseus, Hercules and St. George to John Kitto’s *A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature* (Vincent 1965, 271). The *Penny Cyclopaedia* also relates all three of these heroes’ adventures to a whale, and it discusses the nature of the Biblical “whale” as well. Melville, of course, misspells *κητος* as *χητος*. That he did so deliberately to allude to both God and Christ is suggested by Schleifer (1994) and Rogers (1998).

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