

# Ahab's Soul: An Exploration of the Hero of *Moby-Dick*

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## Abstract

In Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, each character forms a well-rounded and dynamic part of the novel. Being one of the greatest novels in American literary history, *Moby-Dick* contains several characters who catch special notice. These characters exhibit strange qualities, like Fedallah the prophet; jarring situational irony, like the eccentric Indian Queequeg; or mental discord, like tiny Pip. Captain Ahab, the *Pequod*'s commander, represents one of the most dynamic and deep of these characters. Driven by a strong will, Ahab possesses but a single purpose: to destroy the White Whale, which creates a strong bubble of isolation and introspection for the one-legged captain. Throughout the novel, Captain Ahab reveals a monomaniac streak, strongly influenced by his isolation and single-minded purpose. However, readers and analysts alike often prejudice or stereotype the captain of the *Pequod*, labelling him as only a madman or monomaniac. Instead, Captain Ahab reveals himself to be both troubled and driven, able to be swayed by emotions and desires. Although his voyage ends with death and destruction, Ahab represents more than a single-minded beast of vengeance. "Ahab's Soul: An Exploration of the Hero of *Moby-Dick*" will discover the research and study surrounding Ahab's three character traits of isolation, monomania, and will, exploring the depth and shape of the novel's hero, as well as uncovering and explaining some misconceptions or misunderstandings surrounding his character.

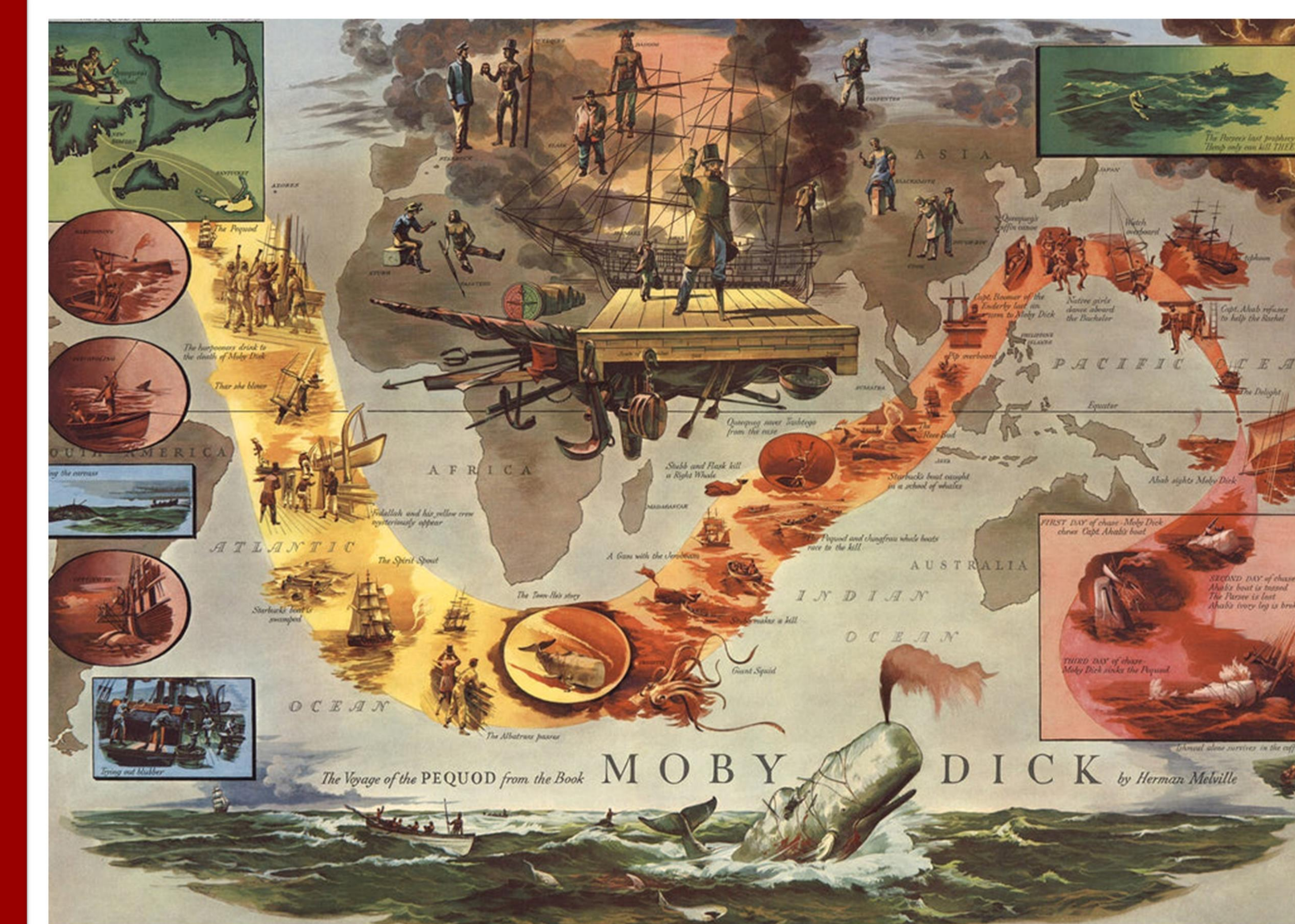


## Ahab's Soul

Strength of Will and Purpose

Intentional Isolation

Monomania and a Mammal



## Images Cited

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**"Ahab and anguish lay stretched together  
in one hammock."  
Herman Melville**