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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/133/2021_2022__E8_B5_96_E4_B8_96_E9_9B_84_E9_c96_133239.htm Lesson 21 , Whats So Big about Moby Dick ? 白鲸记 A pretty , young lady goes swimming alone off the coast of New England in twilight. She is an agile swimmer , full of grace and speed. Without warning , though , she disappears from sight , only to reappear a moment later , screaming in pain. A few shocking moments later , she is again dragged under the water , this time only to reappear the next morning in pieces of the shore. Sound familiar ? By now nearly everyone has seen or heard the story of a killer Great White Shark in Jaws , a hit novel turned into a blockbuster movie. Few people realize , however , that the story broadly follows the events depicted in what many people consider one of the best of American novels. Published in 1851 , Moby Dick has been making waves ever since. The author , Herman Melville , was born in New York on August 1 1819. As a youth in a large family he suffered many insecurities due to the familys constantly changing fortunes. As a young man he worked as a farmer and seaman , the latter providing most of the material for several of his later novels and essays. In his 20s Melville found fame with two novels based on imaginary happenings in the South Pacific. Moby Dick , ironically , was not well received. Afterwards , Melville produced another masterpiece , Billy Budd. He continued writing until his death in 1891. Why has Moby Dick since become such a classic despite its initial lukewarm

reception ? Melville had a keen eye for not only the human condition but for the tenor of his times : the United States was in his day a country of disadvantaged and mistreated immigrants (many of whom became sailors and laborers) , with untrammelled capitalism crushing both nature and man underneath its new country exuberance. His stress on the individual and fate-often pessimistically , or at least realistically were harbingers of the future of literature. Why does the story of Moby Dick continue to enthrall generation after generation ? The story line is simple enough : a mad sea captain vows revenge against a white whale which , on a previous expedition , bit off one of his legs. In his vain attempt at “ justice ” against nature , the captain meets the ultimate tragedy. This was no documentary , however ; the characters and setting become vehicles for far larger and more universal themes of the setbacks and successes of the human spirit as well as its darker urges. So accurately does Melville depict the whaling scenes and sea voyages that the reader is taken on an exhilarating ride. Coupled with the absorbing , mad Captain Ahab , the book is “ a good read ” even by 20th century standards. Earlier in this century , the Nobel Prize winner Ernest Hemingway penned the Old Man and the Sea , another story of a mans struggle with nature on the open ocean. This theme strikes a chord in Americans , whose culture developed along the Atlantic coast of North America and whose seaward passage from the Old World took them to the colonies of the 18th century or the young country of the 19th century by the millions. This fascination with the maritime still holds today : over half the population of the

United States lives in counties touching the Atlantic , Pacific , or Gulf coasts. Perhaps some future writer will once again use the metaphor of sailors and the sea to create yet another Great American Novel. 100Test 下载频道开通 , 各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com