American Legends—Dr. Christina Dokou

Notes on *Moby Dick*, chapters 36, 41, 42

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* Biblical references
  + The importance of the whale/Leviathan (compare with the Kraken; piety test)
  + Ahab, Adam (knowledge imperative)
  + Dotted forehead: Ahasuerus, (mark of) Cain
  + Miltonic Satan (scar, “vast but hollow” chest, call to vengeance with pointless war against Heaven, hatred of incomprehensible creation—wish to strike through the “mask” of nature at “that inscrutable thing” which “is chiefly what I hate”)
  + Satanic ritual
    - Call and response pattern
    - “nailing” the gold piece on the mast
    - oath on grog (“Satan’s hoof,” “serpent”)
    - momentary cessation of the elements “subterranean laugh” at Starbuck’s invocation of God’s protection
    - 3-lance oath—harpoon hollow as “chalice”
* Sea as the savage and marvelous “continent”
* Moby Dick traits:
  + “ubiquitous” (mysterious pathways)
  + ferocious ,wrathful
  + gigantic
  + marked, crooked, corkscrewed, humpback
  + “immortal”
  + “all evil” of the world (acc. to Ahab)
  + white, wrinkled forehead
* Meaning of whiteness
  + White Dog, Stallion, Bull, Stag, Buffalo, Swan, albino
  + the (super) natural American land
  + veil of incomprehensible/Kant’s sublime/Wittgenstein’s “things shown” as more important than “things told”
* The hunt for white flesh

Ahab’s pegleg with deck slot

sea as “Mother Womb/Tomb” (rocking boat)

whale as Abject Feminine (feeds and scares)

ending: incest punished—death in amniotic whirlpool, tied to umbilical harpoon-rope