

American Literature & Culture
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Mod 03 Lecture Number 16
Herman Melville Moby Dick (Lecture 12)

(Refer Slide Time 00:19)



(Professor – student conversation starts)

Professor: So just go back to whatever we are doing about Captain Ahab and try to connect it to Chapter 99. So here I go. Now do you understand by the word Doubloon? What is Doubloon? So Doubloon is literally a Spanish gold coin. Now the idea here is we have been introduced to 7 characters when we met them last. Who were those? Quickly, quickly, don't look back.

Student: Starbuck

Professor: Starbuck, Ok, Stubb, Queequeg, Ishmael, Ahab, Ok who else?

Student: Pip

Professor: Pip, who?

Student: Fedallah

Professor: Fedallah, Ok so 7 characters in all and Doubloon is a Spanish gold coin which is stuck, nailed to the mast of the ship. So you will have plenty of ship-related, sea-related terminologies here. But the basic idea is that 7 people, 7 men who we have already been introduced to, they stand at the dock and look at this Spanish gold coin which has been nailed on one of the pillars on the ship. Ok and 7 different perspectives. Now why do we need 7

different perspectives? And what kind of novel does that make Moby Dick which gives you a plurality of perspective? So we have been talking about all these things from the beginning, so we are literally theory.

Ok, plurality of perspective, so that is the idea? Ok. Each musing, each person has a unique perspective on the coin. Ok, so what is happening is that each person who thinks, who looks at the coin sees himself. This is the beauty of this particular chapter. So it is not, he doesn't see just the coin. He also sees himself...

Student: I have a doubt. Is this similar to Henry James point of view, plurality of perspective?

Professor: Ok, now we have been talking about Henry James as one of the precursors of Modernism. We also talked about the interiority of Henry James' characters and we also saw how he anticipates people like, all these great modernists, who are these great modernists? Joyce, Kafka, Virginia Woolf, so yes and this is, well, plurality of perspective is always similar, I mean you can always; you know, it is like a thread that runs through the entire modernist discourse.

So which is, so this is at the center of, plurality of perspective is always at the center of the modernist discourse. So what happens to post-Modernism? Don't we have the concept of heteroglossia even in, and dialogism in post-Modernism. How is it that so different from this? Well, my question is plurality is implicit in Modernism, but then what happens to the so-called idea of heteroglossia and dialogism in post-Modernism. So how is it so different? Why do we call it modernist and why not, why is not a key post modernist text?

Student: May be because in Modernism the fragmentation is lamented, while in,

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Student: sorry in modernism, the lamentation is

Student: Fragmentation

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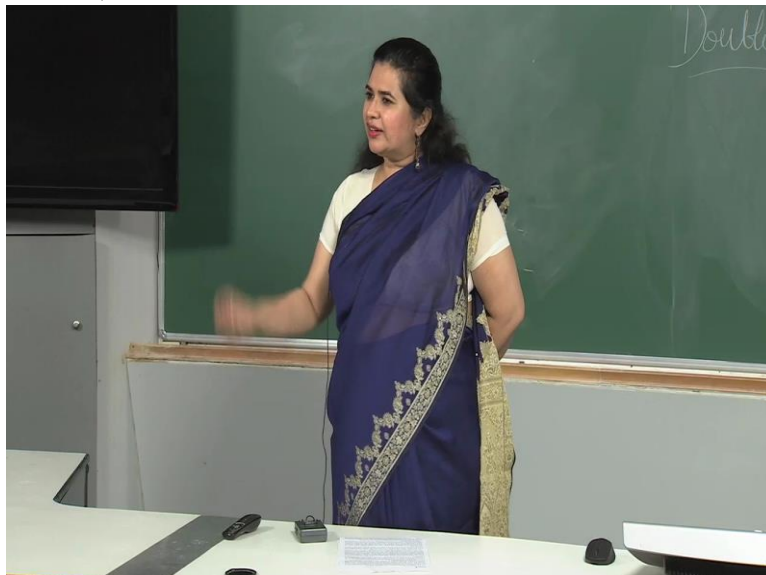
Professor: Fragmentation is not too celebrated and perhaps in post-Modernism

(Refer Slide Time 04:09)



Professor: it is necessitated and celebrated. Ok

(Refer Slide Time 04:12)



Professor: so let's look at this chapter through that perspective, Ok. But modernist is all, Modernism, another feature is also that modernism, and again I will try to through this challenge at you. Modernism is also, all about celebrating imagination. Modernists celebrate imagination. Originality is at the heart of modernism. Original creation, post Modernism is more juxtaposition collage, intertextual and pastiche, Ok. Why can't you call this a pastiche? At the beginning, I did say that Moby Dick too is a pastiche. Ok but then perhaps it was so startlingly original for its time and in spite of those pastiche that it refers to, it refers to, it alludes to several other great works of art. But it, there is no sense of semblance of intertextuality or collage happening here. Therefore it is modernist.

Student: Is it also that modernist still follow a semblance of a plot?

Professor: Yeah

Student: Despite fragmentation

Professor: But where is the plot here; therefore

(Refer Slide Time 05:29)



Professor: so many divergences, so many digressions, yeah

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Professor: so you see therefore this very problematic text. You can call, you see Henry James' is no post-Modernist out and out, even your Dreiser but here it's, therefore it makes, the beauty of this is so there is this, that it is so problematic. You can always have a post-Modernist reading of Moby Dick as well but perhaps not of Henry James, definitely not of Dreiser. They can, you can all safely read them as modernist texts, yeah? Alright so Doubloon, the Doubloon itself is on the vessel in the middle of the ocean and it is also a

displaced object, Ok. They got this particular gold coin, Spanish gold coin from some far, far away equatorial country, yeah it comes from Peru. It comes from Peru, Ok so equatorial country so the, again like all these seafarers it too has been displaced. There is a sense of journey and travel and displacement about, so like it also becomes one of the characters.

Ok, and then each crew member draws his own meaning from the Doubloon and you as readers can derive certain or draw certain conclusions about all these characters because each character sees himself as a, each character sees himself or herself, no her here, but each character sees himself in the coin, Ok. So Melville makes the connection between the Doubloon and the text. , he listens to the crew master and Stubb says at one point, there is another reading now but one text. So that is, that is what Stubb says. Now isn't this one of the features of literary theory? Yes?

Student: (())

Professor: Yes, yeah, still only one text, so reader response theory, Ok. No single conclusion or opinion emerges from the crew's analysis of the Doubloon. Now,

(Refer Slide Time 07:58)



Professor: Ere now it has been related how Ahab was wont to pace his quarter-deck, taking regular turns at either limit, the binnacle and mainmast, all these are ship related terms; but in the multiplicity of other things requiring narration it has not been added how that sometimes in these walks, when most plunged in his mood, he was wont to pause in turn at each spot, and stand there strangely eyeing the particular object before him. When he halted before the binnacle, with his glance fastened on the pointed needle in the compass, that glance shot like

a javelin with the pointed intensity of his purpose; and when resuming his walk he again paused before the mainmast, then, as the same riveted glance fastened upon the riveted gold coin there, he still wore the same aspect of nailed firmness, only dashed with a certain wild longing, if not hopefulness.

But one morning, turning to pass the doubloon, he seemed to be newly attracted by the strange figures and inscriptions stamped on it, as though now for the first time beginning to interpret for himself in some monomaniac way whatever significance might lurk in them. And some certain significance lurks in all things, else all things are little worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher, except to sell by the cartload, as they do hills about Boston, to fill up some morass in the Milky Way.

(Refer Slide Time 09:44)



Professor: Tell me what does it all amount to? What is Melville saying? There are so many allusions here.

(Refer Slide Time 09:54)



Professor: So many metaphors and similes

(Refer Slide Time 09:55)



Professor: can you make a list? Do this exercise fast. Yeah javelin is a sports simile. Yes so, a quick, a quick look, darting look at and there was a significance and then he digresses as there is significance in all things in this universe, otherwise the earth would be just a, what is a comparison?

Student: Empty cipher

Professor: Empty cipher, what is an empty cipher, a zero, a big zero, Ok. If there is no significance, then what is our earth except a big zero, Ok so you get it? You get the connection, that what is he trying to tell you now; that there is some divine providence in everything. No, nothing exists just for the sake of existence. So, therefore at one level Moby Dick happens to be an extremely, deeply religious, spiritual novel, Ok

(Refer Slide Time 11:00)



Professor: and the round world is a cipher except to sell by the cartload. You know, you sell things by the cartload, as they do hills about Boston to fill us some morass in the Milky Way. Now what does it mean? What's a Milky Way?

Student: Galaxy

Professor: Galaxy, and filling morass in the Milky Way?

(Refer Slide Time 11:29)



(Refer Slide Time 11:36)



Professor: What do you think? They do these things as they do hills about Boston, to fill up morass in the Milky Way. How can you fill up anything in the Milky Way?

Student: You cannot

Professor: You can't.

Student: It's futile

Professor: It's a futile task. It's a futile task. The entire world becomes meaningless and purposeless if there is no significance to everything that we do. So we have to understand that.

Now this doubloon was of purest, virgin gold. We have already seen that, high quality gold, raked somewhere out of the heart of gorgeous hills, whence, east and west, over golden sands, the head-waters of many a Pactolus flows. What is Pactolus? What is Pactolus? It is flowing, that means it has to be?

Student: River

Professor: A river but exactly a river? What kind of, a mythological river, again we are talking about he repeatedly alludes to the Greek mythology

And though now nailed amidst all the rustiness of iron bolts

The idea is it's a rare piece, therefore, as rare as if it has just been minted out of the Greek lands.

Iron bolts and the verdigris of copper spikes, yet, untouchable and immaculate

Now see, this Doubloon has been touched by the hands of all these motley crew and these people are, it is like a ragamuffin kind of a crew but it still looks untouched and immaculate, that's the purity of it. Almost like something divine, totem like thing which exists here, among these people.

And it is still preserved in its Quito glow. Nor, though placed amongst a ruthless crew and every hour passed by ruthless hands, and through the livelong nights shrouded with thick darkness which might cover any pilfering approach, nevertheless every sunrise found the doubloon where the sunset left it last.

Now this is the greatness, and this is the magical quality of this coin. There are so many members on the ship, so many crew members on the ship. Anyone can steal it very easily. But every night and every morning, it is there intact. Nobody because there is a, this is a superstitious crowd, Ok. They believe that if you steal it, something bad would happen. So therefore it wouldn't. Although these are like such, the kind of crowd this is, Ok, they would love to have their hands on this. It's lot of money but still they wouldn't because they believe in the purity, in the, some kind of divine significance of this object. Are you able to get it so far? Good.

It was set apart and sanctified to one awe-striking end; and however wanton in their sailor ways,

What's wanton? Nayantara, what's the meaning of wanton, literal meaning?

(Refer Slide Time 15:13)



Professor: Wanton ways

Student: Unabashed, uninhibited,

(Refer Slide Time 15:17)



Professor: Ok, Unabashed, uninhibited, Ok so wayward ways, careless ways so,

However wayward these people are, one and all, the mariners revered it as the white whale's talisman.

Ok, this is something that would save them. Sometimes they talked it over in the weary watch by night, wondering whose it was to be at last, and whether he would ever live to spend it.

Now those noble golden coins of South America are as medals of the sun and tropic token-pieces. Here palms, alpacas, and volcanoes; sun's disks, stars; ecliptics, horns-of-plenty, and rich banners waving, are in luxuriant profusion stamped;

What are the figures stamped on this coin? All these are given to you, what are these?

Student: Palms

Professor: palms, alpacas,

Student: volcano

Professor: Various kinds of vegetation, volcanoes, sun, stars almost like the entire zodiac sign, it is spread out before you; ecliptics, horns-of-plenty, what are those?

Student: (())

Professor: Good and rich banners waving, are in luxuriant profusion, luxuriant profusion stamped so that the precious gold seems almost to derive an added preciousness and enhancing glories, by passing through those fancy mints, to Spanishly, so Spanishly poetic.

It so chanced that the doubloon of the Pequod was a most wealthy example of these things. On its round border it bore the letters, REPUBLICA DEL ECUADOR: QUITO. So this bright coin came from a country planted in the middle of the world, and beneath the great equator, and named after it; and it had been cast midway up the Andes, in the unwaning clime that knows no autumn.

Zoned by those letters you saw the likeness of three Andes' summits; Andes Mountains Ok? and you see the summits of these mountains, from one a flame; a tower on another; on the third a crowing cock; while arching over all was a segment of the partitioned zodiac, the signs all marked with their usual cabalistics, and the keystone sun entering the equinoctial point at Libra.

Before this equatorial coin, Ahab, not unobserved by others, was now pausing.

Now this is an example of soliloquy happening in the novel and Ahab, so I want Ashwin now, you read for Ahab.

Student: "There's something ever egotistical in mountain-tops and towers, and all other grand and lofty things; look here,—three peaks as proud as Lucifer. The firm tower that is Ahab

(Refer Slide Time 18:24)



Student: the volcano, that is Ahab; the courageous, the undaunted, and victorious fowl, that, too, is Ahab; all are Ahab; and this round gold is but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self. Great pains, small gains for those who ask the world to solve them; it cannot solve itself. Methinks now this coined sun wears a ruddy face; but see! Aye, he enters the sign of storms, the equinox! And but six months before he wheeled out of a former equinox at Aries! From storm to storm! So be it, then. Born in throes, 'tis fit that man should live in pains and die in pangs! So be it, then! Here's stout stuff for woe to work on. So be it, then."

(Refer Slide Time 19:11)



Professor: Ok, can you interpret it for me? This is how Ahab reads the coin. And he looks only, at which figure, at the cock; at the river?

Student: The top

Student: The three Andies

Professor: the top

Student: The mountains

Professor: The peaks

Student: Peaks

Professor: The Peaks only, so what is now, how we have been discussing Ahab in certain terms, in certain context? What were we talking, Ahab is a? How has he been painted? Larger than life, so therefore this character is going to look only at the peaks. Ok, understand that.

Student: (())

Professor: Ok

(Refer Slide Time 19:48)



Professor: right, any other comment, so

(Refer Slide Time 19:51)



Professor: Ahab sees himself and he sees himself in the peaks, Ok, only at the top.

Student: His idea of the world mirrored to him

Professor: Yes, and therefore we are also talking about monomania, egoistical, Ok larger than life. He is the man who has been cut off from the stick before he got fully, completely burnt, Ok and therefore the concept, therefore the idea,

‘tis fit that man should live in pains and die in pangs!"

So we have already been introduced to this character and we get his own perspective on himself. So it is not just he is musing on the coin but he is also musing about his own character. Anything else you would like that something that strikes you?

Student: Aries is metaphor.

Professor: Aries

Student: Yeah and the Equinox, yeah

Professor: Yeah

(Refer Slide Time 20:53)



(Refer Slide Time 20:54)



Student: Storm to storm also

Professor: See, because Ahab is a man who is far from calm or settled, Ok. He, there is plenty of storm outside and within himself. So, therefore this is what he will see. We see the world the way we are, Ok.

Student: It also kind of, predicting the fate of the ship.

Professor: Predicting the fate of the ship, yeah, if you stretch the things so, a little too far.
Anukrupa, read for Starbuck.

Student: “No fairy fingers can have pressed the gold, but devil’s claws must

(Refer Slide Time 21:31)



Student: have left their mouldings there since yesterday. The old man seems to read Belshazzar’s awful writing. I have never marked the coin inspectingly. He goes below; let me read. A dark valley between three mighty, heaven-abiding peaks that almost seem the Trinity, in some faint earthly symbol, So in this vale of Death, God girds us round; and over all our gloom, the sun of Righteousness still shines a beacon and a hope. If we bend down our eyes, the dark vale shows her mouldy soil; but if we lift them, the bright sun meets our glance half way, to cheer. Yet, oh, the great sun is no fixture; and if, at midnight, we would fain snatch some sweet solace from him, we gaze for him in vain! This coin speaks wisely, mildly, truly, but still sadly to me. I will quit it, lest Truth shake me falsely.”

(Refer Slide Time 22:33)



Professor: Ok, so in Ahab you have storm and pain, in Starbuck, you have

Student: Wise

Professor: Yes, you have wisdom, you have mildness, you have truth, Ok. So this is, yeah, we were talking about the two contrast in the foils to each other. And he sees the valleys.

Student: The Holy Trinity.

Student: Religious symbol

Professor: Religious symbols also, yeah and he doesn't look at the peaks. He is no egotist. He looks at the valleys, yes. That's one at the heights, another one at the depths. So two contrasting characters and all these things are there, marked very well on the stamp, on the coin, stamped on the coin. But it is how you read it, so multiplicity of perspectives. , Gayatri, read for Stubb.

Student: "There now's the old Mogul,"

Professor: Now why is he a Mogul? The old Mogul is Ahab.

Student: Ahab

Professor: Ok, why is Ahab the old Mogul? Almost as majestic, as kingly, yes as magnificent like a Mogul.

(Refer Slide Time 23:51)



Student: “There now’s the old Mogul, he’s been twigging it; and there goes Starbuck from the same, and both with faces which I should say might be somewhere within nine fathoms long. And all from looking at a piece of gold, which did I have it now on Negro Hill or in Corlaer’s Hook, I’d not look at it very long ere spending it. Humph! In my poor, insignificant opinion, I regard this as queer. I have seen doubloons before now in my voyaging; your doubloons of old Spain, your doubloons of Peru, your doubloons of Chili, your doubloons of Bolivia, your doubloons of Popayan; with plenty of gold moidores and pistoles, and joes, and half joes, and quarter joes. What then should there be in this doubloon of the Equator that is so killing wonderful? By Golconda! Let me read it once. Halloa! Here’s signs and wonders truly! That, now, is what old Bowditch in his Epitome calls the zodiac,

Professor: Ok, there was one

(Refer Slide Time 24:56)



Professor: something called The Book of Zodiac like we have Linda Goodman, Ok and in those times, there was someone called Bowditch. Ok, so Bowditch's book of Zodiac, so he is alluding to that.

Student: calls the zodiac, and what my almanac

(Refer Slide Time 25:13)



Student: almanac below calls ditto. I'll get the almanac and

Professor: What is almanac?

(Refer Slide Time 25:20)



Student: It is a log

Professor: It is a log of?

(Refer Slide Time 25:24)



Student: Ship's activities

Professor: Ship's activities?

(Refer Slide Time 25:26)



Student: Stars

Professor: Stars, it is about zodiac signs and description, so that's an almanac. It's a log, it is somewhere below, Ok and he says, Ok, I will go down and bring it, Ok.

Student: I'll get the almanac and as I have heard devils can be raised with Daboll's

(Refer Slide Time 25:44)



Student: arithmetic

(Refer Slide Time 25:46)



Professor: Ok, it's like, you know, we have a standard book of Maths today, in those days there was Daboll's mathematics, so it was a standard textbook kind of book.

(Refer Slide Time 25:57)



Student: I'll try my hand at raising a meaning out of these queer curvices here with

(Refer Slide Time 26:01)



Student: Massachusetts calendar. Here's the book.

(Refer Slide Time 26:04)



Student: Let's see now. Signs and wonders; and the sun, he's always among 'em.

(Refer Slide Time 26:08)



Student: Hem, hem, hem; here they are—here they go—all alive:

(Refer Slide Time 26:13)



Student: Aries, or the Ram; Taurus, or the Bull and Jimimi!

Professor: Yeah,

(Refer Slide Time 26:18)



Professor: for Gemini

Student: here's Gemini himself, or the Twins. Well; the sun he wheels among 'em. Aye, here on the coin

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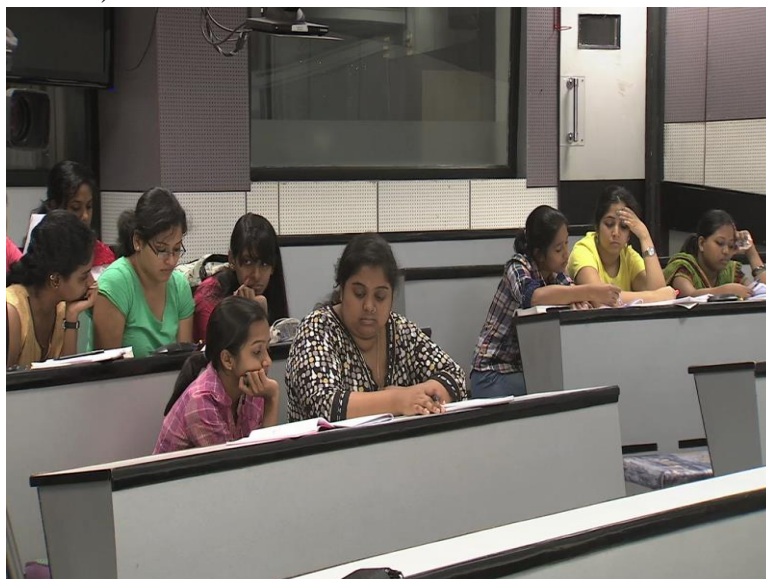
Student: he's just crossing the threshold between two of twelve sitting-rooms all in a ring. Book! You lie there; the fact is, you books must know your places

(Refer Slide Time 26:37)



Student: You'll do, you'll do to give us the bare words and facts, but we come in to supply the thoughts. That's my small experience, so far as the Massachusetts calendar, and Bowditch's navigator

(Refer Slide Time 26:49)



Student: and Daboll's arithmetic go. Signs and wonders, eh? Pity if there is nothing wonderful in signs, and significant in wonders! There's a clue somewhere; wait a bit; hist—hark!

(Refer Slide Time 27:00)



Student: By Jove, I have it! Look you, Doubloon, your zodiac here is the life of man in one round chapter; and now I'll read it off, straight out of the book. Come,

(Refer Slide Time 27:12)



Student: Almanack! To begin: there's Aries, or the Ram—lecherous dog, he begets us; then, Taurus, or the Bull—he bumps us the first thing; then Gemini, or the Twins—that is, Virtue and Vice; we try to reach Virtue, when lo! comes Cancer the Crab, and drags us back; and here, going from Virtue, Leo, a roaring Lion, lies in the path—he gives a few fierce bites and surly dabs with his paw; we escape, and hail Virgo, the Virgin! That's our first love; we marry and think to be happy for aye, when pop comes Libra, or the Scales—happiness weighed and found wanting; and while we are very sad about that, Lord! How we suddenly

jump, as Scorpio, or the Scorpion, stings us in the rear; we are curing the wound, when whang come the arrows all round; Sagittarius, or the Archer, is amusing himself.

As we pluck out the shafts, stand aside! Here's the battering-ram, Capricornus, or the Goat; full tilt, he comes rushing, and headlong we are tossed; when Aquarius, or the Water-bearer, pours out his whole deluge and drowns us; and to wind up, and to wind up with Pisces, or the Fishes, we sleep. There's a sermon now, writ in high heaven, and the sun goes, sun goes through it every year, and yet comes out of it all alive and hearty. Jollily he, aloft there, wheels through toil and trouble; and so, alow here, does jolly Stubb. Oh, jolly's the word for aye! Adieu, Doubloon! But stop; here comes little King-Post; dodge round the try-works, now, and let's hear what he'll have to say. There; he's before it; he'll out with something presently. So, so; he's beginning."

Professor: Ok, so the next person comes.

(Refer Slide Time 29:04)



Professor: That is Flask. Now, what do you understand by Stubb's musings?

Student: A very depressing view of life

Professor: Ok

Student: He reads the zodiac signs as

Student: From one problem

(Refer Slide Time 29:19)



Student: Man's life from birth to death

(Refer Slide Time 29:22)



Professor: Yeah and in all the 12 signs

Student: Hardships

Professor: There is an only hardship, Ok, so it could also be the way the poor man would look at his,

(Refer Slide Time 29:29)



Professor: would view his life.

(Refer Slide Time 29:30)



Professor: Now see Ahab doesn't. Ahab is more existential. Ahab is more, you know, other worldly. His problems are as magnificent as the man himself. But then Stubb being more like a menial worker on the ship, his problems are more common place. We get married, we get bumped, we get pulled in two directions and all this, that's life. That's a common man's life. Ahab and Starbuck, two heroes, they view life more philosophically. So that perspective is always missing in the perspective of the remaining crew. Ok, I won't be giving word to word explanation of that. But let's have Flask now, Ashmita?

Student: "I see nothing here, but a round thing made of gold, and whoever raises a certain whale, this round thing belongs to him.

(Refer Slide Time 30:32)



Student: So, what's all this staring been about? It is worth sixteen dollars, that's true; and at two cents the cigar, that's nine hundred and sixty cigars. I won't smoke dirty pipes like Stubb, but I like cigars, and here's nine hundred and sixty of them; so here goes Flask aloft to spy 'em out." Oh, this was, sorry.

Professor: Continue, continue

Student: "Shall I call that wise or foolish, now; if it be really wise it has a foolish look to it; yet, if it be really foolish, then has it a sort of wiseish look to it. But, avast; here comes our old Manxman—the old hearse-driver

Professor: Hearse-driver, we had been talking about that gray-haired Indian?

Student: he must have been, that is, before he took to the sea. He luffs up before the doubloon; halloa, and goes round on the other side of the mast; why, there's a horse-shoe nailed on that side; and now he's back again; what does that mean? Hark! He's muttering—voice like an old worn-out coffee-mill. Prick ears, and listen!"

"If the White Whale be raised, it must be in a month and a day,

Professor: Is that Flask?

Student: No

Student: Next person

Professor: It's the next person.

Student: Yeah

Professor: Yeah, Ok, so what is Flask all about?

Student: He just sees the monetary worth

Professor: He just sees the extremely materialistic kind of thing,

(Refer Slide Time 31:46)



Professor: that what is he going to gain, what is so, why are people in a thoughtful state when they look at this silly coin? After all, it is just money, Ok and whoever raises the whale, whoever spots the whale and manages to kill it down, he is going to get it. That's it. Ok, there is nothing more, no more reading to be done other than that.

(Refer Slide Time 32:11)



Professor: And it all amounts to 960 good quality cigars. This is important. This is the worth of the doubloon. Whereas for Ahab it means something else, for Starbuck it is something else.

Now, Arya Prakash, you read for

(Refer Slide Time 32:30)



Professor: the Indian, the Manxman

Student: “If the White Whale be raised, it must be in a month and a day, when the sun stands in some one of these signs. I’ve studied signs,

(Refer Slide Time 32:43)



Student: and know their marks; they were taught me two score years ago, by the old witch in Copenhagen. Now, in what sign will the sun then be? The horse-shoe sign; for there it is, right opposite the gold. And what’s the horse-shoe sign? The lion is the horse-shoe sign—the roaring and devouring lion. Ship, old ship! My old head shakes to think of thee.”

(Refer Slide Time 33:08)



Student: "There's another rendering now;

(Refer Slide Time 33:10)



Student: but still one text. All sorts of men in one kind of world, you see. Dodge again! Here comes Queequeg

Professor: Queequeg is the cannibal.

Student: "—all tattooing—looks like the signs of the Zodiac himself. What says the Cannibal? As I live he's comparing notes; looking at his thigh bone; thinks the sun is in the thigh, or in the calf, or in the bowels, I suppose, as the old women talk Surgeon's Astronomy in the back country. And by Jove, he's found something there in the vicinity of his thigh—I guess its Sagittarius, or the Archer. No: he don't know what to make of the doubloon; he

takes it for an old button off some king's trowsers. But, aside again! Here comes that ghost-devil, Fedallah; tail coiled out of sight as usual,

Professor: So it is not just

(Refer Slide Time 34:00)



Professor: how these men look at the doubloon, but how they look at

Student: Each other

Professor: each other also.

Student: There is another rendering now but still one text

(Refer Slide Time 34:10)



Student: like how one texts

Professor: So this is a,

(Refer Slide Time 34:13)



Professor: it is a very self-referential kind of, you understand what is self-referential?

Student: Yeah

Professor: Pragma? You know, when literature starts commenting on itself, right so there are, there is only one text but there are several readings of it. Don't we all

(Refer Slide Time 34:32)



Professor: do that all the time?

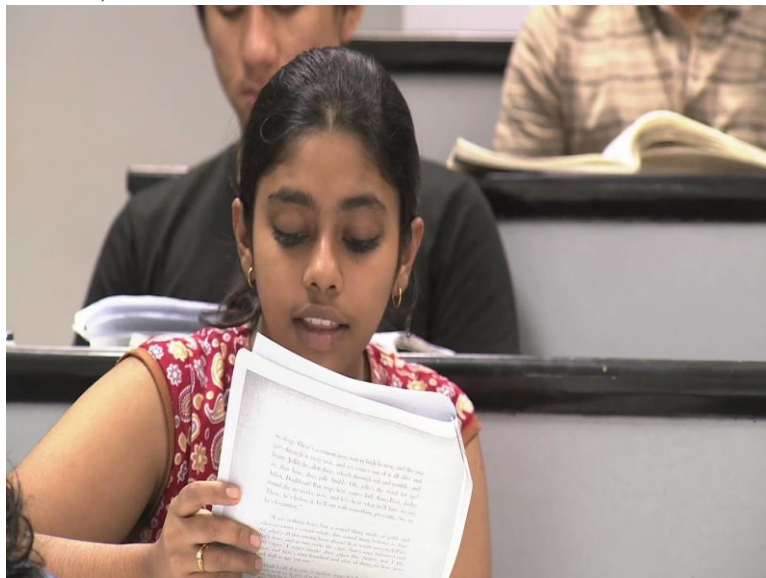
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Professor: When someone, some person reads, when she reads a text, she is going to understand it in one way. When you read the text, you are going to interpret in another way. So there is always one text. So this is the beginning of so-called reception and reader response theory. Ok. You continue, Rukhma. We stop that Fedallah; tail coiled out of sight as usual, oakum

Student: oakum in the toes of his pumps as usual. What does he say, with that look of his? Ah, only makes a sign to the sign and bows himself;

(Refer Slide Time 35:13)



Student: there is a sun on the coin—fire worshipper, depend upon it. Ho! More and more, this way comes Pip—poor boy! would he had died, or I; he's half horrible to me. He too has been

watching all of these interpreters—myself included—and look now, he comes to read, with that unearthly idiot face. Stand away again and hear him. Hark!”

Professor: This is now Pip's voice here. Srinidhi, go for Pip.

Student: “I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look.”

(Refer Slide Time 35:50)



Professor: Ok, Rukma, Rukma, this is upon my soul, is whose lines?

Student: (())

Professor: Not exactly Fedullah.

Student: Manxman

Professor: Manxman, yeah

Student: “Upon my soul, he’s been studying Murray’s Grammar!

(Refer Slide Time 36:06)



Student: Improving his mind, poor fellow! But what's that he says now—hist!"

Professor: Srinidhi?

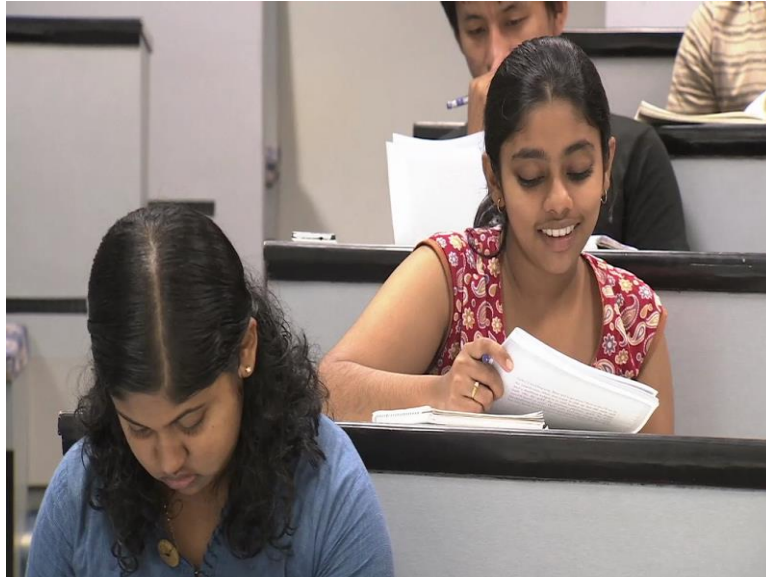
Student: "I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."

(Refer Slide Time 36:19)



Student: "Why, he's getting it by heart—hist! again."

(Refer Slide Time 36:26)



Student: "I look, you look, he looks;

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Student: "we look, ye look, they look."

Student: "Well, that's funny."

Student: "And I, you, and he;

(Refer Slide Time 36:33)



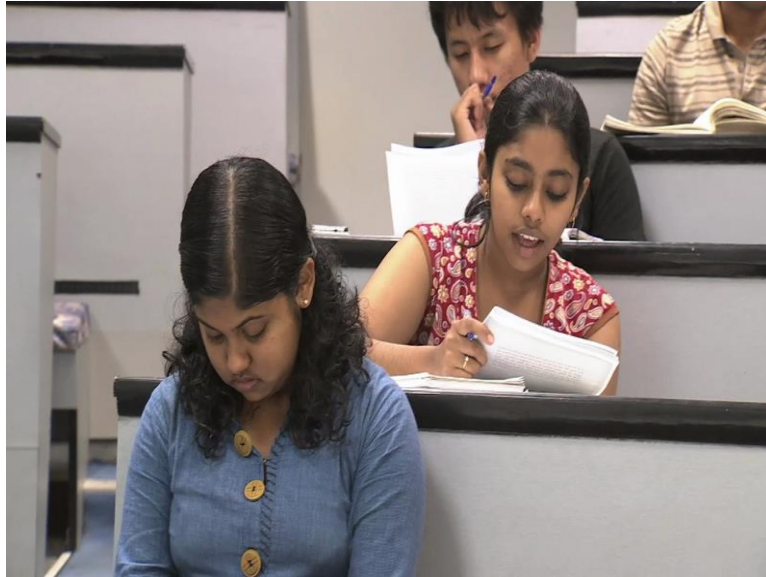
Student: and we, ye, and they, are all bats; and I'm a crow, especially when I stand a'top of this pine tree here. Caw! caw! caw! caw! caw! caw! Ain't I a crow? And where's the scarecrow? There he stands; two bones stuck into a pair of old trowsers, and two more poked into the sleeves of an old jacket."

(Refer Slide Time 36:50)



Student: "Wonder if he means me?—complimentary!—poor lad!—I could go hang myself.

(Refer Slide Time 36:56)



Student: Anyway, for the present, I'll quit Pip's vicinity. I can stand the rest, for they have plain wits; but he's too crazy-witty for my sanity. So, so, I leave him muttering."

(Refer Slide Time 37:09)



Professor: Ok, now comment on this. Pip is a poor black boy, uneducated, absolutely illiterate and he is trying to improve his mind by reading Murray's Grammar, Ok. He doesn't know how to speak properly. So I look, he looks, he is practicing his

Student: Grammar

Professor: Grammar, subject, verb, agreement perhaps. He is practicing that and he is the fool of the ship, everyone has the contempt for him. And this is there, so and Fedallah is like coiled tail like, yes, almost like the devil and Pip on the other hand is the fool, Ok and in between you have all these characters. So,

“Here’s the ship’s navel, this doubloon here, and they are all on fire to unscrew it. But, unscrew your navel, and what’s the consequence?”

Navel is the center of

Student: Ship

Professor: Gravity, center of gravity. So doubloon is sort of center of gravity of the ship. What happens when you remove the center of gravity? Everything collapses, yeah.

“Then again, if it stays here, that is ugly, too, for when aught’s nailed to the mast it’s a sign that things grow desperate.”

The very fact that we need a talisman to nail to a mast, that itself means that we are getting desperate, yeah because Captain Ahab has nailed this coin to the mast, because whoever gets the whale, he gets the reward. So it looks like things are getting desperate. So it works both ways. So you see again a plurality about the coin itself. Is it a good sign or a bad sign to have it around?

“Ha, ha! old Ahab! the White Whale; he’ll nail ye! This is a pine tree. My father, in old Tolland county, cut down a pine tree once, and found a silver ring grown over in it; some old darkey’s wedding ring.

(Refer Slide Time 39:20)



Professor: How did it get there? And so they’ll say in the resurrection,

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Professor: when they come to fish up this old mast, and find a doubloon lodged in it, with bedded oysters for the shaggy bark. Oh, the gold! the precious, precious, gold! the green miser'll hoard ye soon! Hish! hish! God goes 'mong the worlds blackberrying. Cook! ho, cook! and cook us! Jenny, Jenny! hey, hey, Jenny, Jenny! and get your hoe-cake done!"

(Refer Slide Time 39:53)



Professor: Jenny is the cook of the ship, Ok so it is about time to go and order the ship, order the cook. But you know it is not that important we should know who is saying it, but what are they saying. What are they saying? And then again belief in the supernatural. Now look at the, lines carefully.

This is a pine tree. My father in an old Tolland county cut down a pine tree once, and found a silver ring grown over in it. Now these are all old wives tales, supernatural tales so this is a very superstitious kind of a crew. They believe in sanctity of certain objects. And therefore when we say Moby Dick, in Captain Ahab's persona itself we notice that he is Christ, crucified as well as a marked cane as well as a satanic hero who takes the entire crew into the jaws of death, Ok. So again you don't have one definite answer to Captain Ahab.

You don't have definite truth about Captain Ahab. There are multiple views, multiple perspectives through which he can be read. Ok, very often people have also done another kind of reading that Moby Dick, the whale itself is God. You don't challenge God, the Will of God. And what happens when you challenge God? This is, you cause your destruction; you cause the destruction of people around you. So the Will of God should be obeyed, that is one thing. Alright, so that's it.

(Professor – student conversation ends)