

## The White Scourge

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# The White Scourge

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Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites  
in Texas Cotton Culture

Neil Foley

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*It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me. . . . Though in many natural objects, whiteness refiningly enhances beauty, as if imparting some special virtue of its own, . . . and though this pre-eminence in it applies to the human race itself, giving the white man ideal mastership over every dusky tribe; and though in other mortal sympathies and symbolizings, this same hue is made the emblem of many touching, noble things—the innocence of brides, the benignity of age . . . yet for all these accumulated associations, with whatever is sweet and honorable and sublime, there yet lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea of this hue, which strikes more of panic to the soul than that redness which affrights in blood.*

Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*



*To Angela, Sabina, Bianca, and Sophia;  
To Raymond P. Foley; and  
In memory of my mother,  
Maria Lilia Trejo Foley, 1919–1990*

