

DEMONSTRATION OF FAILURES INTO SUCCESS BY NATURE IN HERMAN MELVILLE'S NOVELS

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Abstract

The present study aims to bring out the failures and problems faced by the protagonist of Herman Melville's novels. Usually, the novels of Herman Melville express the general issues of nature. It may be particular or general. But this present research enumerates the problems by nature and its solution in *Moby Dick* nature play a vital role in that play *Moby Dick* had faced a struggle by surrounding. But with the help of nature he overcame, respectively in *Typee* also there was problem by nature. Even the protagonist would be caught by mature people like barbarian. But he overcame himself with the help of nature. In *Billy Budd* he faced the problem in a triangle way. But nature helped him to come out. It has been an apt example of the title.

Keywords: protagonist, enumerate, solution, barbarian, triangle

Here Melville has neatly pointed out the novelty of his masterpiece and its significance. Ahab's true motives for the pursuit of *Moby Dick* are the key that unlocks the main mystery. Failure to answer this question correctly means misunderstanding the theme of Melville's masterpiece. Attempts to interpret *Moby-Dick* as a carefully constructed allegory have resulted in the proposal of different answers by different critics. It has proved mainly how difficulties have been the task of reading Melville's intentions through his profusion of symbols. Obviously, all the proposed interpretations cannot be right. Fortunately, Melville has provided clear guidelines in the story, though some critics have displayed a tendency to ignore things. This book indulges them in a green play of the imagination, readers have been able to invent various interesting and sometimes elaborate allegorical interpretations, internally consistent, and that fits the story fairly well.

It also symbolizes his beauty of writing in his own way. Melville's own line of thinking is suited in this work. It is possible for example to argue on the basis of a Freudian Psychology, that the White Whale represents Melville's Puritan conscience against which his

ego is engaged in a life-or-death struggle. Others may prefer the theory that the whale stands for evil and Ahab for a modern Christ or Prometheus resisting its power. Still others equate the whale with religion and Ahab with liberal thinking. The contest may even suggest a struggle between individualism and social convention, or between Marxism and capitalism, or between science and nature, or anyone of a dozen plausible combinations, of his mind. A case can be made for almost any set of ideas which the reader seems to be in conflict in human life: and apparently, once a person has convinced himself that his particular interpretation of the story is possible, no one can dissuade him from believing it to be the only right one.

But Melville makes no insuperable mystery of the matter. If he had the book would certainly have to be considered an intellectual failure. Not only does Ahab recognize his own motives, but he clearly states them. Ahab is-as Melville once admiringly described his friend Hawthorne. A man which like Russia or the British Empire, declares himself a sovereignty nature amid the powers of heaven, hell, and earth. He may perish: but so long as he exists he insists upon treating with all Powers upon an equal basis. If any of those other Powers choose to withhold certain secrets, let them: that does not impair my sovereignty in myself: that does not make my tributary. And perhaps, after all, there is no secret.

Ahab seeks if the audience takes him at his word is not the actual whale but a symbolical whale-the ultimate mystery of the universe. Being highly educated and Kantian as well. Ahab acknowledges the limitation of man's power to know God through his intellect: yet instead of submitting to his weakness, he hopes to transcend it by sheer defiance. His relentless determination to pierce the mystery is precisely that of Taji in *Mardi*. He believes that he must somehow strike through the "pasteboard mask" of nature he must reason beyond the emblems of reality. But his puny powers, when matched against the forces of nature and fate, inevitably entrap him.

Ahab, although boldly announcing himself a sovereign individual in the spiritual sense, equal in importance if not in strength of mind and body to any other sovereign individual in the universe-"The author would strike the sun if he offended me"-is, however, the prisoner of his human form and human limitations.. His mind fails in its attempts to pierce the wall of symbol, and his response to the failure is anger both at fate and at his own weakness. He strikes back blindly, even when aware of his doom. "How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall?" Braving destruction, he is driven by the desperate urge to know into open defiance of the Power that bound him into weakness and the Mind that remains forever hidden behind the emblematic mask. "Sometimes" he comments bitterly, "I think there's naught beyond." And here he reiterates Melville's own blasphemy: and perhaps, after all, there is no secret.

To argue from this that Melville denied the existence of God or that he regarded God as an enemy is going further than the evidence warrants. While raising serious questions about the inscrutable ways of God and the frustrating mystery of man's place in the universe, Melville took pains to reveal the futility of Ahab's posture of defiance. The appealing thing

about Ahab is his courage-though perhaps *foolhardiness* would be a more accurate word-in playing for high stakes with a stacked deck. In his courage to disobey he resembles Prometheus, but there the resemblance ends. In no true sense can he be taught to act consistently on Melville. In this story, the reader has reminded of Ahab's utter madness-the "madness of strength." There is another madman Pip. Pip the pathetic little Negro boy driven insane after being heartlessly abandoned for a time on the open ocean, possesses the "Madness of weakness." He never bewails or defies his fate. Yet he, not Ahab, glimpses in a sudden flash, at the instant of listing sanity, the true nature of the universe. Melville certainly means to convey in *Moby-Dick* the conviction-forced upon him by his own philosophical inquiries-that, on the one hand, pursuit of the Absolute leads to frustration and madness: on the other, arrogance in the search is inherently self-destructive.

Ahab's great error, like Taji's, is Failure to accept human limitation. In assuming the possibility of leaning final truth, he puts himself in effect on a plane of equality with God. He is not only unrealistic but guilty of the fatal sin of pride: for like Ethan Brand in Hawthorne's tale, he believes himself above and apart from other men. Though his attitude, Melville plainly condemns. While the climax of *Moby-Dick* seems to come at the moment when Ahab steps into the whaleboat for a time recovers his humanity; he nearly allows himself to a common lot of mankind in an imperfect world. The attractions of brotherhood and peace momentarily conquer his insane desire to storm heaven. But his good resolves disappear, and he determines to press on in the chase. He dooms himself that It has to be resisted that the urge to strike at Fate and, by striking, to probe the universal mystery, he dooms himself.

Ahab as captain of the *Pequod* acts as the moral and intellectual leader of a crew representing every aspect of human life. Among the strangely assorted collection of characters are primitive savages like Daggoo and Queequeg, sailors from all the countries of Europe, young innocents like Pip and Ishmael, wise old seafarers, men of different religious faiths, good men and bad men. Some, like Stubb, laugh at life: others, like Starbuck, prize devotion to duty. The ship meets in the course of its voyage a great many other whaling ships bound on their own courses and intent on their own concerns. The meetings at sea provide interesting interludes in the story, sometimes humorous and sometimes tragic, but they also serve to shed the light of numerous and varying points of view on Ahab's quest. One such meeting demonstrates When the *Rachel* asks for aid in the search for a lost whaleboat which contains the captain's only son, Ahab, now close on the trail of *Moby Dick*, unfeelingly refuses.

One of the minor characteristics of the book that modern readers may regard as a defeat is the use of melodramatic devices to inspire fear or wonder. Although Melville's literary principles in 1850 were edging more and more toward scientific realism. He is introduced in the story, either through habit or in a bid for popularity such relics of eighteenth-century taste as the Parsee Fedallah and his mysterious companions. These odd creatures, having for no apparent reason stolen aboard the ship secretly and in the darkness, remain hidden for months below decks and are not seen until called out as the special crew of

the captain's whaleboat after the White Whale has been sighted. While the reason for Fedallah's presence symbolizes the evil which Ahab has created for himself an evil spawned by single-minded hatred-yet as an actor in the drama he is nearly unbelievable. He must be considered a throwback to the phantom figures that haunt the shadowy stairways of gothic horror tales, or the firm underlings of Milton's fallen Satan. Fedallah predicts, accurately though in ambiguous terms, the death of Ahab; and he apparently relishes the wrong interpretation that the mad captain places on his words. Everything turns out as he has foretold, out of the chase Fedallah is gruesomely be held by his captain, lashed lifeless by twined harpoon ropes to the revolving body of *Moby Dick*. Ahab himself, whom-as predicted- only hemp can kill, is dragged into the sea to his death by a coil of rope accidentally looped around his neck just after he has cast his harpoon vengefully into the whale.

When the frantic struggle to finish *Moby Dick* and see it through the press was finally ended, Melville confessed to his friend Hawthorne: that he had written a wicked book and feel spotless as the lamb. While readers today might not consider the work wicked nineteenth-century Christianity would clearly regard it so because the chief character openly questions the goodness of God. In his moments of despair, Ahab even doubts the existence of a just Creator. Like Satan, he refuses to accept the fact of his inferiority and weakness and generally sees the universe as having been formed in fright. Melville, in spite of having created such a character and expressed through him some of his own religious and philosophical doubts could feel personally "spotless" and innocent because as the author he could hold himself aloof from the madness of Ahab and because he had shown the defiance of heaven to be ultimately self-destructive. Through this novel he expresses the quality of flaws and its mature nature and he supposed to the propaganda of its strength.

This novel has to be spoken by many novelists in all scenarios. Melville speaks in *Moby Dick*, baffling and were too many readers of the nineteenth century. It has today been fairly well defined. On one level Melville presents an exciting narrative of adventure at sea on another a remarkably accurate account of the American whale fisheries and the Whaleman's life. On a deeper level explores human psychology-still deeper level he explores human psychology-still deeper, man's moral nature and his relationship to his universe. From the supposition that Ahab to some degree depicts the spiritual autobiography of his creator one may infer Melville's arrival in 1850 at the "Everlasting No" in the development of personal philosophy. *Moby-Dick* declares allegorically total independence of subservience to any established religious or philosophical explanation of man's role in the universal order. It stands however dangerously, as a declaration of man's freedom to control his own spiritual destiny. The risks are understood and accepted: "Make it an utter wreck, if wreck I must!" Melville's admiration for Hawthorne as a "Nay-sayer" indicates his own leanings in this direction.

To his deep disquiet, however, as the perspicacious Hawthorne was to observe later, Melville never could be comfortable in his unbelief. To describe the state of his mind

revealed in *Moby-Dick*, one may use the words he applied in his famous review of *Mosses from an Old Manse* to the author of that collection of thoughtful tales and call him as seeker, not a finder yet.

In *Moby-Dick* the supreme statement of Melville's "Everlasting No, "No" the story takes on a fascination it could never have as a straight forward narrative of adventure at sea, however heroic in proportions, or as a partly fictional account of whaling and cetology. Its philosophical undercurrent as well as its frequently noticed resemblance to the great myths of western culture and folklore helps to explain the difficulties often encountered in the first reading of the story. On the other hand, its appeal to the whole complex of biological memories and social the reader who does not insist upon classifying *Moby-Dick* strictly in one literary category or another, its rereading can be endlessly fresh and revealing. How the various ingredients of this masterpiece and mixed and how they balance and support each other to produce a single but multifaceted effect can be seen in part from an examination of the way in which the plot of this unusual narrative unfolds.

The story begins on a winter's day in the city of New York, where a young American- he calls himself Ishmael, after the half-Egyptian son of Abraham and Hagar who was driven from his home and wandered in barren land-low in funds and low in spirit, in desperation decides to seek his fortune aboard one of the whaling ship's he knows to be signing crews for voyages to the Pacific Ocean. The name Ishmael seems appropriate for him not only because he feels alone and forsaken but also it fits the whaling crews of the nineteenth century. It was composed largely of the dregs and scum of maritime life-true outcasts from society. Traveling to New Bedford, Massachusetts, the chief whaling port of the United States, Ishmael stops for two nights at the Spouter-Inn, where he makes his initial acquaintance with men who earn their living by killing whales. They prove a strange lot. Strangest of all to Ishmael is the cannibal Queequeg, a savage harpooner from the South Seas with whom he unwillingly finds him-self sharing a bed. The savage, however, turns out to be harmless and even amiable: after some humorously depicted moments of terror, Ishmael accepts him as a bosom companion. They agree to go job-hunting together and to sign aboard the same ship.

On a Sunday, following the ancient custom of seamen preparing to start on a dangerous voyage, Ishmael and Queequeg attend church at the Whaleman's Chapel, where they hear Father Mapple a noted preacher, deliver a sermon on Jonah. The first of two remarkable sermons in *Moby-Dick* this one in a sense proclaims the real theme of the book. Looming high above his motley congregation in a pulpit shaped like the prow of a whaling ship, Father Mapple employs the language of seafaring men as he explains the message of the Old Testament fable. The sermon admirably foreshadows Ahab-who like Jonah stubbornly disobeys the will of God; though unlike Jonah he does not seek refuge in a hiding place but openly defies God-and points a warning of the consequences of disobedience.

On Monday, Ishmael and Queequeg sail on a little packet schooner to Nantucket, the island far-famed as the birthplace of modern whaling, where after a night at the Try Pots(that serves fish at all meals), they sign for a long voyage aboard the *Pequod*, a doughty old

whaling ship headed for the South Pacific. They are enrolled as members of the crew by two parsimonious elderly Quakers, Captain Peleg, and Captain Bildad; but they are unable to meet the ship's commander, Captain Ahab. When they inquire about their future captain, Peleg describes him as a renowned whale hunter whose leg recently has been bitten off by a large bull whale.

This rather unexpected and impassioned plea for Ahab may be more disturbing than reassuring, but Ishmael and Queequeg take it as a matter of course and are soon busy with preparations for the sailing scheduled for a few days hence. During this interim period, a ragged stranger stops them on the wharf one morning and in mysterious words and gestures tries to warn them against sailing aboard the *Pequod*. He tells them his name, Elijah. This incident arouses apprehensions, but they brush off the warning as a sailor's prank. In the murky dawn on the day of sailing, they catch a momentary glimpse of several shadowy figures going on board the ship, and Elijah mysteriously materializes again to hint that these figures will be nowhere in sight when the two shipmates enter the *Pequod*-a prediction that oddly proves correct. Despite these ominous portents, Ishmael and his cannibal companion join the rest of the crew for duty. With Captain Ahab still not in evidence, the *Pequod* weighs anchor on Christmas Day and sets out upon her fateful voyage.

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