

Moby dick and the whaling industry



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Herman Melville uses the perils of whaling to develop his idea of revenge in his well-written book, Moby Dick. Melville went through many experiences growing up such as being in the navy, whaling, and then being held captive by cannibals (gateway proquest). When he returned home from his journeys he began to write about his previous experiences.

Melville was an exceptional author; writing many books during his lifetime. At the time Moby Dick (one of Melvilles most popular books) was being written, America was trying to establish its nationality and international identity (novels for students, encyclopedia). The country did this by establishing colonies and figuring out who can be allowed in America.

Melville keeps the reader on their toes with the way he changes the point of view several times. Ishmael is the narrator throughout the book and he is introduced in the beginning with a very famous line Call me Ishmael. He switches up the point of view in 2 different ways; first and third person. As he describes the events in his book, he uses his own thoughts and the thoughts and feelings of other characters in the book from an outside point of view. Without Ishmael there would be no story. He is a very different person in human nature, but as the narrator he is a very unique person. Then we have Ahab, he is described as a very mystical person because no one knows about him. But he was considered an ungodly, god-like person because he always thought ahead about everything. As soon as Moby Dick ate his leg, he immediately wanted revenge. He also has a white scar down his face from a thunderbolt. Some even say it runs down his whole body. Then we have Starbuck, he is Captain Ahabs chief mate. He was mainly the chief mate because of how skinny and limber he was. He was the only one that had the

courage to stand up to his captain. Queequeg is the harpooner Ishmael met and had to room with him in the inn. Stubb is a humorous person. When he tells his men to do something he has a sarcastic tone so it doesn't feel like they are being bossed around. Pippin gets scared when they were on the way to get a whale and jumps out but luckily Stubb saves him.

As the story goes on you learn more about why Moby Dick is so important to these whaling voyagers. The very large white sperm whale has sunken so many ships and has so many scars and has killed many people. Ahab wants him so bad because he left a very big white scar on his face and ripped his leg off, but Ahab managed to leave his mark on the large whale.

While Moby Dick was being written, America was going through a wild period because they were trying to establish their identity both nationally and internationally. Transcendentalism, the idea that God was in this world as well as every individual, was the principle philosophical and religious view point. This was proposed by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay, Self-Reliance.

In the 1850s, whaling was a very unregulated business, American whalers were free to sail the open seas and hunt for whales in any waters. Barely a year after his return, Melville finished his manuscript on the semi-fictional novel based on his first travel to Marquesas. In the year that Moby Dick was being published, a whaler was sunk by a sperm whale in circumstances similar to that of the climax in this novel.

Herman Melville was born in New York City in 1819 to his parents Allan and Maria. Both of Melville's grandfathers, Thomas Melville and Peter Gansevoort,
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were Revolutionary war heroes, which Herman Melville had great pride in. Melville's family was very dedicated to their faith, in fact, nearly three weeks after Herman Melville's birth, he was baptized at his home by a minister of the Southern Reform Dutch church.

Allan Melville sent all of his sons to the New York Male School. Unfortunately, Melville had to drop out of school at the age of fifteen and go to work due to the loss of his father. At the age of twenty, Melville started the beginning of his career on vessels. In one of his books, *TYPEE*, he describes his first voyage as both thrilling and harrowing.

In the middle of one of his voyages, Melville jumped ship at the Marquesas and lived there for a month among the cannibals. In this time, the natives captured him and held him captive in the valley of Typee. He was able to escape by boarding an Australian trade ship. This experience sparked a new novel called *Typee*, which he found great success in.

In 1851, one of Melville's greatest novels was published, it was not immediately recognized, but as years went on it became more popular. Melville published many more novels after this, but he did not experience very much success. By the time of his death, September 28, 1891, Melville's reputation declined greatly. The failure of his works led him to wonder if a book in a man's brain is better off than a book bound in calf- at any rate it is safer from criticism.

Herman Melville was a great author, his novels reflected his very adventurous lifestyle. One of his greatest successes *Moby Dick*, gives a great sense of excitement and adventure by changing up the points of view. As <https://assignbuster.com/moby-dick-and-the-whaling-industry/>

you can see, Melville had a semi rough child hood suffering losses in his family and having to go to work at an early age. Herman Melville uses the perils of whaling to develop his idea of revenge in his well-written book, Moby Dick.