

**NATURE VS MAN: A THEMATIC STUDY OF HERMAN MELVILLE'S  
*MOBY DICK.***

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**ABSTRACT:**

Nature always wears the colors of spirit and joy. Humans are the creations of nature and nothing without it. Nature gives us life in all means and humans are not loyal to protect it in return. Human's act against nature is the major cause for the degradation happening throughout the world. Many authors warned the readers through their writings about the ill happening against nature and its outcome. Among all Herman Melville's portrayal of human act against nature through the character Captain Ahab, who made his move against nature to catch the smart sea Whale Moby Dick. The setting created by Melville for this novel is the places in and around the ocean near Massachusetts. The novel not only exposed the value of culture and humanity but also shows the injustice done by mankind against nature and as a result everyone was punished on their own way.

**Keywords:** Nature, Creations, Whale, Ocean, Injustice.

Nature by all means is highly supportive and loyal towards human. Each and every act against nature by human affects the regular life cycle of human beings. Even after knowing the entire outcome, humans are not ready to change their own life style and go along with nature. Literature such as Ecocriticism talked mainly about the relationship between human and nature and the link between the both. Writers such as Thomas Gray, Robert Burns, William Wordsworth and so showed their deepest love and concern on the nature. They considered nature as their friend, inspiration, tutor and so. Ernest Hemmingway had taken a step forward than the other writers and addressed the Sea as her Mother.

Nature and mankind are always inseparable. Each and every step taken by human has created a huge gap between nature and mankind. This message was beautifully conveyed by Herman Melville in his novel *Moby Dick*. The character Ahab and the Whale Moby Dick are the centre of focus in the novel. Melville has handled the theory of Ecocriticism in a different way through this novel.

The novel *Moby Dick* shows important for the respect of nature than other themes in particular. This story explained in detail about the effect of nature when human tries to overcome it. *Moby Dick* is all about the struggle between the Captain Ahab and the Whale Moby Dick. The entire human race is referred through the character Ahab and the nature and natural phenomena is represented through the Whale Moby Dick. The story opened with a sea voyage by many people of various classes in a ship named Pequod. The owners of the ship are Peleg and Bildad. The ship started its voyage from Nantucket and on a cold Christmas day. The ship was directed towards Africa, Indian Ocean and some other places without exposing the exact place where they aimed to go until the Captain of the ship Ahab entered into the scene.

Ahab is a brave captain of one leg, who is considered as the mysterious captain. He lost one of his legs during his last fight with the sperm whale in the sea. He attached a false leg made upon the sperm whales' jaw. In Ahab's point of view the sperm whale Moby Dick is his one and only rival. He wanted to kill the sperm whale at all costs. Ahab's attempt to kill the whale became his lifelong ambition to be attained. He didn't know that he had a try against nature till he lost his life.

Ahab described the whale Moby Dick as the embodiment of evil, because he had lost his leg while fighting with this legendary great whale. He has even announced that who see the whale at first would be awarded with a golden doubloon. A group of men accompanied in the ship who had taken the voyage for the first time in the Pequod under the guidance of a leader named Fedallah. They were suggested to Ahab by the ship owners as highly professional person in haunting.

Fedallah, a Parsee is man of exotic looking and he was good in Astrology also. He foretold two prophecies to Ahab stating that Ahab would not died until he see two strange hearse

to carry the death upon the sea, one not constructed by a mortal hands, the second was made upon American woods. Through this statement Ahab came to a conclusion that he would not face his death on sea because there was no hearse in the ship. Meanwhile he met another captain, who eventually lost his arms in a fight with the sperm whale. The conversation with the captain stimulates the idea of haunting the sperm whale at his earliest.

Queequeg a main character in the novel and an important harpooner was so sick and he made a coffin for himself. Almost he was in his final stage of his life and counting his days. The coffin was made up of wood and he usually carries the coffin with him as he was at his final stage of his life. Unexpectedly he was recovered from his sickness during the voyage.

The harpooners, jester and other crew members were eagerly waiting to meet the sperm whales. During the second day of their voyage they met the Whale which was a great threat and challenge to many captains and harpooners. The ship reached the region of equator and Ahab was keen in finding the great whale in the ocean. On seeing the whale sperm, Ahab shouted in a high voice with joy. He ordered all the harpooners and the crew members involved in haunting to be ready to haunt his one and only enemy on that day. He even cheered up all his team mates to get confidence to haunt the whale. Fortunately very sooner they have harpooned the whale. Even after harpooning the whale don't want to come under the control of the team members. It had almost damaged the harpoon boats and hitting the Pequod often through his strong body to damage the ship.

The fight between the harpooners and the whale became strong and both of them, wanted to win in the war. It was highly unpredicted that the victory fell in the hands of the whale Moby Dick. Luck and perseverance helped the Whale in right time, it started shaking the control of the ship through his powerful attack. Everyone started losing their hopes and almost they came to know about their end.

The movement taken by the whale collapsed the ship and shivered it into pieces. The unexpected attack by the whale disturbed the crew members heavily and many of them fell into the ocean. The first major death was shocking to all the crews. Fedallah was trapped into a harpoon line and

fell into the ocean. No one knew that how did he die, but they all could see is the sinking corpse of Fedallah. Ahab recounted the prophecy given by Fedallah who gave details about Ahab's death but died unaware of his own.

Ahab was exhausted completely in the battle. He was rushing here and there Inorder to save the life of all. He was not ready to still believe the other harpooners. He got into the action directly to kill it.

Early in the morning he found out mischievous Moby Dick through its hump. He started shouting frenziedly. "There she blows! There she blows! A hump like a snow-hill it is Moby Dick." (MB 482). Accidentally he saw the coffin that was made by Queequeg for himself which was made up of American wood and that reminded him the prophecy again about his death. A little later he came out from his thoughts and rushed towards the deck to attack the furious whale.

Ahab found that dealing Moby Dick is quiet a hard task. Ahab asked Starbuck to stay back out of consideration. Moby Dick was too serious in his movement. His move was unsteady, suddenly moving upward and downward again into the sea and disappeared all of a sudden. Ahab peered deep into the sea to find out his enemy. When he saw the two long crooked tooth of Moby Dick, he gripped the harpoon and got ready to attack the whale.

The boat of Ahab was hit by Moby Dick with its jaw and split into two pieces. Ahab started realizing the prophecy of Fedallah that the Pecquod was made up of the American Wood. Inorder to escape from the direct attack by the whale, he rushed himself towards the other side of the deck. Unfortunately he the loop line tangled around the neck of Ahab. Inorder to release himself from the loop link he bend over and the loop line tangled the neck of Ahab even more. He realized that soon he is going to lose his life. The whale disappeared all of a sudden from the sight of Ahab. Due to collision the coffin made by Queequeg started sinking on the water and reached the surface. The narrator of the novel Ishmael was there who hides himself in the coffin to save his life sank and reached the shore.

The two prophecies foretold by Fedallah happened before the death of the Captain Ahab. By thinking all the words of Fedallah, Ahab lost his life. Throughout the novel Herman Melville

never missed even a single chance to portray the atmospheric setting of the ocean. The ups and downs of the sea waves whenever the harpoon attacked the whale is the direct expression of nature's agony on human kind. Even nature is also supporting the whale and it has to be saved from the haunt. The climax scene of the novel clearly instructed the readers that no one can withstand against the nature and natural phenomena. When human cross the limits the nature will not allow it without showing the effect of it.

The effect of disturbing the nature is clearly shown by Melville through the novel *Moby Dick*. Even though the whale *Moby Dick* is not a character in the novel, Melville used this whale to represent the nature and the character of Ahab represents the injustice against the nature. Melville has given a strong statement that nature is so powerful and it has its own way to take all the corrective actions when needed.

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