

The Quest ForThe Hero in Herman Melville's "Moby-Dick"

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Abstract:

Herman Melville's Moby-Dick is one of the American novels that are concerned with the sea and the predicaments of people in the middle of their voyages in the high seas. Herman Melville is a specialized in writing about the sea. He considers the sea as a source of wealth, finding treasures, and discovering new lands and secrets, new information as well as it is a source of adventure and peril. The current paper studies many characters who can be regarded as heroes of the oeuvre. They are three in number. Each of these characters is very apt to be the hero because of the qualities that are available in each of them. The current paper consists of three parts entitled according to each of the heroes' name.

Each of these heroes is critically analyzed according to his good traits and evil vices. The researcher recollects the different viewpoints of the readers, critics and their decisions to determine who the hero is on one hand and who the villain is, though it is not the concern of the present paper, on the second hand. Through referring to the instances and the situations in which each of these heroes behave and act, the paper is going to determine who the hero of the paper is. By elaborating and evaluating their roles and situations the paper is going to reach its aim that is determining the hero of the oeuvre.

Key Words: hero, pursuit, revenge, destruction

□ البحث عن البطل في رواية هرمان ميلفل موبي دك

مدرس

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المخلص:-

تعد رواية موبي دك لهرمان ميلفل احدى الروايات الامريكية التي اهتمت بالبحر ومشكلات الناس اثناء ابحارهم في اعالي البحار. يعد هرمان ميلفل متخصصاً في الكتابة عن البحر. فهو يعد البحر مصدراً للثروة وايجاد الكنوز واستكشاف اماكن جديدة واسرارها ومصدراً للمعلومات الجديدة. كما ويعد البحر مصدراً للمغامرة والخطر. يتناول البحث الحالي مجموعة من الشخصيات التي يمكن اعتبارها بطلاً للعمل. انهم ثلاث شخصيات. يعد كل من تلك الشخصيات مناسباً لان يكون بطلاً بسبب المؤهلات المتوفرة في كل منهم. يتكون البحث الحالي من ثلاثة اقسام تم تسميتها حسب اسماء الابطال.

سيتناول البحث كل من هؤلاء الابطال من خلال التحليل النقدي للخصال الحميدة والعيوب الرذائل الذميمة. وسيقوم الباحث بجمع اراء النقاد وقراراتهم كيما يتوصل الى رأي نقديتهم من خلاله تحديد شخصية البطل هذا من جانب ومن هو الشخص الشرير من خلال الاشارة له لأن هذا الموضوع ليس من صلب اختصاص البحث الحالي. من خلال الاشارة الى الامثلة والمواقف التي يقوم الابطال بالتصرف والتحرك من خلالها. ومن ثم سيتم الاستدلال الى بطل العمل . وكذلك سيتم تقييم الشخصيات موضع النقاش ومواقفهم من ثم سيتوصل البحث الى هدفه لذي هو الوصول الى هوية شخصية البطل

الكلمات المفتاحية: البطل، المطاردة، الانتقام ، الدمار

1.Introduction

Herman Melville(1819-1891) is an American writer who writes novels, short stories and poetry. He is infatuated by the sea and he works on the ship's deck. His career as one of the ship crew influenced his literary career as a writer. This paper sheds light on one of the American novels that is penned in the ninetieth century by one of those writers who are specialized in such type of writings. Hughes (2011:285) mentions that Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* was revived in the twentieth century, when its importance and value as one of the canonical texts of the American Renaissance was admitted by a generation of critics spelled by its symbolic power, wit, playfulness, grandeur and beauty. This gained reputation lies in its worldly dimensions.

Forster (2004:114) opines that the novel cannot be limited into a book narrowed and hardened into mere words . It is the battle against evil that lasted for a long time in a destructive way. The white whale, according to Forster, is evil , and captain Ahab is misled by his constant pursuit to overcome Moby Dick. Herman Melville chooses the ship " Pequod" and its crew to stand for dissimilar layers and races of the American society at the ninetieth century. Melville uses the experiences and adventures of his youth and young manhood as the raw material for his novels. The present study discusses the major three characters whose potentials make them heroes to reach the aim behind the study.

Kelley (2012:401) extends his interpretation to say that *Moby-Dick* is a novel of three heroes who are Ishmael the narrator and the only rescued character ,captain Ahab and Moby Dick who defy each other. The first major character is captain Ahab. The second character is the only survivor of the voyage and the narrator of the oeuvre Ishmael, while the third character is Moby Dick who is an animated whale that carries the title of the novel. Each of these

characters has his own significance due to his role in this novel. That is why each of them is going to be tackled separately.

Critics have their different points of views to judge who the hero or the villain is. According to their trends , interpretations and mentality, they decide one to be the hero and the other to be the villain. The conclusion sums up all these facts of the characters and analyzes them closely.

1-Ishmael as a hero

Ishmael is the narrator of the novel . He is solely rescued of the ruined " Pequod". He is the novice wanderer who wants to discover something new to refresh his boring life. Kelley (2012:402) shows us that Moby-Dick⁽¹⁾ can be interpreted by some critics as a novel that has three heroes. Those critics regard Ishmael the narrator as the hero because he is the only rescued person out of the destruction of the "Pequod". The other two heroes are of course Ahab and Moby Dick. Tilak (2011:113) states that the novel is narrated by Ishmael. He is a neutral man who sees what actually happens since he is the only surviving character out of the destructive confrontation between Ahab the captain and his crew on the one hand and Moby Dick, the aim behind this voyage, as is declared by Ahab. So, Ishmael is the narrator and the only surviving character on the other hand.

Spanckeren (1994_40) pinpoints that the name Ishmael emanates from the book of Genesis in the Old Testament- he was the son of prophet Ibrahim and his wife Hagar (servant to Ibrahim's wife; Sarah). Ishmael and Hagar were cast into the wilderness by Ibrahim. And this is clear when we find Ishmael wandering at the very beginning of the novel searching for a job till he got the Pequod.

Rollyson, Paddock, and Gentry(2012: 153) confirm that Ishmael shares all the qualities of Melville's sailor narrators. He seems

somewhat removed from the rest of the crew, using his marginal status to provide the distance with which he can observe and narrate.

He is a wanderer, having tried his hand at a number of professions, a philosophical seeker after life's deeper truths, his lack of surname shows his marginal situation. Hughes (2011:287) opines that Ishmael champions the whale as the most heroic form of maritime activity, contrary to the popular opinion of whaling as "a butchering sort of business"(P. 110)he always looks at the ocean as the "dark side of the earth"(P.43).

Sten (2006:409) reiterates regarding Ishmael as a hero when he assures that if readers focus on the novel's emphasis on the transformation and the turning toward spiritual self-knowledge so Ishmael alone completes an initiatory test and returns to tell about it. Ishmael is introduced at the very beginning of the novel in a fallen state of emotional lethargy, confusion and inactivity. He is a spiritually dead man in a dead sea seeking the relief of the condemned everywhere. He is fed up and bored of the existence as if he spent his youth and found himself in the middle of the journey of life. He seems unclear and has no aim to go to the sea. He confesses "is my substitute for pistol and ball"(P. 3). Ishmael is not suffering alone from his hunger for release and relief. He is the representative or exemplary figure, one meant to point the way to his fellow" on a dreary Sunday afternoon, he sees" crowds of water gazers , "thirsting for adventure."(P. 3-4).

Sahu (1991:73) expounds that Ishmael states this voyage and the whale (Moby Dick) as something new for him and he needs to unfold it "And into the wild conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two there floated in my inmost soul, endless processions of whale, and, of midmost of them all, on grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air."(P.7).This phantom whale is the beginning

and the end and represents all the instinctual vitality locked within the self. What differentiates Ishmael from these more coward islanders is simply that he accepts the call to the sea. He does so without full understanding of what he is doing and why? He is so novice and green that he lives intuitively and trusts his inner feelings. Hughes (2011:288) uncovers the disgusted feeling of Ishmael at the beginning of the voyage because he knows that his roommate is Queequeg.

Lyons (2006:56) unfolds Ishmael's emotion to be in such a miserable situation saying that Melville nevertheless does encourages cross- cultural relationship in the novel when the captain insists on that Ishmael and Queequeg, the huge, naked ,dark-skinned, tattooed, idol worshipping cannibal, must share a bed. Shocked at knowing that his roommate is a cannibal, Ishmael reasons with himself:" What's all this fuss I have been making about, thought I to myself- the man's a human being just as I am: he has just as much reason to fear me, as I have to be afraid of him. Better sleep with a sober Cannibal than a drunken Christian. (P.25) Gibian (2006:28) emphasizes on the idea of friendship. This friendship is of a homo sexual type . Ishmael calms down surprisingly quickly and finds that his xenophobia and inability to be social with a horror guide him toward a fast friendship with his pagan savage.

Blades (2011:220) affirms that Ishmael thinks that the journey represents trials of the spirit, psychological trials, his passage is inward as much as it is across water" After examining his need to test himself through his voyage into the sea."(MB:28) " and along lost, forgotten powers are revived to be made available for transfiguration of the world"(P.29).Ishmael moves on expressing his kind-heartedness when he is fascinated by the white colour of Moby

Dick. Gibian (2006:28) describes the real identity of Ishmael when he focuses on his feeling at the commencement of the journey

I am tormented with an everlasting itch for remote I love to sail for forbidden seas, and lands on barbarous coasts. Not ignoring what is good, I am quick to perceive a horror, could still be social with it..... Since it is but well to be on friendly terms with all the inmates of place on lodges on."(P.7)

Lee (2006:36) states that he is obviously fascinated by the whale's whiteness made the researcher side with Moby Dick for many features available at him. Ishmael confesses that in "many natural objects, whiteness refiningly enhances beauty" and it is associated with "royal pre-eminence" and it is the "imperial hue"(P.204). Ishmael persists counting the significance of Moby Dick's whiteness "noble things" that it is made an emblem of, including the "innocence of brides" (P. 205). Lee (2006:35) adds that Ishmael draws a connection between Moby Dick's whiteness and God, when he tells the readers to see an albatross of the messenger of God, and thus peeping into "secrets which took hold of God" (P.206) or rather as being inherently supernatural. Yet the whale's whiteness also terrifies the illiterate Ishmael. It makes terrible things more terrible, when accompanied by divinity, whiteness enforces a "certain and nameless terror"(P.207).

Sten (2006:418) analyses the uniqueness of Ishmael's character saying that Ishmael is kind-hearted hero because he confronts, while facing the whale, his mortality, the bare fact of death. He simply confesses "I saw no living thing within; naught was there but bones"(P.450). The experience of facing the whale, Moby Dick, strengthens the knowledge of Ishmael as being the sole survivor from such a deadening confrontation. So, he discovers something beyond the limit of human mind by glimpsing Moby Dick.

Sten (2006:409) increases his elaboration at the real feeling of Ishmael towards the hard-heartedness of Ahab showing that Ishmael's hope now is to get rid of the domineering power of Ahab's aim to retaliate from Moby Dick. He wants to leave Ahab's mad desire to hunt and kill Moby Dick, but he hesitates because he does not have the ability to do so. At the early days of the hunt, Ishmael cannot imagine that Moby Dick will be his savior and the reason behind his salvation. He cannot imagine that Moby Dick will empower him to break the strangle hold of Ahab's ego and control, to throw off Ahab's rage and maddening desire. Besides, the vitality of Moby Dick enables him to resume the course of his personal adventure.

Kulkarni (2008:36) further adds Ishmael's story becomes more exciting with the discovery of the outcast's true nobility and ends with his return to the community of his birth to bear witness to his concrete experience. His retelling of that story begins with the famous announcement of a man who knows from experience that God and the soul of the redeemed man are one. His identity is exposed in the moment of his soul's greatest triumph, Ishmael returns to share the wealth of his discovery with those who long for the adventure that will liberate the soul. This wealth is contained within the pages of *Moby-Dick*, the book that records its only surviving hero's experience on the ship's deck and bodies forth the wisdom he has gained from the events leading up to the fateful encounter with Moby Dick.

Ishmael is not a man of action and he does not capture the beast with a harpoon, as Ahab tries to do. Being divine, Moby Dick can never be taken that way. Ishmael is the hero who captures the story of Moby Dick through the power of his pen. He expresses the way in which he is rescued and excepted from the fatal death as being "the fates ordained" (P.573).

2-Ahab as a hero of the novel

Ahab is the captain of the whaling-ship "Pequod" who is chasing sleeplessly the white whale, Moby Dick, with a deadening desire to retaliate for his being mutilated by Moby Dick which snatched Ahab's leg. Lee (2006:35) assures that Melville comes to be ranked as one of the great presiding voices of American literature. He shows the significance of dissimilarity of races on the Pequod's deck: " Providing the brain, the rest of the world generously supplying the muscles in which Melville chose Ahab's ship Pequod to represent all the layers and races of the American society with ironic image of white American officers."

Rollyson, Paddock and Gentry (2007:156) elaborate that Ahab is the " Pequod's" captain and he is the leader that should be followed by his crew. He is a mysterious man. He is strong as if he were a God springing out of mercilessly natural catastrophe. He is replete of anger , ruthlessness and rage because once a whale called Moby Dick snatched his leg and piqued and mutilated him. Melville's Ahab formed to follow the same portrait of the heroes of the great world, like Ulysses, Achilles and many others, who spends a great deal of his life chasing his dream . His quest for Moby Dick mesmerizes even as it terrorizes his crew. Lall (2007:211) mentions that the significance of Ahab's name obviously shows his real monomaniac character. Ahab's name means, in the Old Testament, that he is wicked king. Rollyson, Paddock ,and Gentry (2007:156) certify this idea that in the Bible, Ahab is a king of Israel who " did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him". Lall (2007:211) continues his idea of Ahab's name showing that Peleg, a minor captain, explains that this name was given to Ahab by his foolish and ignorant mother, and that an old woman had once said that the name would prove prophetic. Indeed, the woman's prophecy proves to be true at the

end because of Ahab's destructive aim to follow his unfulfilled desire to kill Moby Dick but the situation turns upside down and he and his crew are killed.

Crane (2007:92) explains that Ahab is a hero because he cannot stop questing for a certain and fixed answer to cosmic riddle of existence represented by Moby Dick. Lauter (2010:265) sees that Ahab is at once a heroic character and a tragic hero" Who is over me? He declares, in his Promethean quest to conquer evil and find out the meaning of the universe."(P.140).He is a good man but not pious and blasphemous. Ahab is not jolly but ever since he lost his leg while attacking Moby Dick, he has been very moody and savage. Ahab cannot be cured of his to revenge against ,Moby Dick. He is unable to see what is there beyond the needs of his ego. He thus causes not benefit or knowledge but destruction, ruin, and death his people.

Sten (2006: 409) exposes the character of Ahab as a hero for his personal valor. He resists all the remainders of his morality and clings to his existence as a natural man. He stands for the powerful desire to rule; he is an example of the ruler who turns into a tyrant , a dangerous figure who sacrifices the public goods for his benefit" he is the supreme lord and dictator"(P.122). Patil (2009:61) expounds further that Ahab suffers from a malaise or schism in the soul, an aggression so intense so as to prove deadly. Ahab appears on the deck after a mysterious reclusiveness and there is a great scar on his face. He spends his time gazing at the sea, steadying his whalebone leg, which was very disturbing for the crew who cannot sleep easily, in specially made notches on the ship deck.

Bode (1995:72) assures that Ahab is a man with an overwhelming obsession to kill Moby Dick which had crippled him, he is Melville's greatest creation. He burns with a baleful fire, becoming evil himself in his thirst to destroy evil, Moby Dick " that

inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate."(P.164).Smith(2004:427) thinks that captain Ahab is famous because he has a distinct relish for the hunt. Ahab is finally consumed by his own life's chase of Moby Dick, bound by the ropes of his passion on the creatures he works to destroy. The crew always accused Ahab of violating the purpose of their whaling adventure. So, Ahab is more than once forced to face the fact that his rigid, paternalistic tyrant has made the "Pequod" into a killing machine. He gives up everything related to money, life, happiness and family and follows blindly Moby Dick.

Blades (2011:262) discusses further that Ahab believes he is on a destructive mission to kill Moby Dick that will grantee his immortality. To reach this aim, he neglects his domestic affairs. His denial of the invitation to come home to God is a denial to give his narrow, earthly conception of what constitutes his self- interest. He looks at the future not in terms of dying and rebirth, but as a relentless threat to his vitality and identity. Rao (2006:101) elucidates that he is fearful of death, sensitive to insult, resistant to loss and change. He is incapable of taking even a further step into the unknown. So rigid is he that he contests to the death any will that challenges his own . To a man like Ahab, who lives such a hard time, lost in the grasp of his ego ,even the divinity becomes enemy" talk to me not of blasphemy man, I'd strike the sun if it insulted me,"(P.164). He is dependent on brute courage and force rather than faith or spirit to sustain him.

Obenzinger (2006:188) epitomize the enthusiastic power inherits the personality of Ahab. Ahab oscillates between believing and unbelieving in the existence of God . He thinks that there is an over God who waits behind the pasteboard mask of reality; that God may be not just indifferent but malevolent; that he can gain access to secret realms of knowledge; that human can dare to

challenge and conquer nature; that the force of one man's will can actually change reality. He is excessive and valor "who is over? in his Promethean quest to conquer evil and find out the meaning of the universe" (P.140).Lall (2007:213) shows that ever since his disastrous confrontation with Moby Dick, Ahab harbours a " wild vindictiveness" against Moby Dick. He considers all his bodily woes and his intellectual and spiritual exasperations with Moby Dick. It floats before him as the " monomaniac incarnation" of all malicious agencies which are responsible for human predicaments. He begins to relate all the world's evil to Moby Dick which is powerfully assailable. Ahab takes upon himself the task of attacking and killing this evil and putting an end to it.

Patil (2009:62) reports for us the personality of Ahab as he possesses a complexity that is increasingly unfolded as the ship becomes close to its destiny and about to confronts the whale. He muses over the decisions he made in his life, however, believing himself as a fool for having spent so long time at sea, but assures to Starbuck, his assistant, that he cannot turn back. Ahab also sees himself , like the whale, as a mere instrument of the fate. He confesses that he is a victim of some power – nature, God, evil, human nature- against which he must struggle but ultimately he cannot appear but as defeated . His behaviour as an insane and monomaniac person is due to his deformity. However, the loss of his leg made him physically and psychologically a victim of the whale, Moby Dick. He is called Mogul by the ship's crew. He embodies a complicated metaphysical struggle to determine the place of the human individual in the universe.

Sten (2006:412) pens that Ahab is the worldly tyrant who forsakes his public duty for his private need. His vices cannot be redeemed. He brings his whole crew to ruin. He is a man who frequently denies the call of the soul's awakening and who, instead

of submitting to God's will, holds desperately to the bit of morality designed for him.

Lall (2007:214) indicates that one sticking trait of Ahab's personality is his egotism and snobbishness. He thinks himself to be supremely important. He nails a Spanish coin to the main- mast of the ship and promises to give it as a reward to the sailor who sight Moby Dick first" whoever of ye raises me a white whale headed whale with wrinkled brow and crooked jawshall have the golden ounce"(P.201) . He administers an oath to the member of the crew as if he were performing a religious ceremony, ordering the them to hunt down Moby Dick. He prepares grog to all the sailors asking them to drink it in token of their having taken a resolve to hunt it down.

Rao (2006:104) announces that Ahab is so confident of his power that he expresses his being sacrilege, his denial of the Sun and his declaration of independence, have so angered the Gods as to cause them to lash out with a tempest, one that serves also to warn him to turn back" talk to me not of blasphemy man, I'd strike the Sun if it insulted me"(P.164). Ahab, the night before confronting Moby Dick, stands proudly and swears to the inviolability of his ego " in the midst of the personified impersonal, a personality stands here....while I earthly live, the queenly personality live in me, and feels her royal rights"(P.507). Tilak (2011:111) depicts the humanistic trait in Ahab's character elaborating that despite being obsessed with his passion for revenge and his determination to hunt Moby Dick down, yet he has not become totally oblivious of everything else. It is true that his ultimate purpose to revenge has crushed every feeling in him, so that he is heedless now of his familial affairs and he is not completely heartless. The miserable case of Pip moves his deeply and he takes the mad negro boy, Pip, under his personal care. Moreover, his humanity is obvious when he

observes the ship carpenter making a life buoy out of a coffin, and he praises him regarding him as being an unprincipled fellow like Gods. He talks regretfully about his past life during which he was chasing whales and not spending much time on the shore. At the time, he comes very close to give up his hunt for Moby Dick; but he then pulls himself up and quickly recovers his determination, refusing to budge his resolve

Lall (2007:218) strengthens the idea of Ahab's determination toward his toppling fate. A man's thinking varies from time to time. no man can hold the same beliefs continuously throughout his life. Such contradictions, however, shows the limitations of human ability and mind. Ahab is certainly a man despite his heroic qualities .Kulkarni (2008:35) depicts the final destined situation stating that Ahab's death is inevitable; but death at the hands of divinity is the most desirable consummation of devotion to fate and God. Ahab's method is not usual method of love, but it is that of hate and defiance. This is the reason behind Ahab's refusal to leave Moby Dick and his insistence on retaliation .

Sten (2006:420) analyzes Ahab's real personality as a person who is aiming at immortality but his quickening pursuit of Moby Dick leads him to rush uncontrollably into the jaws of destruction. Waters can be seen as a source of life as well as of death. However, for a zestful man like Ahab whose snobbishness corrodes all faith, waters never bring renewal. Only when he sheds a single tear as he stands gazing into the sea and muses overall he has missed on shore over forty years of striving –human sympathy, friendship and domestic affairs, the green world- it is clear that he understands the sacrifices he has made" and only then it is clear he is worthy of our attention and sympathy, and capable of common, human feeling. Nor did all the Pacific contain such wealth as that one wee drop," (P.543).

Kulkarni (2008:37) admits that Ahab is not the ordinary kind of man. He is a superman who meets a sad fate. He is undoubtedly a hero who is vanquishing by a terrible sea-monster. He is blasted by the fire of revenge , and he carries the scar upon his body signifying that what follows is only the completion of the ritual of sacrifice that has somehow remained unfinished and unfulfilled. Despite the fact that there is much evil, he succeeds in emerging as the tragic hero of the book. He speaks in a blasphemous and impious manner; he defies the gods and hurls a challenge at them; he baptizes his harpoon in the name, not of Father God, but in the name of the devil. He disregards the sane advice of his first mate; he ignores all the omens which bode ill to his enterprise.

3- Moby Dick as a hero

Moby Dick is the hero of the novel according to the researcher .It is the pivot around which all the work revolves. Moby Dick is the aim behind which every character runs eagerly, each for certain purpose of his own. It is the character Ishmael wants to see to enrich his knowledge. Moby Dick is the desire for all whale men to get as it increases their wealth. And finally it is the aim behind which Ahab blindly runs all his life after the snatching of his leg. Moreover, all readers are eager to meet Moby Dick. Readers hear too much about the traits of Moby Dick but they never face him. Readers as well as some of the characters are suspended to unfold the real identity of Moby Dick.

Moby Dick represents the borders which human being cannot pace over . It stands for the unfold secrets of the world that human being cannot discover and reach at. He is an innocent animal which behaves without any deliberation. It stands for the limitation of human power to get at the far reaching areas. It has a divine strength to triumph over all power of all challengers who try to trespass the boarders of the allowed knowledge. Human being , represented by

Ahab, tries to probe the mystery of the universe. That is why, human being pursues blindly his aim to crush everything that might prevent him for such an aim. Moby Dick is one of the powers that tend to hide the secrets of the universe and keep them beyond the human reach. The researcher sides with the novelist, who chooses the name of the whale as an apt title for his novel, in determining Moby Dick as the hero of the oeuvre. Moby Dick overcomes the evil powers which aim at killing or exploiting everything related to Nature for the sake of their own benefit. The whales, represented by Moby Dick, win the struggle against the satanic power, represented by Ahab. So, one of the strugglers must be killed to provide refreshment for the counterpart. It is a matter of survival for the fittest. Hughes (2011:286) affirms that Moby Dick also symbolizes man's ultimately futile attempts to master nature, the impossibility of truly knowing our own souls.

Lee (2006:34) describes Moby Dick as being a mute character in the novel. It is a white whale in the middle of the Pacific. It is impossible to hear him speak, but it is a creature of great and immense ability and vitality. We know some of his destructive features through many characters or the crew of the ship "Pequod". They all consider him as mysterious, forbidden to be touched, except Ahab who sees that the whale or Moby Dick must be killed.

Lee (2006:36) persists on highlighting the traits of Moby Dick through other characters' perspectives commencing with Starbuck, Ahab's assistant, who sees Moby Dick merely as a "dumb brute" (P.178). Other crew members are familiar with the identity of the white whale, as a mystical monster, though they are soon frantic to topple the beast. On the other hand, Ishmael is spellbound by the whale's whiteness, causing him to attribute to Moby Dick the result of the white colour placed on him, which are many. He admits that "in many natural objects, whiteness refiningly enhances beauty" and

it is related to "royal preeminence" and it is the "imperial hue"(P.204). Ishmael adds some important traits of Moby Dick's whiteness "noble things" that it is made a sign of "innocence of brides"(P.205). Sahu(1991: 74) discusses this idea of characters' opinions about Moby Dick highlighting that it is the monster that has an immense power and an astonishing force. What is uppermost in Ishmael's reaction to it is a sense of mystery. He also considers it as an impersonal life force, impervious to the desires of human being. Ishmael shows some connection between the whale's whiteness and God and divinity "secrets which took hold of God"(P.206). However, the whale's colour terrifies the narrator, Ishmael. It makes terrible objects more terrible, when coupled with divinity, whiteness enforces a "certain and nameless terror"(P.207). Ishmael opines that the whale's colour also refers to ghosts and death "supernaturalism of this hue"(P.208) and "instinct of the knowledge of the demonism in the world"(P.211).

Lee (2006:38) moves on numerating Moby Dick's traits according to Ahab, it is the wall between "some unknown but still unreasoning things" and "the unreasoning mask" of all "visible objects"(P.178). It encompasses the vastest of unanswerable human questions "that inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate"(P.178). He disgusts his inability to capture what he wants to know. Somehow, Ahab contemplates that hunting down the whale will supply him with peace and answers.

Sahu (1991:73) proposes that the character of Moby Dick is as important as any other character in the novel. It is a unique type of whale and has great reputation among the whale men. Moby Dick has a peculiar white colour, a high pyramidal hump and a wrinkled forehead. If the character of Moby Dick is eliminated from the work, the work will fall to pieces. Moby Dick is distinguished by its unusual ferocity. This is clear when it is sometimes fleeing

from its pursuers with every risk it might face, it has several times turned round and attacked them, either destroying their buoys or driving them back panicky to their ship. Moby Dick is so formidable character that it has the ability to topple the ship and ruin its crew. Many deaths were reported to be caused by Moby Dick.

Patil (2009:64) further adds that Moby Dick is an agent of those supernatural powers which personify evil. Ahab believes that it is full of a deliberate and willful malice, even after the clarification of Starbuck who sees that Moby Dick is only a "dumb brute"(P.178), assailing whale men blindly and from sheer instinct Ahab persists in believing that it is an embodiment of evil and of the forces which are hostile to human being. He believes Moby Dick is the incarnation of all the malicious agencies which are responsible for human suffering. He connects all his bodily woes and deformity and all his intellectual and spiritual predicaments with Moby Dick. He thinks that all the world's evil is visibly personified in Moby Dick, that this evil is practically assailable. However, according to some critics interested in Melville, Moby Dick stands for God and the forces of goodness. It is regarded as an agent of the nemesis which evil doers must meet. Whereas the Freudian critics give their opinion about the representation of Moby Dick as being a symbol of great phallic member, as a symbol of the vitality of the universe and of the principle of life. It is the symbol of our universal parents.

Rao (2006 102) points out that the whale is as significant and manifold as Nature itself. Like Nature, the whale is paradoxically benign and malevolent , however, nourishing and destructive. It is massive, brutal, monolithic, but at the same time protean, erotically beautiful, and infinitely variable. It appears to be unpredictable and mindless; yet it is controlled by certain laws. Moreover, whiteness is the paradoxical colour, the colour which involves all the contradictions of Nature. Whiteness signifies death and corruption

as much as it refers to purity, innocence and youth. The whale represents the conflict between the evil as personified by Moby Dick and the good as embodied by Ahab. On the other side, other critics see that Moby Dick refers to good side of the universe and Ahab represents everything related to the evils.

Conclusion:

This paper aims at explaining the traits and the vices of the major heroes of the novel to reach at a certain decision to conclude who the hero is. The researcher concludes that the hero is Moby Dick which represents the divine power of the universe to defend against the assailants and exploiters of the secrets of the universe. So, as Herman Melville suggests that the whale is the hero, the researcher intends to convince the readers that there are many heroes for this novel, but the most qualified character to be the hero is the whale, Moby Dick.

The current paper consists of three sections entitled according to each hero. Each of these heroes is going to be critically analyzed according to his good trait and evil vices .though each reader might choose any hero and provide justification for his (her) choice. Yet the researcher concludes that Moby Dick is the hero of the oeuvre, because of its innocent attempts to defend for his identity and the universe . Ishmael as a hero is not very persuasive because he is only narrating the events . He is not a man of action. He is all the time neutral. That is why the researcher leaves him aside. As far as Ahab's traits are concerned, he is a man of great deeds to reach his aim. He wishes to fulfill his desire at any cost. So, he violates the actual purpose of the voyage which is hunting. He neglects all advice given to him by the members of the crew and the prophecies of his Parsee and he refuses to budge his situation. He is a reckless man that he sacrifices the lives of the crew of the ship to reach his deadening destiny.

⁽¹⁾When the name Moby Dick is written in two separate words, it means that it refers to the character of the white whale, whereas if the name *Moby- Dick* is hyphenated, it means that it refers to the title of the novel.

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