

CHAPTER III  
ANALYSIS OF EXISTENTIALISM  
IN HERMAN MELVILLE'S MOBY DICK

The writer has shown in the early chapters that the analysis of in Herman Melville's Moby Dick is built on theory of existentialism and objective theory. She wants to seek the answer of the problem merely from the work itself. The study is conducted by obtaining the data, evidences and indications within the novel as the source of analysis. This means to eliminate anything outside the work, like the author, the reader and society while the focus of attention is on the elements of it.

Since the analysis applies the intrinsic study, therefore it examines plot, characterization, and setting of the novel. It is done for seeking information which justifies the existentialism. The writer assumes that the author of Moby Dick wants to show existentialism through the novel. In this case, the writer applies the approach of Hugh Holman and William Harmon's existentialism to analyse the work. She uses descriptive method to analyse the plot and the characterization of the work and interpretative method is

necessary to explain the setting. It is done to find out the answers of the questions stated in the statement of the problem.

The revelation of existentialism is revealed on the character of Ahab. So the discussion is concentrated on Captain Ahab through his action, speech and feeling.

Existentialism in Herman Melville's Moby Dick can be seen from Ahab's character. There is a state of human existence in it and that is universal for man. Ahab's manner is influenced by his sensed experience, as it has been known that Ahab lost his leg because of the white whale's ferocious jaws. Facing this bitter fact in his life, Ahab wants to take revenge on the white whale, Moby Dick. It proves the condition of the inadequacy of the human reason to explain the enigma of the universe as the writer has given the explanation of existentialism in Chapter II. Dealing with this view, James Baird states in his book entitled Ishmael (1956):

"Melville's symbolism proceeds from feeling. Its elements are emotive and intuitive rather than reasoned (or better, intellectualized)".

### III.1. Plot

As explained before, there are causal relationships in the arrangement of events when searching a plot of work. In this case, a plot has some elements which have those causal relationship. For that reason the analysis of the plot of Moby Dick is done by examining those elements. And since this study is focused on Ahab, so the plot is concerned with the happenings on Ahab himself.

#### III.1.1. Exposition

This story begins with the desire of Ishmael as the narrator to go to the sea, in which later he is one the crew of Captain Ahab.

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p.1)

The destination of Ishmael is Nantucket, an old island surrounded by the sea, in which the history of whaling derives.

Nantucket! Take out your map and look at it. See what a real corner of the world it occupies; how it stands there, away off shore, more lonely than the Eddystone Lighthouse.

Look at it—a mere hillock, an elbow of sand;  
all beach, without a background.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 65)

— the place where the first dead American whale was stranded. Where else but from Nantucket did those aboriginal whalers, the Red-Men, first sally out in canoes to give chase to the Leviathan? And where but from Nantucket, too, did that first adventurous little sloop put forth, partly laden with imported cobblestones — so goes the story — to throw at the whales.....

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 8)

After Ishmael and his friend, Queequeg decide to choose the Pequod (the name of the ship), here they meet the owners of the Pequod and they talk about the captain of the ship namely Captain Ahab.

....I don't know exactly what's the matter with him; but he keeps close inside the house; a sort of sick, and yet he don't look so. In fact, he ain't sick; but no, he isn't well either. Anyhow, young man, he won't always see me, so I don't suppose he will thee. He's a queer man, Captain Ahab — so some think — but a good one. Oh, thou'lt like him well enough; no fear. He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab; doesn't speak much; but, when he does speak, then you may well listen.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 86)

From that passage, it can be seen the appearance of Captain Ahab. He is a queer man, he does not speak much and he keeps close inside the house. It seems that he has an influence upon the crew and they fear him, they always obey his orders. Yet, he is a common man and a normal one but he has a reason to be like that.

Aye, aye, I know that he was never jolly; and I know that on the passage home, he was a little out of his mind for a spell; but it was the sharp shooting pains in his bleeding stump that brought that about, as any one might see. I know, too, that ever since he lost his leg last voyage by that accursed whale, he's been a kind of moody - despeate moody, and savaage sometimes; but that will all pass off. And once for all, let me tell thee and assure thee, young man, it's better to sail with a moody good captain than a laughing bad one. So good-bye to thee - and wrong not Captain Ahab, because he happens to have a wicked name. Besides, my boy, he has a wife - not there voyages wedded - a sweet, resigned girl. Think of that; by that sweet girl that old man has a child: hold ye then there can be any utter, hopeless harm in Ahab? No, no my lad; stricken, blasted, if he be, Ahab has his humanities!"

(Herman Melville, 1962, p. 87)

It is clearly understood that Ahab is hurt, there is a deep sorrow of pains in himself. And from his feeling hurt, his mind is filled with despair and ready to do anything to get satisfaction. He lost his leg because of the accursed white whale, Moby Dick, which from that event Ahab has a motivation to take revenge on Moby Dick. Yet, Ahab is still like other people, having a wife and a child. He has a good hope in his life. In fact it is unreasonable that he has a desperate mood, but he can not be blamed.

After everything on board of the ship is right so it is ready to go. The Pequod is fully equipped, there

are a good deal to be done and many things to be thought of because whaling vessels are the most exposed to accidents of all kinds. It is on Christmas day the Pequod departs.

"At last the anchor was up, the sails were set, and off we glided. It was a sharp, cold Christmas; and as the short northern day merged into night", .....

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 109)

Some days have passed since the Pequod started the voyage, then Ahab comes to the cabin, he talks to Stubb, his words express an exclamation of a scornful old man. From his words his grief can be known.

"Am I a cannon-ball, Stubb," said Ahab, "that thou wouldst wad me that fashion? But go thy ways; I had forgot. Below to thy nightly grave; where such as ye sleep between shrouds, to use ye to the filling one at last - Down, dog, and kennel!"

(Herman Melville, 1962; p. 132)

However, after that Ahab tries to throw away his sadness and Stubb listens to him without any enthusiasm.

"A vast!" gritted Ahab between his set teeth, and violently moving away, as if to avoid some passionate temptation".

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 133)

The enemy of Captain Ahab, Moby Dick, is firstly talked at the quarter-deck. It is at one morning after breakfast, ascending the cabin to the deck Ahab asks

the crew what they know about a white whale. Accepting their answers Ahab expresses his feeling towards Moby Dick, how he really hates Moby Dick and one of the crew tells something concerning his leg.

"Corkscrew!" cried Ahab; aye, Queequeq, the harpoons lit all twisted and wrenched in him; aye, Daggo, his spout is a big one, like a whole shock of wheat, and white as a pile of our Nantucket wool after the great annual sheep-shearing; aye Tashtego, and he fan-tails like a split jib in a squall. Death and devils! men, it is Moby Dick ye have seen - Moby Dick - Moby Dick!"

"Captain Ahab, I have heard of Moby Dick - but it was not Moby Dick that took off thy leg?"

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 171)

It is a question which strikes Ahab and explains all the wonder of the crew, in which there is an ill will in his desire to whaling. Hearing that question Ahab shows his great anger and regret.

"Moby Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now. Aye, aye", he shouted with a terrific, loud, animal sob, like that of a heart-stricken moose; "aye, aye! it was that accursed white whale that razed me, made a poor pegging lubber of me forever and a day!"

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 171)

To see the fact that Ahab is in his madness to kill Moby Dick, Starbuck wants him not to have motivation of vengeance because in his vengeful mind there is a disregard of danger. However there is no respect from Ahab and somehow it has to be done.

...but I came here to hunt whales, not my commander's vengeance. How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? it will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market."

(Herman Melville, 1962; p. 172)

"How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and to be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me"

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 173)

Regarding that passage it shows Ahab will do anything to satisfy himself. He must create meaning through acting upon it, although he must do it out of his capability for which it seems he wants to challenge nature.

### III.1.2. Conflict

As mentioned slightly before, conflict is the basic idea of a story, in which there is an opposition of at least two forces. The cause of the conflict have been shown in the exposition. It has been explained in the exposition of this thesis that Ahab lost his leg because of the ferocity of Moby Dick. For this reason,



he is in anguish that he has a desire to kill Moby Dick in order he can revenge his enemy.

After passing along voyage, the Pequod meets many obstructions like storm, the leak of the body of the ship and the strike of many sharks when they try to keep their sperm whale at the stern. The Pequod has passed the sea of Java and it seems they begin to chase Moby Dick. Ahab tries to search out his foe.

From this height the whale was now seen some mile or so ahead, at every roll of the sea revealing his high sparkling hump, and regularly jetting his silent spout into the air.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 576)

Then when the existence of Ahab's foe is close to the Pequod, it can be seen that the white whale is very quiet. But there is a full terror in Moby Dick's quietude.

No wonder there had been some among the hunters who namelessly transported and allured by all this serenity had ventured to assail it; but had fatally found that quietude but the vesture of tornadoes. Yet calm, enticing calm, oh, whale! thou glidest on, to all who for the first time eye thee, no matter how many in that same way thou may'st have be-juggled and destroyed before.

(Herman Melville, 1962; p. 577)

In his magnificence, Moby Dick does not strike the Pequod but his existence is very dreadful.

... and magnifying as it rose, till it turned, and then there were plainly revealed two long crooked rows of white, glistening teeth, floating up from the undiscoverable bottom. It was Moby Dick's open mouth and scrolled jaw; his vast, shadowed bulk still half blending with the blue of the sea. The glittering mouth yawned beneath the boat like an open - doored marble tomb;.....

(Herman Melville, 1962; p. 578)

All of the boats are dropped to enable to be close to the white whale. Ahab may not attack Moby Dick immediately, because the jaw of this white whale is within six inches of Ahab's head. While the crew of the Pequod dare not strike this enormous fish, Ahab in his monomaniac darts his weapon.

...he seized the long bone with his naked hands, and wildly strove to wrench it from its gripe. As now he thus vainly strove, the jaw slipped from him, the frail gunwales bent in, collapsed, and snapped, as both jaws, like an enormous shears, sliding further aft, bit the craft completely in twain, and locked themselves fast again in the sea, midway between the two floating wrecks.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 579)

The strike does not mean anything for Moby Dick, even it causes their boat to become wrecks. Actually Ahab tries to avoid the boat from the bite, however his effort is in vain.

...at that moment his hand had made one final effort to push the boat out of the bite. But only slipping further into the whale's mouth, and tilting over.....

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 580)

That strike makes Moby Dick in the vengeful wake, then he shows his act by revolving his body which causes a terrific condition. Ahab and the crew are in the boat which is revolved. The Pequod saves them by separating the boat from Moby Dick.

...and at the same time slowly revolving his whole splendid body; so that when his vast wrinkled forehead rose - some twenty or more feet out of the water - the now rising swells, with all their confluent maves, dazzling broke againts it; vindictively tossing their shivered spray still higher into the air.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 580)

The Pequod's prows were pointed; and breaking up the charmed circle, she effectually parted the white whale from his victim.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 581)

On the second day of the chase, Moby Dick attack them in the second terror. The hand of fate has snatched all the souls of the crew, and by the perils of the previous day they are bowled over.

Rising with his utmost velocity from the furthest depths, the Sperm Whale thus booms his entire bulk into the pure element of air, and pilling up a mountain of dazzling foam, shows his place to the distance of seven miles and more.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 587)

Unmindful of the tedious rope-ladders of the shrouds, the men, like shooting stars, slid to the deck, by the isolated backstays and halyards; while Ahab, less dartingly, but still rapidly, was dropped from his perch.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 588)

In the crisis moment, the crew and Ahab have no opportunity to strike the white whale, Moby Dick assaults them.

That instant, the White Whale made a sudden rush among the remaining tangles of the other lines; by so doing, irresistibly dragged the more involved boats of Stubb and Flask towards his flukes; dashed them together like two rolling husks on a surf-beaten beach,.....  
(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 589)

### III.1.3. Suspense

As stated before suspense arises from the reader's growing concern about which force will win, in connection with the story) the third day of the chase of Moby Dick is the determinant time of the crew. They attack Moby Dick and it causes a tragedy for them, since previously the white whale is in a great anger.

Moby Dick was now again steadily swimming forward; and had almost passed the ship, - which thus far had been sailing in the contrary direction to him, though for the present her headway had been stopped. He seemed swimming with his utmost velocity, and now only intent upon pursuing his own straight path in the sea.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 601)

The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward; with igniting velocity the line ran through the groove; ran foul. Ahab stopped to clear it; he did clear it; but the flying turn caught him round the neck, and voicelessly as Turkish mutes bow-string their victims,

he was shot out of the boat, ere the crew knew he was gone.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 605)

#### III.1.4. Climax

The highest point of intensity in the story takes place when the crew realize that their captain becomes the victim. There is no Ahab anymore, in the powerlessness of the crew definitely the winner is Moby Dick.

And now, concentric circles seized the lone boat itself, and all its crew, and each floating oars, and every lance-pole and spinning, animate and inanimate, all round and round in one vortex, carried the smallest chip of the Pequod out of sight.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 606)

#### III.1.5. Catastrophe

It has been explained in Chapter II, that after climax of a story it is followed by resolution. It is the end of story in which if the story express a sad ending so it is said to be a tragedy, while the opposite of it is a happy ending story. And the event of the story which shows a tragedy is the catastrophe.

The catastrophe in Herman Melville's Moby Dick appears in the resolution of the story. It has been known in the climax that Moby Dick defeats the crew of the Pequod. The fact which shows that all of the crew

and also Captain Ahab become the victims in the whaling is the catastrophe of the story. Finally, only Ishmael survives in the whaling.

Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand ago.

(Herman Melville, 1962:p.608)

"And I only am escaped alone to tell thee".

Job.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 608)

### III.2. Character and Characterization

Characterization is the description of the characters as life like which presents descriptive method and dramatic method. The writer of this thesis wants to discussed one of the characters of the work, since the existentialis reveals from the characterization of that character, namely Ahab.

#### III.2.1. Descriptive Method

Ahab is an old man and an experienced whaleman. From the discussion of the crew, it can be known that Ahab has a strong character and everyone fears him. He is called 'Old Thunder' because of his greatness.

"Who's Old Thunder?" said I, again riveted with the insane earnestness of his manner.

"Captain Ahab".

"What! the captain of our ship, he Pequod?"

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 98)

"What did they tell you about him? Say that!"  
 "They didn't tell much of anything about him; only I've heard that he's a good whale-hunter, and a good captain to his crew"

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 99)

His whole high, broad form, seemed made of solid bronze, and shaped in an unalterable mould, like Cellini's cast Perseus.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 127)

Eventhough Ahab is a tough person, there is such a sorrow caused by a bitter fact in his life.

And had you watched Ahab's face that night, you would have thought, that in him also two different things were warring. While his one live leg made levelly echoes along the deck, every stroke of his dead limb sounded like a coffin-tap.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 249)

That glad, happy air, that winsome sky, did at last stroke and caress him; the stepmother world, so long cruel - forbidding now threw affectionate arms round his stubborn neck, and did seem to joyously sob over him, as if over one, that however wilful and erring, she could yet find it in.....

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 571)

From the passages it can be seen Ahab's grief and regretness in life. There is a mighty woe expressed from his face and this condition makes him having a conquerable pride.

There was an infinity of firmest fortitude, a determinate, unsunderable wilfulness, in the fixed and fearless, forward dedication of that glance.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 130)

### III.2.2. Dramatic Method

Characterization in dramatic method is presented in the character's speech and action. In this case, from the speech of Captain Ahab it is clearly known that Ahab has a strong will, nobody can swerve his will. There is an insistence from his ill will to revenge. As a man which is powerless compared to the mighty of God he wants to challenge nature.

"I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. For could the sun do that, then could I do the other; since there is ever a sort of fair play herein, jealously presiding over all creations".

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 173)

What I've daared, I've willed; and what I've willed, I'll do! They think me mad - Starbuck does; but I'm madness maddened! That wild madness that's only calm to comprehend it self!

(Herman Melville. 1962: p. 177)

In conducting his intention Ahab does not regard anything surrounding him. He does not pay attention to the condition of himself and also does not listen to the advices from the crew. He does not realize his limitation as a man, he pays no attention to the crew's warnings.



.... the inmates of the other boats obeyed not the command. "Captain Ahab? -" said Starbuck, "Spread yourselves, " Cried Ahab; "give way, all four boats. Thou, Flask, pull out more to leeward!"

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 231)

In doing his desire Ahab has a extreme courage which is supported by his monomania. In his madness Ahab does not fear anything, that he is ready to do anything, he always supports the crew to do what he wants.

"Only pull, and keep pulling nothing more. Crack all your backbones, and bite your knives in two - that's all. Take it easy - why don't ye take it easy, I say, and burst all your livers and lungs!"

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 238)

In the next passage it shows Ahab does not want to reveal his sadness. Eventhough he is in great pain, he keeps showing his fortitude.

"Swim away from me, do ye?" murmured Ahab, gazing over into the water. There seemed but little in the words, but the tone conveyed more of deep helpless sadness than the insane old man had ever before evinced. But turning to the steersman, who thus far had been holding the ship in the wind to diminish her head way, he cried out in his old lion voice, - "Up helm! Keep her off round the world!"

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 253)

An inspiration of proud feelings is seen from Ahab's words As if there is a natural force when he orders the crew.

..... he cried out in his oled lion voice, -"Up helm! Keep her off round the world!" Round the world! There is much in that sound

to inspire proud feelings; .....  
 (Herman Melville, 1962: p. 253)

Ahab always fortifies himself against attacks from the outside of himself. Everything that obstructs his intention is considered as an attack by him, like it happens when one of the crew informs him there is a leak at the body of the ship.

"Captain Ahab mistakes; it is I, The oil in the hold is leaking, sir. We must up Burtons and break out". "Up Burton and break out? Now that we are nearing Japan; heave-to here for a week to tinker a parcel of old hoops?"

"Either do that, sir, or waste in one day more oil than we may make good in a year. What we come twenty thousand miles to get is worth saving, sir".

"So it is, so it is; if we get it".

"I was speaking of the oil in the hold, sir".

"And I was not speaking or thinking of that at all.

Begone! Let it leak! I'm all a leak myself. Aye leaks in leaks .....

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 505)

Ahab does not want to quit chase of Moby Dick, although the crew has given warnings to him and the important point is that is impossible to defeat the white whale, he is satisfied because he has done will. The next passage shows his regret towards his incapability. He feels insulted when the crew must help him, in one moment.

"Let me first help thee towards the bulwarks, sir".

"OH, oh, oh! how this splinter gores me now! Accured fate! that! that the unconquerable

captain in the soul should have such a craven mate!"

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 591)

In a few moments Ahab weeps to see the fact happened to him. Realizing his one poor leg, his emotion becomes weaken. When this moment comes to him, it seems as if he is a normal man his humanity.

"Oh, Starbuck! is it not hard, that with this weary load I bear, one poor leg should have been snatched from under me? Here, brush this old hair aside; it blinds me, that I seem to weep. Locks so grey did never grow but from out some ashes! But do I look very old, so very, very old, Starbuck? I feel deadly faint, bowed, and humped, as though I were Adam, staggering beneath the piled centuries since Paradise God! God! God! - crack my heart! - stave my brain! mockery! mockery! bitter, biting, mockery of grey hairs, have I lived enough joy to wear ye; and seem and feel thus to intolerably old? Close! stand close to me, Sturbuck; let me look into a human eye; it is better than to gaze into sea or sky; better than to gaze upon God. By the green land, by the bright hearthstone! this is the magic glass, man; I see my wife and my child in thine eye.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 573)

At the other moment, in his conciousness Ahab tries to contemplate all of the happenings to himself. In that contemplation he hesitates to his action, he does not convince to himself. In the depth of his heart Ahab realizes his guilty, he is aware that his action is unreasonable, but it is a mistery for him.

"I so keep pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time, recklessly making me

ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not so much as dare? Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who that lifts this arm?

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 574)

As existentialism reveals mostly through the characterization of Ahab, it is clearly understood here that there is a human existence. Ahab is like other people, with his common sense, thus it is universal for man there is a self-fortifying in every man to show his existence. And in this existence a man must create meaning through acting upon it, while through acting upon it there is an unalterable mind in Ahab.

"Ahab is for ever Ahab, man. This whole act's immutably decreed. 'Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled. Fool! I am the Fates' lieutenant; I act under orders. Look thou underling! that thou obeyest mine - Stand round me, men. Ye see an old man cut down to the stump; leaning on a shivered lance; propped up on a lonely part; but Ahab's soul is a centipede, that moves upon a hundred legs.

(Herman Melville, 1962: P. 592)

To create meaning in life a man must do it through acting upon it, it means he must see the fact. Whatever occurs in Ahab dealing with his sensed experience. He hurt because he lost his leg, and it is caused by the ferocity jaws of Moby Dick. In this case, to create meaning to his problem Ahab must take revenge on his enemy, he must kill the white whale. It is not enough

wants to do his vengeance without facing his enemy.

Ahab's boat was central; and cheering his men, he told them he would take the whale head-and-head, -that is, pull straight up to his forehead, - a not uncommon thing; for when within a certain limit, such a course excludes the coming onset from the whale's side-long vision.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 588)

Ahab does not ever show his hopeless when he does his desires. there is a high spirit and courage in his mind. When the crew need the support, deliberately he supports them in a loud voice. Admittedly in supporting the crew to chase the it seems Ahab really conquers his men. The crew finally always obey his order and they really have the same spirit with Ahab, even they do it seriously.

"They will last long enough! pull on! - But who can tell" he muttered - "whether these sharks swim to feats on a whale or on Ahab? - But pull on! Aye, all alive, now - we near him. The helm! take the helm; let mepass," - and so saying, two of the oarsmen helped him forward to the bows of the still flying boat.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 602)

In the moment of the crisis time, the Pequod and the crew really area in the brink of death. It is on the second day of the chase towards Moby Dick, Ahab and his men has struggled out from under the perils, they like seals from a seaside cave. However this condition does not alter the decsion of Ahab at all. In his high

spirit and in a loud voice which shows the fortitude of his mind he supports the crew. It seems really the revealing of his anguish. He can extinguish the anguish and his sorrow of pains only by doing his will.

"As fearless fire," cried Stubb.

"And as mechanical," muttered Ahab. Then as the men went forwards, he muttered on: - "The things called omens! And yesterday I talked the same to Starbuck there, concerning my broken boat. Oh! how valiantly I seek to drive out of other's hearts what's clinched so fast in mine! \* The Parsee - the Parsee! - gone, gone? and he was to go before: - but still was to be seen again are I could perish - how's that? - There's a riddle now might baffle all the lawyers backed by the ghosts of the whole line of judges: - like a hawk's beak it pecks my brain. I'll, I'll solve it, though!"

(Herman Melville, 1962: p.593)

From this point it shows his eagerness to kill the white whale. He does not regard his weakness as well as the limitation of the crew. He wants to keep in struggling what he desires, he keeps on maintaining it until he gets the satisfaction it.

Ahab does not get satisfied if he does not kill the white whale. His pains can not be recorved if he odes not do it. When all of the crew of the Pequod feel hopeless, when there is no hope for them to survice from the tragedy, there still opportunity for them to quit the chase. However whatever the risk of that chase Ahab insists to do it. Ahab must survive

from the risk of the danger as well as the crew. Whatever the obstructs they meet in their voyage, it is regarded by Ahab. And the crew must obey what the captain wants.

"What death - knell rings in it, that old Ahab shakes as if he were the belfry. the harpoon, too! - toss over the litter there, - d'ye see it? - the forged iron, men, the white whale's - no, no, no, - blistered fool! this hand did dart it! - 'tis in the fish - Aloft there! Keep him nailed - Quick - all hands to the ningging on the boats. Collect the oars - har-pooners! the irons, the irons! - hoist the royals higher - a pull on all the sheets! helm there! steady, steady for your life! I'll ten times girdle the unmeasured globe; yea and dive straigh through it but I'll slay him yet!".

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 592)

From he characterization of Ahab can be concluded that there is a revelation of human existence in it. A human being always in his self-fortifying in his mannein life.

### III.3. Setting

As mentioned slightly before in the theoretical Framework that setting includes the physical and spiritual background. The physical background of a story is the information of the time and the place the story takes place. Then the spiritual background is the atmosphere revealing from the story.

### III.3.1. Physical Background

The story of Moby Dick takes place at the sea. In this case, Ishmael as the narrator of this story is one who tells the voyage.

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago - never mind how long precisely - having little or no money in my puse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I ththought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 1)

The sea according to the author of the work has a universal significance, by the views of philosophy the author gives a deep meaning of the sea.

Should you ever be arthist in the great American desert, try this experiment, if your caravan happens to be supplied with a meta-physical proffesor. Yes, as everyone knows, meditation and water are wedded for ever.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p.2)

Go visit the Prairies in June, when for scores on scores of miles you wade knee-deep among Tigerlilies- what is the one charm wanting? -Water - there is not a drop of water there!

Why did the old Persians hold the sea holy?  
Why did the Greeks give it a separate deity,  
and own brother of Jove?

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 3)

The writer of t his thesis assumes that all of ot about the author's views concerning the sea are not without meaning. It shows the mistery of the world, there is a greatness in the sea which discover the puzzle of the world.



It occurs on a Saturday night in December when Ishmael arrives at New Bedford and the destination of the voyage area Cape Horn and the Pacific.

I stuffed a shirt or two into my old carpet-bag, tucked it under my arm, and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific. Quitting the good city of old Nantucket, I duly arrived in New Bedford, it was on a Saturday night in December. Much was I disappointed upon learning that the little packet for Nantucket had ...

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 8)

Nantucket is the city of the harbour for the whaling ship. The author describes this place as a place where the history of the whaling ship derives. There are many important things concerning with Nantucket as the harbour of the whaling ship. As it is known that the whaling is a popular and dangerous job in America in the 1840's, from the story of Moby Dick we can get many information about it.

For my mind was made to sail in no other than a Nantucket craft, because there was a fine boisterous something about everything connected with that famous island, which amazingly pleased me. Beside, though New Bedford has of late been gradually monopolizing the business of whaling, and though in this matter poor old Nantucket is now much behind her, yet Nantucket was her great original - the Tyre of this Carthage; - the place where the first dead American whale was stranded.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 8)

There is a chapel in New Bedford that Ishmael comes to it. That is a whaleman's chapel which shows the tragedies occurred in whaling. There is a risk of death in whaling. Here is one of the marble tablets in the chapel which consists of notes about the death of whaleman.

Sacred  
To the Memory  
OF  
John Talbot,  
Who, at the age of eighteen, was lost overboard  
Near the Isle of Desolation, off Patagonia,  
November 1st, 1836  
THIS TABLET  
Is erected to his Memory  
By his sister

---

Nantucket is an island which is surrounded by the sea, as it is stated in the passage below.

Nantucket! Take out your map and look at it, See what a real corner of the world it occupies; how it stands there, away off shore, more lonely than the Eddystone Lighthouse. Look at it - a mere hillock, an elbow of sand; all beach, without a background.

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 65)

The time of the departure of the ship is on Christmas, which here it is mentioned.

At last the anchor was up, the sails were set, and off we glided. It was a sharp, cold Christmas; and as the short northern day ....

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 109)

From the physical background of the work, in connection with the place, it is known that Ahab lost his leg because of the ferocious jaws of the white whale which certainly happened in the sea and Ahab wants to take revenge on Moby Dick consequently by chasing at the sea. It shows a relation of the cause and effect of the universe, and it explains the existentialism.

### III.3.2. Spiritual Background

Actually there are many parts in the story which show ing the spiritual background of Moby Dick. The author reveals through some poems and song stries. They are considered as the spiritual background of the story because from those parts it can be seen the atmosphere of existentialism. The writer discusses two of them in this thesis.

"The ribs and terrors in the whale,  
Arched over me a dismal gloom,  
While God's sunlit waves rolled by,  
And lift me deepening down to doom.

"I saw the opening maw of hell,  
With endless paians and sorrows there;  
Which none but they that fell can tell-  
Oh, I was plunging to despair.

"In black distress, I called my God,  
When I could scarce believe Him mine,  
He bowed His ear to my complaints-  
No more the whale did me confine.

"with speed He flew to my relief,  
As on a radiant dolphin bore;  
Awful, yet bright, as lightning shone  
The face of my Deliverer God.

"My songs for ever shall record  
That terrible, that joyful hour;  
I give the glory to my God,  
His all the mercy and the power".

(Herman Melville, 1962: 42-43)

That is the sermon read by the Father Mapple in the chapel. From the poem it can be felt the greatness of God. It shows also the woe of Ahab because of the terror of the whale. From the terror of whale the author wants to show the terror of life. In the third stanza which is the last sentence it means the speaker of the poem wants a freedom that shows free will. In the last stanza it mentions the terrible and the joyful hour. It refers to our life and the existence of human being, that in the sorrows of life we can make it valuable through acting upon it then we reach the happiness of life.

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,  
Stand dress'd in living green.  
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,  
While Jordan roll'd between".

(Herman Melville, 1962: p. 109)

These words are full of hope and fruition. It describes the equality of people, that we have the same rights, the words of Jews, Canaan and Jordan are the represen-

tatives of people all over the world showing there is no difference. 'Sweet fields' is the symbol of happiness, this means the life is full of hope and we can reach that happiness if we want to try earnestly.

## **CHAPTER IV**

## **CONCLUSION**