



The Culture of American Whaling as Portrayed in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*



A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Sciences of Hasanuddin
University in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements to Obtain
Bachelor's Degree in English Literature Study Program.

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**ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM
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LEGITIMATION

THESIS

THE CULTURE OF AMERICAN WHALING AS PORTRAYED IN HERMAN
MELVILLE'S "MOBY DICK"

BY

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It has been examined before the Board of Thesis Examination on Friday, 14 June 2024
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On June 14th, 2024, the Board of Thesis Examination has kindly approved a thesis by Wahtyudi Arfandi (F041191147) entitled *The Culture of American Whaling as Portrayed in Herman Melville's "Moby Dick"* submitted in fulfillment of one of the requirements to obtain Sarjana Degree in English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

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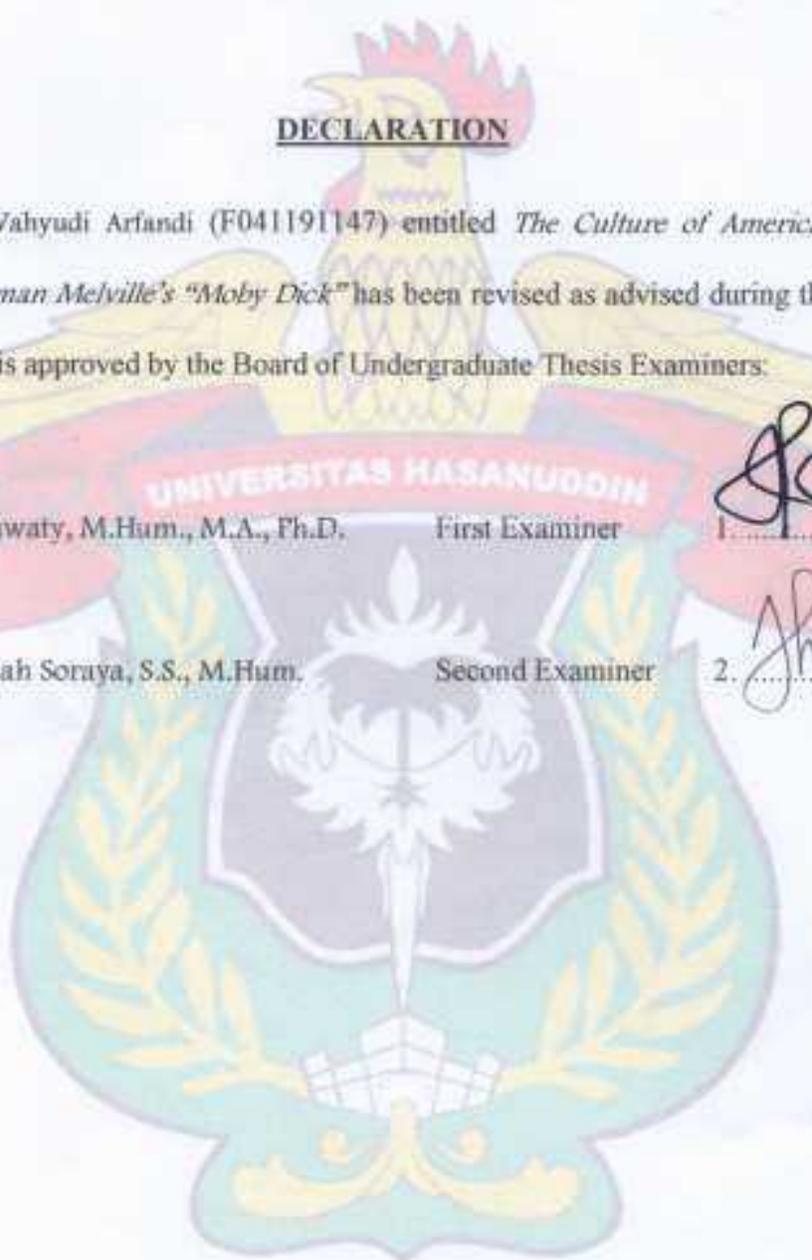
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Hereby, the writer declares that this thesis is written by himself. This thesis does not contain any materials which have been published by other people, and it does not cite other people's ideas except quotations and references.

Makassar, July 5th 2024



Wahyudi Arfandi



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The writer also recognizes that this work is without its flaws, and any suggestion or feedback will be very appreciated, thank you.

Makassar, 14 June 2024

Wahyudi Arfandi



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ABSTRAK

WAHYUDI ARFANDI, 2023. The Culture of American Whaling as Portrayed in Herman Melville's "Moby Dick" (dibimbing oleh **Burhanuddin Arafah** dan **A. ST. Aldilah Khaerana**)

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan berbagai macam budaya perburuan paus yang terkandung di dalam novel *Moby Dick* karya Helman Melville, dan mencari tahu hubungan Herman Melville dengan perburuan paus.

Penelien ini menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi sastra, yaitu pendekatan yang menekankan hubungan atau refleksi karya sastra dengan kondisi masyarakat di mana karya itu diciptakan. Unsur kemasyarakatan yang dianalisis pada penelitian ini adalah unsur budaya yang terkandung di dalam novel *Moby Dick*. Penelitian ini juga menganalisis unsur intrinsik yang terdapat di dalam novel, yaitu alur, tokoh, dan latar. Adapun metode analisis yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif.

Hasil dari penelitian ini memaparkan lima macam budaya perburuan ikan paus yang dapat ditemukan di dalam novel *Moby Dick*, yaitu aspek bahasa pelaut yang unik dibanding Bahasa Inggris, setologi sebagai ilmu yang mempelajari tentang paus, keragaman orang-orang yang terlibat di dalam cerita yang tak memandang ras dan agama, alat-alat yang diimplementasikan dalam berburu paus, dan Nantucket sebagai pusat dari industri perburuan paus. Penelitian ini juga memaparkan bahwa terdapat elemen di dunia nyata yang tercermin di dalam novel *Moby Dick*, dua diantaranya yaitu pengaplikasian *try-pot* dan keberadaan Mocha Dick.

Kata Kunci: *Budaya, Perburuan Paus, Sosiologi Sastra*



ABSTRACT

WAHYUDI ARFANDI, 2023. The Culture of American Whaling as Portrayed in Herman Melville's "Moby Dick" (supervised by **Burhanuddin Arafah** and **A. ST. Aldilah Khaerana**)

This research aims to describe whaling cultures contained within *Moby Dick* written by Herman Melville, and also to find out the relationship between Herman Melville and whaling.

This research applies sociology of literature, a literary analysis approach that emphasizes the relationship or reflection of a literary work with the conditions of society in which the work was created. The social elements analyzed are the cultural elements that can be found in *Moby Dick*. This research also analyses the intrinsic elements found within the novel, namely the plot, character, and setting. The analysis method used is descriptive method.

The result of this research presents five whaling cultures found within *Moby Dick*, which are the unique aspect of sailor language compared to English, cetology as a study to learn about whales, the diversity of the people involved in the story, which includes various races and religions, the tools implemented in whaling, and Nantucket as hub for the whaling industry. This research also presents that there are real life elements that are reflected in the novel *Moby Dick*, two of which are the application of the try-pot and the existence of Mocha Dick.

Keywords: *Culture, Whaling, Sociology of Literature*



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, identification of the problem, the scope of the problem, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the significances of the study, and the sequence of chapters.

A. Background of the Study

Culture is the amalgamation of human customs, traditions, and activities that are contained within a group of people. Throughout history, Humans all over the world have created many cultures, with literature being one of such cultures.

Literature can be generally described as a medium or work whereby authors express their imagination and feeling, whether the purpose of the work is as a mere entertainment, or as a reflection of humans and/or society as a whole. Adding to this, Pickering & Hoeper, (1981: 307) define Literature as a “uniquely human activity, born of man's timeless desire to understand, express, and finally share experiences”. Moreover, literary works as the reflection of the world and human as a result of social phenomena (Pradopo, 1994: 26). This reflection of the world provides more meaning towards literary works, making them worth more than just a media to consume.

Literature comes in many different forms, mainly presented in written form. They are, but not limited to, novels, short stories, and poem. In addition to written form, Marcus and Sollor, (2009: 89) state that “literary means not only what is



written but what is voiced, what is expressed, what is invented, in whatever form” This means that works that are presented in non-written form such as dramas and even songs can be considered as literary works.

A novel is a work of fiction that portrays characters that embody real life people, events, and settings within a plot or scenario set by the author. According to Tarigan, (1991: 164-165) Novels exhibit unique qualities that vary based on their characters, conveying multiple feelings and emotions. Novel consists of intrinsic and extrinsic elements. This means a novel can be analyzed not only by its inherent quality, but also the outside influence that are related to the novel.

This study analyzes a novel entitled *Moby Dick* written by Herman Melville. The novel revolves around Captain Ahab's relentless quest for revenge against the white sperm whale known as Moby Dick, who had bitten off his leg in his previous voyage. The story is told through the point of view of Ishmael, a young man wanting to try his hands at whale-hunting. He meets Queequeg, and later becomes friends. They then both sign on the whaling ship Pequod, followed by the introduction of captain Ahab and the other crew members.

As they voyage through the vast oceans, Ahab's obsession with Moby Dick leads the crew into perilous situations, ultimately resulting in their tragic deaths. The novel also explores the themes of obsession, fate, and the power of nature while delving into the complexities of human nature.



The writer chooses to analyze this novel in particular because in addition to the story, Melville had laid down various and extensive information about cetology (the study of whales), whaling, and the culture of whaling and its industry that are included within the novel, which was unheard of at the time, and the writer finds this fact intriguing.

Moreover, whaling as an industry in the United States (and the world, to an extent) has a massive influence in the 17th to 19th century, as they are part of everyday life at the time, with the need of whaling oil as a fuel for lamps (Starbuck, 1878: 37). As a student who concerns himself over English (in this case America) history and culture, the writer wants to study and to let people know about one fragment of United States's long history and culture.

This topic is also chosen because whaling has serious impact on the ocean life, specifically in regards to whale population, as whales are currently considered as an endangered species. This study serves as an introduction into the knowledge of whaling and to raise awareness for the general population by looking at the history of whaling, and its cultural elements that can be found within the novel.

For these reasons, the writer analyzes the whaling culture, which is prominently featured in the novel using sociology of literature approach. Therefore, the write formulates the tile of this study as *The Culture of American Whaling as Portrayed in Herman Melville's Moby Dick*.



B. Identification of the Problem

In accordance to the background of the study, the writer has identified a number of problems within the novel, which are listed below.

1. The history of the whaling industry
2. The American whaling culture that is prominently featured in *Moby Dick*
3. The message conveyed in *Moby Dick*
4. The relationship between Herman Melville and the whaling culture in America
5. Symbolisms portrayed in *Moby Dick*

C. The Scope of the Problem

This section aims to limit the issue that is analyzed in this study. So that, the study is narrower and more focused. The writer has limited the problem within the American whaling culture featured in the novel (point 2). This issue is analyzed using sociology of literature approach by analyzing the novel itself and also external elements that are related to the novel.



D. The Statement of the Problem

Based on the points above, the writer has formulated the research questions as the main topic of the study into:

1. How is the American whaling culture portrayed in *Moby Dick* novel?
2. What is the parallel between *Moby Dick* and real-life whaling

E. Objectives of Study

Based on the previous section, The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To explain the portrayal of American whaling culture in the novel *Moby Dick* through analyzing the story, the characters, and the setting of the novel.
2. To find out the parallel between *Moby Dick* and real-life whaling.

F. Significances of the Study

In addition to fulfill the objectives above, the study is also hoped to offer significances as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

The writer expects that this research serves a contribution to larger body of knowledge, especially the literary study on the novel *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville.



2. Practical Significance

This study is expected to give a deeper understanding about Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, both for the writer and the readers alike, and to be used as a reference for forthcoming studies.

G. Sequence of Chapters

This thesis is divided into 5 chapters, as shown below:

1. Chapter I is the introduction, which consists of the background of the study, identification of the problem, the scope of the problem, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, and the sequence of the chapters.
2. Chapter II is the literature review, which consists of previous related study and theoretical framework.
3. Chapter III is the research method, which consists of the methodological design and method of collecting data.
4. Chapter IV is the main findings of the research, which consists of the discussion of the research.
5. Chapter V is the conclusion, which consists of the conclusion and suggestions.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of previous related studies, theoretical framework, which consists of the intrinsic elements of a literary work, sociology of literature, a brief history of the whaling industry, and Herman Melville and sea voyage.

A. Previous Related Studies

There are several past researches that are relevant with this study. These researches can be used as a reference to learn from, or to compare with this study. They are as follows:

Firstly, Khosyatillah (2008) in her research entitled *The Study of Symbol in Herman Melville's Moby Dick*, discusses about symbolic elements within the novel. This research is conducted with the semiotic approach to find symbols and the meaning behind each symbol. Khosyatillah discovers that symbols kind be found of characters as a cultural and private symbol, such as Ishmael being the symbol of outcast, Queequeg being the symbol of purity, Ahab being the symbol of madness, Moby Dick representing the symbol of an unreachable goal, etc.

Secondly, Yadav & Yadav (2019) in his research entitled *A Determined Observation and the Investigation of Moby Dick as a Symbol of Evil*, analyze the themes and symbolisms of evil, suffering, and pain in Moby Dick. The finding of this research is how the color of white is usually symbolized as a purity and good spirit,



but the ever so white Moby Dick itself, is anything but. Moby dick in the novel is portrayed as evil and destruction incarnate, annihilating anything that stands on its path.

Lastly, Carver (2021), in his research entitled '*One of the strangest and most wonderful books in the world': Moby-Dick; or, The Whale (1851)*', analyzes the background of Herman Melville and its impact in the creation of his novel *Moby Dick*. Carver also analyzes the theme of the novel and the symbolism of the characters. Carver finds that Moby Dick is based on both Melville's years of experience aboard whaleships and the real-life disaster of the *Essex* whaleship.

The similarity between this study and Carver's, Yadav & Yadav, and Khosyatillah's research can be found in the object of the research, which is the usage of *Moby Dick* as an object of research. The difference is the focus of the research. Carver, Yadav & Yadav, and Khosyatilalh analyze the theme and the characters and what they symbolize, meanwhile this research focuses more on the American whaling culture and its involvement in the novel.

What makes this study different from the other past researches, this study analyzes *Moby Dick* further, by analyzing the cultural elements that are present within the novel. This fact is the distinction that separates this study from other researches.



B. Theoretical Framework

1. The Intrinsic Elements of the Novel

In addition of the extrinsic elements, the writer also describes the intrinsic elements that comprise a literary work. As discussed earlier in chapter I, the writer only explains elements that are considered necessary for this analysis. They are as follows:

a. Characters and Characterization

Characters in literature are the people (or even animals) portrayed within a written story. They provide the foundation for plot and theme through their actions, attitudes and interactions with each other. The individuals have significant personality traits that often shape their behavior and decisions throughout the narrative.

Forster (1956: 4-5), distinguishes between flat and round characters. Flat characters are one-dimensional and lack depth, often serving as mere stereotypes or archetypes. In contrast, round characters are multi-dimensional, with the ability to change and evolve over the course of the story. Forster argues that "the test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way" (1956: 55), meaning that a well-crafted character should be multidimensional, with the ability to change and evolve over the course of the story.

Based on this, character can be generally divided into two types, namely static and dynamic. From the start of the story to its conclusion, the static character remains



the same kind of person. On the other hand, a dynamic character involves a shift in one or more facets of personality, outlook, or character as the story goes.

Additionally, characters can also be analyzed based on their role in the story. Protagonists are the main characters who are the center of the story, while antagonists are characters who oppose the protagonist and create conflict. Supporting characters, on the other hand, provide context, background information, or assist in the development of the main characters.

The author of a work of literature creates characters through a combination of different elements (this is referred as characterization), including, but not limited to:

1. Physical appearance: The way a character looks can be described in detail, including their height, weight, hair color, eye color, clothing, and any distinguishing features.
2. Personality traits: Characters can have a range of personality traits, including strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, fears and desires, and moral beliefs.
3. Background and history: A character's background and history can include information about their family, upbringing, education, social class, and any past experiences that have shaped who they are.
4. Motivations: Characters are often driven by specific motivations, such as love, power, revenge, or personal growth.



5. Relationships: The relationships between characters can also be important in shaping their personalities and motivations, as well as driving the plot forward.

Overall, characters play a crucial role in literature, as they provide a human element to the story, allowing readers to relate to and empathize with their struggles, triumphs, and failures. By crafting well-rounded and dynamic characters, authors can create stories that resonate with readers and stand the test of time.

b. Plot

A plot is the sequence of events that make up a story, and is often considered one of the most important elements of literature. It is the framework or structure that gives a story coherence and meaning, and provides a sense of direction and purpose to the narrative.

There are many ways to divide the structure of a plot, and one of the most popular is the Freytag pyramid. The Freytag Pyramid is a visual representation of the plot structure in literature, developed by German novelist and playwright Gustav Freytag in the mid-19th century. The diagram is a pyramid-shaped structure that shows the key elements of a plot, including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.



The breakdown of each element of the Freytag Diagram is as follows (Freytag, 2008: 36-43)

1. Exposition: This is the beginning of the story, where the setting, characters, and background information are introduced. It establishes the context and tone of the story, and provides the reader with the necessary information to understand what is happening.
2. Rising Action: This is the section of the story where the main conflict or problem is introduced and developed. The tension and suspense increase as the story progresses, as the characters face obstacles and challenges that make the resolution seem uncertain.
3. Climax: This is the turning point of the story, where the conflict reaches its peak and the outcome becomes clear. It is the most intense and dramatic moment of the story, and often involves a pivotal decision or action by the main character.
4. Falling Action: This is the section of the story where the tension begins to decrease, as the consequences of the climax are played out. Loose ends are tied up, and the story begins to move towards its conclusion.
5. Resolution: This is the end of the story, where the conflict is fully resolved and the loose ends are tied up. It provides closure and a sense



of resolution to the reader, and may involve a moral or lesson that the reader can take away from the story.

Forster (1956: 61) distinguishes between story and plot, with the former referring to a sequence of events in chronological order, while the latter involves the selection and arrangement of events to create a meaningful and engaging narrative. He argues that a plot should be structured around a central conflict or problem, with each event leading logically and inevitably to the next, building tension and suspense as the story progresses.

Forster emphasizes the importance of causality in the plot, stating that “the king died, and then the queen died” is a story, but “the king died, and then the queen died of grief” is a plot” (1956: 61), as it reveals the cause-and-effect relationships between events. He also notes the importance of the climax and resolution in the plot, arguing that they should provide a sense of closure and satisfaction to the reader.

Furthermore, Forster highlights the importance of the relationship between the plot and the characters. He argues that the plot should arise naturally from the characters' motivations and actions, rather than being imposed on them from outside. A well-crafted plot should also reveal the characters' personalities and motivations, allowing the reader to become emotionally invested in their struggles and triumphs.



c. Settings

In literature, setting refers to the time, place, and social context in which a story takes place. It includes the physical environment, cultural and historical background, and social and political conditions that shape the characters' experiences and actions. The setting can play a significant role in shaping the narrative, establishing the mood, and providing insight into the characters' motivations and perspectives.

There are generally two aspects of setting in literature, as shown below:

1. Time: The time period in which a story takes place can be significant, as it may influence the social, cultural, and historical context in which the characters are situated. For example, a story set in medieval times will have a very different setting than one set in the modern era, and this can impact the themes, language, and tone of the narrative.
2. Place: The physical environment in which a story takes place can be an important part of the setting, as it can impact the characters' actions, emotions, and attitudes. For example, a story set in a small town may have a different setting than one set in a bustling city, and this can shape the characters' experiences and interactions.

The setting of a story can be a specific year, decade, or century, and can have a significant impact on the story, including the social and political context in which the



characters live, the technology that is available to them, and the cultural norms and values that shape their world. Similarly, the setting of a story can be a specific city, town, or country, and can have a significant impact on the story, including the climate, geography, and culture of the location.

In other words, the setting is an essential element of literature, as it provides the context and background against which the story is played out.

d. Theme

Themes in a literature are the overarching ideas that can be found in a literary work. Themes give a meaning, depth, and complexity in a literary work. They are not usually explicitly stated, but it sends a message of what the author is trying to say.

Themes can cover various ideas that the author wants to convey, and they can be expressed in a lot of ways, for example through the story, symbolism, character's dialogue and actions, etc.

Themes are the reflection of the author's own experience. Example of themes include love, good and evil, justice and corrupt, and obsession. And the way they are interpreted depends on the reader based on their perspective and opinion.



2. Sociology of Literature

Sociology of literature is a literary analysis method that put an emphasis on the relationship between the literary work and the circumstances of the society at the time. Roucek and Warren (1965: 20) describe sociology as a field of study which focuses on human relationship within a group. This theory is assumed to be first founded by Georg Lukács in his book *The Theory of the Novel*, first published in German, in 1916. The book talks about the comparison between classical poems and modern novels, in which he argued that the modern novels focus more on tackling values and problems within the world (Lukács, 1971: 56).

Furthermore, according to Yudiono (2000: 3), Sociology of literature is a method in which find social values that are associated between society and the literary work. These associations are based on:

1. An author writes literary works for the society to consume, understand, and learn from them.
2. The Author is one part of the society that are bound within social status
3. The language used is a language based on said society. In other words, a language is a social construct formed by society.
4. A literary work comes from the author's idea, which in turn comes from the society which the author involves in.



There are two ways one can go about analyzing a literary work from the perspective of sociology of literature, which are listed below:

a. Literature as a reflection of society

A literary work can be regarded as an echo of one period of society. It can be interpreted as to what extent the literary work reflects/mirrors its society of its time (Irmawati, Arafah, & Abbas, 2020: 32). This theory, in other words, deals with analyzing the influence of a society towards the creation of a literary work.

This theory emphasizes the relationship between literary works and their social environment. In actual society, humans are dealing with norms and values, Literature works also reflect norms and values that are consciously focused and trying to be implemented in the community. Literature also describes human concerns, hopes and aspirations. Therefore, the possibility of literary works can be used as the most effective sociological measure to measure human response to social forces. In essence, Literary works are related to society, and these two cannot be taken apart, as they are regarded as one entity. (Suhadi, Arafah, Makatita, Abbas, & Arafah, 2022: 1214).

b. The Social Context of the Author

An author's literary work may be influenced by the social context of the author, the social factors that construct the content of said literary work. Social factors constructing the content of literary works social context issues. The author's



social context that plays a role in influencing his/her work comes from the society which the author is involved in. The relationship between the author and society plays an important role. This is because the type of society to which the author is oriented determines the form and content of the literary work.

The application of Sociology of Literature in this study will be conducted by analyzing the literary work itself and find the relation of its content with how the society was at the time, in this case, finding the cultural elements of whaling contained within the novel that were actually exist back then.

C. A Brief History of Whaling in America

1. Early Days

The history of whaling in the United States of America dates back to the 15th century, originating in New England, specifically in Massachusetts. The establishment of a fishing colony was one of the main concepts behind the settlement of Massachusetts, with one of the charter's clauses was to guarantee the colonists' unrestricted access to the sea. (Starbuck, 1878: 4). The Eastern Massachusetts settlers decided to settle on Cape Cod, due to its strategic location for whaling for its abundance of whales both near the coast and the deep sea, and its potential for whaling to be highly profitable, with the demand for whale oil, which is used for oil



lamps. The commercialization of whaling was established upon a trade contract between the colonists and the natives of the land.

Starbuck (1878: 5) states that before the arrival of the British colonists, the natives of the land, otherwise known as the Indians, would frequently pursue the whales with their canoes, wounding them bit by bit until they eventually died. Their method of attack was to plunge their weapons into the body of the whale whenever they rose to the surface of the water to breathe. Their weapons consisted of a crude wooden harpoon, to which was attached a line with a wooden float at the end. This method of whaling was later used and followed up by the British colonists.

People would usually keep an eye for whales, alerting other people when a group of whales approached. They would rush into the small boats in an effort to drive the unwary whales onto the beach (Federal Writers' Project, 1938: 10). After the whale was successfully killed, it was towed ashore and had its fat, or blubber, cut off (this process of cutting the blubber off of a whale is called flensing). Once the fat had been taken off, it was then heated up inside of what is called a try pot, until the whale oil is fully extracted.

2. The Rise of the Industry

In around 1690, Nantucket, an island located south from cape cod, joined in on the trade. By around 1712, Nantucket whalers caught their first sperm whale, and this event would cause a fundamental shift in how they went about their trade. The



industry was given new life by this occurrence because they started whale-hunting in the sea, with vessels that weighed about thirty tons, right away. They were prepared for trips lasting around six weeks, and they brought along a few barrels, enough to hold one whale's blubber, which they will then bring home. The owners then took control of the blubber, tested the oil, and sent the vessels back out right away. By 1715, Nantucket had six sloops engaged in whale fishery (Starbuck, 1878: 20).

Many Indians were employed in the industry of whaling, and the most active ones were promoted to steersmen and occasionally even allowed to command a boat. Each boat's crew was made up primarily or entirely of natives. Because of this encouragement, they quickly gained experience and knowledge, becoming proficient whalemens.

As whaling became more significant and more boats were used, it became necessary to choose the location with the best harbour, and Nantucket's current location was chosen. The Straight wharf was constructed in 1723 as a result of the need to replace the old ports, which at best were only temporary and frequently destroyed by winter storms, with more substantial wharves (Starbuck, 1878: 21).

The number and size of the employed vessels increased along with the growth of the business. The size of the vessels increased to 40 to 50 tons with the addition of schooners (Starbuck, 1878: 22). When whales started to become scarce close to the shore, larger vessels were put into service and sent southward, where they cruised until around the first of July. After returning, they underwent repairs and continued to



cruise east of the Grand Bank for the remainder of the whaling season, unless, as was frequently the case, they filled up sooner than anticipated. The ships used for this service were typically ships of 60 or 70 tons, and their crews typically included four to eight native Americans in each vessel (Starbuck, 1878: 23).

But eventually Nantucket ran out of men to staff the whaling ships, so Cape Cod and even Long Island were called in to make up the shortfall in crew members. Due to the low colonial demand, it was inevitable that the business occasionally became overdone, the market became oversupplied, and the oil that was sold was disposed of at a price that was too low to be as lucrative as the islanders believed it should be. The populace started considering alternative markets. They had made Boston their factor for a number of years, selling their oil and getting their supplies from there (Starbuck, 1878: 24).

The English trade was preyed upon by French and Spanish privateers at the beginning of 1741 (Starbuck, 1878: 36). Naturally, the whaling vessels arrived with their fair share of losses. Whalemen were always at risk of being overtaken, and that the risk increased with the distance from the port. For several years, these privateers would occasionally sail through the Nantucket and Vineyard, fending off anything that got in their way that they could handle. The business was operated for a significant portion of the time in fear of capture, first by the Spanish and French and then by the English. Vessels from Nantucket, the Vineyard, and the south shore of the



cape pursued their southern voyages along the edge of the Gulf Stream to the Cape de Verde Islands, some toward the Bahamas, and some sailed toward north.

The Straits of Bellisle and the Gulf of Saint Lawrence were opened to the whalemens in 1761 and they immediately took advantage of the rich fishery that was made available to them as the result of the conquest of Canada and the ceding of territory to England by France at the end of the war, a result that the colonists had worked hardly and spent their lives to achieve (Starbuck, 1878: 39).

The whale-fishing industry in 18th century achieved its peak of success in 1774. At this time, it's safe to say that there are at least 360 different kinds of vessels were deployed each year. They had a combined weight of nearly 33,000 tons, employed approximately 4,700 men directly and a significantly larger number indirectly. The fishery continued to thrive despite the threat from French and Spanish privateer vassals. From 1771 to 1775, at least 45,000 barrels of spermaceti oil, 8,500 barrels of right whale oil, and nearly 75,000 pounds of bone were probably produced annually (Starbuck, 1878: 57).

The story is not that much different in the first half of the 19th century. After a brief period of war in 1812, The American whaling industry underwent a period of rebuilding before entering a golden age of whaling, due to the growth and prosperity in the industry. As populations in Europe and America grew and industrialization accelerated, there was an increase in demand for products made from whales. A new generation of whalemens opened, explored, and used a number of new hunting



grounds, from the South Pacific to the Seychelles and from Japan to the Western Arctic, increasing supply at the same time. Between 1815 and 1859, American production of sperm oil nearly doubled, whale oil increased by more than eleven times, and whalebone increased by forty times. The overall value of the industry's output increased by more than eleven times. (Davis et al., 2007: 37)

Parallel to the thrive of the industry, the scale in which whaling is conducted also significantly got bigger and bigger. The small boats and schooners were replaced by the much larger ships, and more sophisticated methods of whaling were developed. For instance, the efficiency of harpoon guns took over the industry from the more conventional harpoons.

Whales, as a product, can be utilized in various ways. Their meat is used as a good source of nourishment, much like meat in general. Their oils are used to fuel lamps and candles before the age of electricity. In addition, oils from a certain kind of whale such as sperm whale (*spermaceti*) can also be used to lubricate machinery, due to their superior oil quality. An ambergris, found exclusively within a sperm whale is a highly prized substance that is mainly used for cosmetics purpose such as perfumes, can also be used as an ingredient for wine and even a treatment for headaches.

3. The Decline

The latter half of the 19th century told a different story, however, as the whaling industry gradually decline over time, as stated by Davis et al., (2007: 41):



1861-65 was 47 percent below the level of the previous quinquennium. That rate of decline was not again reached until the interval 1891-95 to 1896-1900, but the downward slide was persistent. By 1901-5 the annual average tonnage of the American whaling fleet-more than 208,000 tons in 1846-50-was only 10,462. The decline proceeded almost twice as quickly as the previous expansion. By 1876-80 average annual tonnage had fallen by 78 percent from its peak in 1846-50, and the industry was no larger than it had been fifty years earlier (Davis et al., 2007: 41).

The cause of this decline can be attributed to two huge factors, namely:

1. The decline of demand: The rise of whale oil's price, consecutively followed by the invention of kerosene, which served as a better alternative for fuelling lamps.
2. The decline of supply: The excessive number of whales hunted in the first half of the 19th greatly reduced the population of whales in the latter half of the century.

Today, whaling is completely prohibited in United States. This prohibition started in the 1972 after the U.S. Congress passed a law under the Marine Mammal Protection Act that illegalizes the act of hunting or injuring a whale. (Lang, 2002)