Danyuan Wang

Mrs. Fort

English 9 – Period 1

30 September 2019

Power and Moby dick

Power is a fickle thing. It often manifests, for a short time, in an individual. With only the right conditions to nourish and grow the power he wields. To Herman Melville, author of *Moby Dick*, power is a tool to be used not an end goal to be sought after. He continuously paints power as an object of great value but never to be sought after.

To Captain Ahab, his priority is not power but vengeance “now possessed a thousand-fold more potency then ever had he sanely brought to bear” (Melville 157) he desired vengeance not power. He merely used his power to achieve it. Along the way to revenge he acquired absolute power and control over the ship he used his power to do what he really wanted to do: kill Moby Dick. In this situation Ahab did not want power. But power could help him get what he really wants.

Now we turn to the whale, in all its might and glory. Basking in his fullest power surrounded by creatures dwarfed by his tremendous size. Yet he desires only to preserve his life. To protect against the depths, he must so often dive he grew a thick layer of oil in his skull and under his skin. Every action that the whale ever takes is to protect himself from the dangers of the world. A cornered animal will fight with astounding ferocity. Indeed, Moby Dick, the title character and main antagonist of the story is known for charging at whaling ships and causing injuries that are “fatal to the last degree of fatality” (152). Sperm whales do not feed on humans nor do they intentionally seek out ships to sink. But when attacked he only wants to protect himself. His great size and strength only make it easier for him.

Power has been long desired by people from all over the world. Power is the ability to make a change. To “make a dent in the Universe.” (Steve Jobs). People who desire power for powers sake will not be able to wield it well. Power is a tool. Not a prize.

Works cited

Melville, Herman. Moby-Dick. 2nd Norton Critical Edition, W.W. Norton & Company, 2002. WC.470