

# **Rebellion and Death: The *Cause and Effect of Alienation in Bartleby, the Scrivener and Moby-Dick*<sup>1</sup>**

**Babu Sarker**

*Lecturer, Department of English, Notre Dame University Bangladesh*

## **Abstract**

This paper examines Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby, The Scrivener*, exploring how Ahab and Bartleby represent alienated workers of Melville's era, echoing the Marxist aspects of workers' alienation. From the Marxist perspective, this paper analyzes how Melville depicted Ahab's and Bartleby's alienation and their rebellion against the exploitation of workers in the capitalist society, in which workers suffer psychosomatically. While scholars analyze Melville's *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* from a Marxist perspective, they fail to recognize Captain Ahab as a "Proletarian Ahab" like Bartleby, since *Moby-Dick* introduces Ahab to readers as the "Captain" of the *Pequod*. However, I argue that Captain Ahab thinks and acts as an alienated worker, similar to Bartleby, and rebels against capitalism. Moreover, the texts *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* suggest that Captain Ahab's monomaniacal vengeance arises significantly from his previous forty years of cruel proletarian experiences, which led him to seek vengeance against Moby Dick, that represents the Capitalists. Likewise, Bartleby refuses to work, recognizing the lawyer's exploitation of workers. Therefore, from the Marxist perspective on alienation, I will argue that Captain Ahab and Bartleby represent workers' psychosomatic conditions, aligning with the workers' alienation—physical, mental, and spiritual—under the yoke of capitalism that produces workers' tragic deaths in Melville's era.

*Keywords:* proletarians, exploitation, alienation, rebellion, death

## **Introduction**

One of the theorists says, "Literary text acts as a kind of mirror" (qtd. in Delbanco 10). This quote indicates the function of a text or novel that works like a mirror that reflects the person who stands in front of it and other things around the person in a room. Similarly, as a mirror, Melville's *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* also reflect Melville's mind, besides his proletarian experiences of the capitalist world that he expresses aesthetically in his narratives. Regarding

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*Moby-Dick*, Andrew Delbanco states, “Surely no text written by an American has been as powerfully reflective as *Moby-Dick*” (10). That means *Moby-Dick* vividly reflects or portrays Melville’s contemporary world in America, including the history, society, and ideologies of the owners and workers through the context of the text’s stories, characters, and genre. Delbanco’s quote haunts my critical mind repeatedly, making me think about what scholars missed in discussing what *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* might have reflected on—especially when I read earlier and present scholars on Melville’s writings. Among the earlier scholars, C.L.R. James, from a socio-political and historical perspective, argued that Melville’s writings are related to the social movement, which expresses social and political ideas, relating the “work, author, and the period” (115). Moreover, Bruce Franklin presented Melville as a proletarian artist and said that *Moby-Dick* flows from Melville’s experience of proletarian life (295), exposing “the essence of capitalist society” (289). From the capitalistic view, he also related Bartleby’s denial of working as a crime with “a mild, quiet version of Melville’s own crimes of desertion and mutiny: it too is a refusal to work” (300). Aligned with James and Franklin, Michael Paul Rogin, saw the text *Bartleby* as a social critique, “not as realistic story but as psychological parable” (198) and the *Pequod* in *Moby-Dick* as “a ship of workers” (111), and for Rogin, Ahab is not one of them, though he is “above the commerce” (112). The noticeable thing is that though James, Franklin, and Rogin see both texts, *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby*, as stories about workers, they do not see Ahab as a proletariat like Bartleby. Instead, they are busy showing Ahab and Bartleby as symbolic characters, *Moby-Dick* as a metaphorical novel, and *Bartleby* as a parable of the workers. Similarly, though the present scholars analyze the characters of Bartleby from a Marxist view and Ahab from a psychological perspective, emphasizing upon their loneliness and individualism, they also fail to see Ahab as a proletariat who suffers from alienation like Bartleby. For example, according to Yoshiaki Furui, “The novel’s foregrounding of Ahab’s solitude can be best understood by reading *Moby-Dick* in terms of Melville’s engagement with individualism,” because the mid-nineteenth century has been dubbed “the age of individualism” or “the golden age of individualistic thought and expression in American society” (600). This implies that Furui missed seeing that Captain Ahab’s solitude or individualism comes from his previous experience of alienation of his proletarian life because, according to him, Melville, through the character of Ahab, portrayed the picture of individualism of his era in America.

From the Marxist view, in *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby*, Melville, the proletarian author, depicted workers’ physical and mental suffering and struggle, exploring the workers’ exploitation and alienation in such a way that

perfectly echoed the concepts of alienation in Marx's classic theoretical work in "Economic Philosophic Manuscript of 1844" through which Marx discusses the *cause* and *effect* of Capitalism in the life of the proletarians. The term "alienation" generally means a state of isolation from anything or anybody, including an activity in which the person is involved. The literal meaning of alienation is *estrangement*—it means separation from oneself or being disconnected from others or society. More specifically, in his *1844 Manuscripts*, Karl Marx defines alienation as proletarians' or workers' feelings of separation from their product, labor, other workers, and finally, from themselves in the political-economic mode of production in capitalist society. However, from the Marxist aspects, though scholars focus on Bartleby's eccentric behavior as the *effect* of labor exploitation and alienation, they do not see Ahab's eccentric monomaniacal madness to kill Moby Dick as significantly as the *effect* of his previous experience of labor exploitation and alienation because they see Ahab as the Captain of the ship *Pequod*, not a worker like Bartleby. In the last twenty years, while scholarship has mainly discussed Moby Dick's biting Ahab's leg off as the cause of Ahab's monomaniacal vengeance from the psychological perspective, including his eccentric behavior, individualism, and loneliness, I argue that Ahab's monomaniacal vengeance is the effect of his previous experience of labor exploitation and alienation because before becoming Captain Ahab, he worked for forty years in the whaling industry as a proletarian. However, to me, from the Marxist view, both Bartleby and Ahab represent the worker's psychosomatic situation in the socio-political-economic reality of the capitalist society of the Melville era, and their psychological and behavioral disorders are the effect of their alienation caused by labor exploitation that produces Ahab's and Bartleby's rebellion against Capitalism. So, their tragic death is also the product of Capitalism.

### **Causes of Workers' Alienation from a Marxist Perspective**

In the remainder of the introduction of this paper, and to establish my claim, in this article, I will use Melville's *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* as primary sources, Marx's theory of alienation described in his *1844 Manuscripts*, and other scholarship used in this article as secondary sources. Before establishing my claim by examining the texts *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* to show how Bartleby and Ahab are alienated and as alienated workers behave eccentrically to produce their tragic death in the mode of production in their capitalist society, let us focus on the core messages of Marx's theory of alienation.

Marx discussed the causes of workers' four types of alienation in *1844 Manuscripts*, keeping capitalism at the center. According to him, the

production processes in capitalism make workers totally “self-alienated” or “alienated self-conscious” (114) —physically, mentally, and spiritually. It indicates how workers feel alienated in the production process. Based on Marx’s discussion in *1844 Manuscripts*, the causes of workers’ four types of alienation can be summed up with the idea of capitalism, private property, objectification of labor, and commodity fetishism as follows:

According to Marx, capitalism is the root or first cause of workers’ alienation from the products they produce because capitalism creates two social classes: property owners and propertyless workers (Marx 70). It implies that in a capitalist society, the capitalists own the property and the production, not the workers. Consequently, the workers feel alienated from their products.

In addition, the second kind of alienation of the workers is feeling alienated from their labor. According to Marx, private property is another essential reason workers become alienated because, in capitalism, private property owners possess not only the product but also the workers. Since “Labour is the essence of private property” (Marx 80), in a capitalist society, private property owners value only the workers’ labor and money, not the workers. Consequently, though private property is the product of workers’ labor, they feel alienated from their product and their labor (their talents, skills, and muscle power) because these belong to their owners, who buy them with wages.

Moreover, the third type of alienation of the workers is their alienation from other workers. In Marx’s view, in the production process of capitalism, private property owners transform workers from men into “strange and inhuman objects” (Marx 87), separating them from their production and labor and other workers. It denotes that in the production process, workers are classified and separated from other workers to do the same labor repeatedly to produce what the production owners want. Therefore, in this production process, the “worker sinks to the level of a commodity and becomes indeed the most wretched of commodities” (70). This means the workers feel themselves as “objects” or “goods” in the production process since the owners give the most value to the production, workers’ labor, and money. In addition, workers realize that capitalists use them and their labor as tools, classifying their work and separating them from other workers to produce private property or production. Therefore, the workers feel that in the production process of capitalism, they are turned into commodities and devalued as humans. Moreover, they feel they become the objects of their products, alienated from their products and labor, and from other workers as workers—without human dignity, rights, freedom, and potentialities of their creativity.

Finally, workers' fourth type of alienation is alienation from the self or alienated self-consciousness. In capitalism, commodity fetishism leads workers to turn into such an object—valueless in the production mode—that they feel totally alienated not only from their product, labor, and other workers in the production process but also from themselves in the capitalist society. This kind of alienation is equal to death at physical, conscious, and spiritual levels. This happens because, in the political-economic capitalist mode of production, consumers become obsessed with the product, not with the workers, though capitalists squeeze workers' talents, skills, and labor to produce the best product. According to Marx, "Man's species-being" consists of body, mind, and spirit, but the spirit is the essential nature of man (Marx 77). Similarly, as humans, willpower, freedom, and rights are essential for the workers. In capitalism's political-economic mode of production, workers do not belong to their willpower, freedom, and rights. Consequently, they cannot think freely or act with their creativity using their hearts and minds like the artists. Whatever they have to do, they do according to the owner's will. Therefore, being alienated from their products, labor, and fellow workers, as human beings in this capitalist production process, the workers also feel alienated from their willpower, freedom, and rights. Thus, in this state of self-realization, the workers feel total alienation because they neither own the products they produce nor their labor or other workers, feeling incapable of doing something creative according to their own will. In other words, in this reality of capitalism, being captivated by the political-economic mode of production, workers feel totally "alienated from self" or become "alienated self-consciousness being" (Marx 114)—meaning a total object or machine.

The workers feel self-alienated because this kind of realization of self-alienation appears: "The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an 'external' existence, but that it exists 'outside him,' independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power of its own confronting him; it means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien" (Marx 72). It infers workers' feelings of total alienation—physically, mentally, and spiritually—from their product, labor, and fellow workers and their potentiality of becoming or doing something creative. Consequently, some workers become frustrated, depressed, and finally hostile against this kind of alienation, while others accept it. With these Marxist aspects of alienation, when we read the texts *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby*, we find the same kinds of alienation in the life of Ahab and Bartleby, who represent other workers in the texts.

## Workers' Alienation in *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby*

Melville, the proletarian artist, depicted his proletarian experiences and workers' experiences, psychosomatic conditions and alienation in his literary works: *Typee* (1846), *Omoo* (1847), *Mardi* (1849), *Redburn* (1849), *White-Jacket* (1850), and later in *Moby-Dick* (1851) and *Bartleby* (1853). Concerning Melville's literary art, Franklin says that Melville is a proletarian artist and his "creative imagination was forged in the furnace of proletarian experience" and through "the eyes of a class-conscious worker" under the imperialism of commercial empire in the nineteenth century (287). This implies that in his writings, Melville used his proletarian experiences to write about workers' suffering and alienation in the farms, city life, and factories, as well as the whaling industry on the ocean of his time. For example, his *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* vividly portray the psychosomatic conditions and alienation of the workers through the passive, mystifying, eccentric, lonely, depressed, and mentally and physically sick characters who face the hardships of daily life on the land and in the whaling industry under the yoke of the capitalist society.

Pointing out the bourgeoisie's injustice towards the workers, Shashank B. Mane says that in the novella, *Bartleby*, "Melville attacks the bourgeoisie, their methods of earning money, their treatment to the working class and the deplorable conditions of the working class in the mid-nineteenth century in America" (120). Here, Mane wants to say that through the characters in *Bartleby*, Melville depicts how the capitalists earn money and treat the working class. In the lens of Mane, *Moby-Dick* also portrays the same picture of the owners and workers. In these two texts, Melville presents workers as human, contrasting with how capitalists treat them as objects or tools to produce their products, who suffer psychosomatically in the reality of capitalism's political-economic mode of production.

In general, *psychosomatic reality* refers to a physical sickness produced or aggravated by psychological factors. Nevertheless, in this paper, I use the phrase psychosomatic reality as an effect from the Marxist view to show how psychological factors cause physical illness and how physical illness also affects the mind, causing alienation and psychological disorder of workers—especially Ahab and Bartleby in *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby*. However, based on the Marxist theory of alienation discussed above, let us take an in-depth look at *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* to show how Bartleby and Ahab represent workers and are alienated.

## **Workers' Alienation from Their Product**

*Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* present how workers in a capitalist society work hard to produce products, but do not own their production and consequently feel alienated from their product. Since the working-class characters in *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* sell their labor for wages in a capitalist society, they do not own their products. For example, Ishmael as a sailor, Queequeg as a harpooner, and many other mariners and sailors in the *Pequod* in *Moby-Dick* and the scriveners in the *Bartleby* are the workers who use their labor (talents, skills, and manual work) to produce the product (whale oil and other products and copies for the lawyer). However, they do not own their production because the capitalist bought their labor and talents with wages or “lays” (*Moby-Dick* 70). From the Marxist view, it shows that as a sociologist, Melville portrays workers' alienation from their product in the capitalist society through the characters of owners and workers in *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby*. In other words, the owners' characters in the texts earned money and treated the proletarians as a means of capitalist production, in which the characters of workers felt alienated from their products. After all, they are deprived of their products (hunted whales and whale oil or benefits) because they do not own their production or even see or know where their products actually go.

## **Workers' Alienation from their Labor**

In *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby*, Melville depicted the possessive attitude of private property owners and workers' alienation not only from the product but also from their labor by portraying the characters of owners and workers. In *Moby-Dick*, Peleg and Bildad are the “owners” of their private property, the *Pequod* (*Moby-Dick* 68), and possess the workers who work physically and mentally using their talents, skills, and muscles to hunt whales and earn profit for the owners because they hired them based on different “lays” (70). As the owner, they hired Captain Ahab, the captain's mates, harpooners, and mariners based on different percentages of *lay* to gain profit by hunting the whales. The narrator in *Moby-Dick* indicates that Ahab is not the owner of *Pequod*, like Peleg and Bildad, because he is hired. As a captain, Ahab will “receive certain shares of the profit called *lays*” (70). This proves that Ahab is not the owner but the captain of the *Pequod*. However, since the owners paid hired workers with different percentages of *lay*, they owned the *Pequod*, the production of the workers, and the workers' labor too. This means workers do not own the product (the hunted whales) or the annuity and their labor because they sell them.

Similarly, in *Bartleby*, the lawyer expresses that he owns the law office, scribes, and their productions. Regarding the lawyer, Barnett says, “The lawyer’s possessive attitude towards the entire world of his law office exemplifies still another Marxian contention: that a factor contributing to the alienated character of work is its belonging not to the worker but to another person” (382). From the Marxist view, Barnett demonstrates the lawyer as the owner of the law office—the private property—his workers, and their labor. I agree with Barnett because the lawyer, as the owner, wants to control Turkey’s behavior by giving a coat (*Bartleby* 7) and uses the possessive pronoun “my,” thinking of Bartleby as his hired clerk (14). Moreover, in the absence of Bartleby in the office, the lawyer unlocked Bartleby’s desk “by his own property rights” (Barnett 382) because he, as an owner, claims, “The desk is mine, and its contents too, so I will make bold to look within” (*Bartleby* 17). Later, when Bartleby refuses to leave the office, the lawyer, with his property rights, questions Bartleby, “What earthly right have you to stay here? Do you pay any rent? Do you pay my taxes? Or is this property yours?” (24). From the Marxist view, all these quotations from the text show the possessive attitude of the lawyer who owns his private property—the law official and the scribes. This demonstrates how the scribes feel alienated from their production (copying and typing) and their labor (neat and clean handwriting) because all things belong to the lawyer who bought their labor with wages. In other words, in capitalism, scribes are first alienated from their product, and second, they are alienated from the labor because their labor is sold with cheap wages—which means their labor becomes the property of the private property owners.

### **Alienation from Other Workers**

Melville’s *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* also present workers’ alienation from other workers in two ways: First, their work is classified, and second, therefore, they cannot interact socially. For example, as captain of the *Pequod*, Ahab’s job is managerial, which separates him from the work of the other crew members. Consequently, Ahab remains lonely and alienated in the cabin day and night. Concerning Ahab’s loneliness and monomaniacal vengeance against Moby Dick, Furui says, “While it is evident that Ahab is physically and emotionally separated from the other crew members aboard the *Pequod*, what is less obvious is that he also remains isolated from Moby Dick, which is the very object of his obsessive revenge” (603). Here, Furui argued from a psychological perspective, drawing other scholars’ attention to show how Ahab feels lonely and obsessed with revenge for both being separated physically and emotionally from Moby Dick and other crew members.

Like Ahab, other workers feel lonely and alienated or separated from other workers. For example, in the chapter “Breakfast” in *Moby-Dick*, the narrator Ishmael says,

The bar-room was now full of the boarders who had been dropping in the night previous, and whom I had not as yet had a good look at. They were nearly all whalemens; chief mates, and second mates, and third mates, and sea carpenters, and sea coopers, and sea blacksmiths, and harpooners, and ship keepers; a brown and brawny company, with bosky beards; an unshorn, shaggy set, all wearing monkey jackets for morning gowns. (37)

Here, Ishmael presents the actual scenery of workers’ classification or division of labor in the whaling industry. Regarding the types of work in the whaling industry, Paula Kopacz mentions a list of labor that goes with the different divisions of labor mentioned above. The working list of the whaling ship is:

Loading of supplies for the voyage, manning the sails, navigating the ship, looking out on the mast-head for whales, lowering for a whale, harpooning the whale, taking a Nantucket sleigh-ride, using the lance, cutting off the blubber, mincing it into small pieces, boiling out the oil, extracting the precious ambergris, stowing whale oil below deck, and cleaning up the greasy mess—processes that make the whale ship at sea most like the mill factory at home. (80-81)

All the work mentioned in the quote is tedious manual work in the whaling industry. I agree with Kopacz and want to say that workers on the *Pequod* do the same work repeatedly, risking their lives because they are poor wage slaves, though they do not own the whales or make the same profit as the owners of the *Pequod*. However, because of this kind of classification of works and division of labor, workers feel alienated from their production, their labor, and other workers.

In addition, observing the silent whalers in the bar room during their breakfast, Ishmael, to his surprise, says, “I was preparing to hear some good stories about whaling; to my no small surprise, nearly every man maintained a profound silence. And not only that, but they looked embarrassed” (*Moby-Dick* 37). This quotation suggests that Ishmael, with his curiosity, was waiting to hear from these expert whalers about their bold, exciting, and dangerous experiences of the sea. However, he is surprised to see them eating breakfast silently. This implies the effect of alienation of the whalers in the division of labor in the whaling industry year after year. In other words, these workers

faced alienation from their product, their labor, and from other workers by division of labor in the whaling industry in such a way that affected them very badly. Therefore, after years, when they stepped from water to land, they felt a void in themselves with frustration, mentally tired in such a way that made them eat silently instead of talking, laughing, and sharing their stories during breakfast.

Similarly, in *Bartleby*, scribes feel alienated from other workers because the lawyer classified scribes' jobs to get a super production (neat and clean and correct copy) from the scribes. For example, the lawyer says, "Where there are two or more scribes in an office, they assist each other in this examination, one reading from the copy, the other holding the original. It is a very dull, wearisome, and lethargic affair" (*Bartleby* 9). It shows that in the lawyer's office, scribes do different types of jobs: "copying," "examining the typing," "reading proof," and "holding the original copy." Moreover, the lawyer divides the times and scribes between Turkey and Nipper. Turkey works in the morning and Nippers in the afternoon, while Gingernuts works like a table boy, and Bartleby works day and night, totally separated from other workers. In the Marxist view, these all classify the workers and separate them from each other in the mode of production. Moreover, the text *Bartleby* also shows that the scribes never interact positively as social human beings. It might happen because the lawyer exploits his workers by separating them from each other and alienating workers from their products, labor, and others in the production process. This makes the scribes feel like objects of their labor.

### **Alienation from Self or Becoming Alienated Self-Consciousness**

In *Bartleby* and *Moby-Dick*, Melville also demonstrated how workers realize the "alienated self-consciousness" or "self-alienated," creating the characters of Bartleby and Ahab, who represent the workers in a capitalist society. Regarding Bartleby's alienation, Mane says, "In the short story *Bartleby*, Melville portrays the cataclysmic or ruinous effects of capitalism on the working class. The story focuses on the effects of industrialisation upon the individual worker; how the capitalistic system turns a human into a nonsensical babbling" (121). It indicates the destructive effects of capitalism, which turns workers into machines in the mode of production in the industry or capitalist society. Bartleby realizes how capitalism alienates the scribes in the lawyer's office from his Self-Consciousness. Similarly, Captain Ahab, from his previous forty years' proletarian experience of alienation in the mode of production in the whaling industry, knows the psychosomatic condition and suffering of the workers. Therefore, both Bartleby passively and Ahab directly

became hostile and rebellious, and they rejected becoming wage slaves by becoming commodities or objects in the mode of the political-economic production process in capitalism. In contrast, the characters of Turkey, Nippers, Gingernut, and Ishmael, along with other workers in *Moby-Dick*, accept their “self-alienation” and turn into commodities in the political-economic capitalist mode of production.

The three scriveners in *Bartleby*, Turkey, Nippers, and Gingernut, accept silently the cruel reality of capitalism and their alienation as wage slaves under the domination of the lawyer who exploits them. For example, the lawyer valued “his (Turkey’s) morning services” (5). Moreover, despite Turkey’s “strange, inflamed, flurried, flighty recklessness of activity” (5), the lawyer kept him in his office because Turkey was quick and steadfast to “accomplish a great deal of work in a style not easy to be matched” (5), he wrote a neat, swift hand (7), and “always dressed in a gentlemanly sort of way; and so, incidentally, reflected credit upon my chambers” (7). These specify that the lawyer, owner of the private law office, values Turkey’s skills and talents to increase profit through his law chamber’s business, but not him as the scrivener. Moreover, the lawyer never worried about the eccentricities of Turkey and Nipper; instead, he feels fortunate owing to Nipper’s “peculiar cause—indigestion—the irritability and consequent nervousness” because Nipper was mainly observable as the proxy of Turkey’s for half of the day (8). All these lawyer statements toward his scriveners stipulate the capitalistic attitude of gaining profit and valuing workers’ labor. In the Marxist aspect of alienation from the self, the noticeable thing is that except for Bartleby, other scriveners in *Bartleby* accept the cruel reality of capitalism and obey the lawyer as wage slaves or turn into self-alienated beings under the commodity fetishism of capitalism.

From the Marxist view of alienation, it can be said that Melville created the characters in *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* in such a way that they represent both owners and workers in the capitalist society, workers’ psychosomatic conditions, and the four types of alienation discussed above. The experience of alienation in the capitalist society affected Bartleby and Ahab so badly that Ahab rebelled directly, and Bartleby passively rebelled against capitalism, performing their daily activities like machines, not humans.

### **The Effect of Alienation is Bartleby’s and Ahab’s Rebellion Against Capitalism**

Bartleby and Ahab represent the alienated workers of Melville’s era who reject turning into objects in the political-economic mode of production

by accepting their tragic deaths. It is understandable when we accept the characters Bartleby and Ahab as symbolic characters, as fifty years ago, Michael Paul Rogin saw Melville's *Bartleby* and *Moby-Dick* as parables and metaphors that talk about the workers (111, 112, 198). Aligned with Rogin, I want to discuss the symbolic characters Bartleby and Ahab, who represent the alienated workers protesting until their deaths against the mode of political-economic production of capitalism.

Both Bartleby passively and Ahab directly rebelled against capitalism. For example, Bartleby rebelled against the lawyer passively until his death, repeatedly saying, "I would prefer not to do" (*Bartleby* 10). This repeated statement by Bartleby seems very eccentric, but from the aspect of Marxist alienation, it is Bartleby's passive rebellion against how the owner exploits the scrivener. Regarding this act of Bartleby, from the Marxist view, Barnett says, "All three of the scriveners employed in the lawyer-narrator's office illustrate the aspect of alienation that Marx delineates, but only Bartleby comes to understand the situation and reject it" (379). This means Bartleby, as a worker, realizes the lawyer's capitalistic attitude to gain profit, exploiting the workers, his fellow scriveners' psychosomatic reality as the effect of alienation, and his own alienation in the political-economic mode of production in capitalism. Therefore, like other scriveners, he does not accept becoming alienated from his product, labor, and others, turning into an object like his fellow scriveners. Instead, he accepts death as passive hostility and rebellion against the demanding condition of capitalism that not only turns workers into objects but also produces the death of the workers.

Like Bartleby, Ahab is also a worker who expresses his monomaniacal vengeance against Moby Dick. Critics might argue that Ahab is the Captain of the *Pequod*, and he is not a worker like Bartleby or Ishmael. Then, how can he rebel against capitalism like Bartleby? However, to understand and accept Ahab as a worker, I want to draw readers' attention to what Mark Edelman Boren says about Ahab. Boren invites readers to understand Ahab's monomaniacal vengeance that eats Ahab in two ways: through text and the description of Ahab by the narrator, because sometimes in the text, like the narrator, Ahab also narrates about himself. For example, Ahab talks about himself and his forty years of bitter proletarian experiences to Sartbuck in the chapter "The Symphony." Therefore, in his discussion, Boren suggests that to understand crazy Ahab and his monomaniacal vengeance in *Moby-Dick*, readers should see Ahab through his entire textual existence in the novel, not only through the eyes of Ishmael but also through the text and Ahab's context in the text and his words that show "'Ahab is Ahab.' That means Ahab is not Ishmael" (2). Based on Boren's suggestion, when we analyze the text *Moby-*

*Dick*, we see the text portrays Ahab's two natures: "Captain Ahab" throughout the novel and "Proletarian Ahab" only briefly in the chapter "The Symphony," in which Ahab regrets because of his forty years of proletarian life.

Scholars focused on "Captain Ahab" throughout the text, in which Ahab controls the *Pequod* and all upon it as a captain. Therefore, they missed seeing Ahab as a worker and analyzing Captain Ahab's regression of forty years of proletarian life. To me, Captain Ahab's monomaniacal attitude is not only the cause that Moby Dick chew up his leg but also effect of his alienation caused by his forty years bitter experience of proletarian life. In other words, it can be said that Captain Ahab, from his previous proletarian experiences, is furious with Moby Dick, who chewed his leg up and represents the capitalist. Now, let us focus on how the text presents Ahab's rebellion against Moby Dick and capitalism.

In contrast to *Bartleby*, Ahab directly expresses his rebellious mind against capitalism. For example, in the chapter "The Quarter-Deck," Captain Ahab expresses his rebellious mind against capitalism when, after knowing Ahab's monomaniacal vengeance against Moby Dick and manipulating the crews to join his obsession to chase Moby Dick as a game, Starbuck protests to Captain Ahab. Starbuck protests, saying, "Captain Ahab, . . . 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" (132). Here, Starbuck, the first mate, clearly tells Ahab that he came to hunt the whales, not to kill Moby Dick according to his commander's will. Moreover, he asks Ahab to realize what is the benefit or value of killing one white whale in the Nantucket Market after burning many barrels of oil if they do not hunt whales?

However, in response to Starbuck, Ahab says, "Nantucket market! Hoot! But come closer, Starbuck; thou requirest a little lower layer. If money's to be the measurer, man, and the accountants have computed their great counting-house the globe, by girdling it with guineas, one to every three parts of an inch; then, let me tell thee, that my vengeance will fetch a great premium *here!*" (*Moby-Dick* 132). In this quote, Ahab expresses his rebellion against capitalism, saying, "Nantucket Market! Hoot!" Moreover, with his statement, "My vengeance will fetch a great premium *here!*" Ahab invites Starbuck to come down to his level to understand the reason for his monomaniacal vengeance against Moby Dick, and the valuable of it is more than hunting many whales to sell at the "Nantucket market." Furthermore, three times the use of exclamatory signs in this quotation expresses Ahab's rage against Moby Dick and the "Nantucket market," indicating the heavy

layers of his previous forty years of proletarian experiences in the heart of the whaling industry, where the capitalists treated and exploited him to hunt whales, particularly Moby Dick, that took his leg.

Moreover, in the chapter “Ahab and Starbuck in the Cabin,” Ahab directly expresses his rage against the owners. For example, when the *Pequod* is in the China Pacific, Starbuck informs Ahab about the ship’s oil leak and asks to stop the ship to fix the leak, warning Ahab, “What will the owners say, sir?” (*Moby-Dick* 347). In response to Starbuck’s question, Ahab says, “Let the owners stand on Nantucket beach and outyell the Typhoons. What cares Ahab? Owners, owners? Thou art always prating to me, Starbuck, about those miserly owners, as if the owners were my conscience. But look ye, the only real owner of anything is its commander; and hark ye, my conscience is in this ship’s keel.—On deck!” (347). Here, Ahab emphasizes again his monomaniacal vengeance against Moby Dick. He neither cares about the ship’s oil leak nor the owners. His only purpose is to chase Moby Dick and kill it. This quotation implies that Ahab does not like Starbuck’s capitalistic attitude and rebukes him when Starbuck does not see Ahab as the real owner of anything on the deck as the commander.

From the Marxist view, a close reading of *Moby-Dick* helps to see how Moby Dick is personified and represents the capitalists in Melville’s era. For example, in the chapter “Moby Dick,” like Bartleby and Ahab, Moby Dick is also a very complex and mysterious character because he is personified with “Murderous monster and ferocity, cunningness and malice” (144), “ubiquitous” (146), “immortal” (147). All these characteristics of Moby Dick represent the characteristics of a capitalist who possesses power like the Almighty in the capitalist society. In the Melville era, capitalists were so powerful to the workers that no one could destroy it. Ahab wants to destroy it, but Moby Dick consumes Ahab. Like Rogin, I, too, see that Melville metaphorically portrayed the characters of Ahab, who represent the workers, and Moby Dick, who dominate in the sea like the capitalists on land. However, the way Ahab, with his monomaniacal vengeance against Moby Dick directly, and Bartleby, with his eccentricity and passive hostility, rebel against the lawyer and produce their death, it can be said that they did it out of the effect of their alienation described in Marxist theory.

## Conclusion

I do not know whether Melville, as an avid reader in America, read Marx's original writings or his writings for the *New York Magazine* for ten years, since both were contemporary writers. Nevertheless, in his novel *Moby-Dick* and the novella *Bartleby*, Melville depicted the causes of workers' physical, mental, and spiritual suffering and struggle, and the alienation and tragic death of the workers as the *effect* of capitalists' workers exploitation in such a way that echoes the concepts of alienation in Marx's classic theoretical work in *1844 Manuscripts*. Therefore, from the Marxist view, it can be said that as a proletarian artist and sociologist, in his *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby*, Melville portrayed how the workers live poorly in psychosomatic conditions and face tragic death inhumanely in the poor socio-political-economic conditions and their social status in capitalist society, which turn workers from human beings into objects. Through the workers' characters—particularly Ahab and Bartleby—he also tried to draw his readers' attention to see workers not as wage slaves but as humans, like the capitalists. Moreover, as human beings, workers have freedom and free will. Therefore, they should be treated with human dignity when they follow their owner's commands or instructions to produce products.

Finally, it can be said that Melville will remain a classic American author for his proletarian writing skills in *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* and his subtle critique of American capitalism, which turns human beings into objects. Melville was such a proletarian author who empathized and sympathized with his fellow working-class people because he knew the cruel reality of capitalist society. Indeed, he wanted to bring about constructive changes in America through his writings. His contemporary critics failed to think this way. Moreover, Melville's literary creations *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* can surely open various new spaces of study—such as, alienation and false consciousness from the Marxist or Melville as a romantic proletarian author in the aspect of romanticism, if future scholars revisit Melville's *Moby-Dick* and *Bartleby* and evaluate them, looking at Ahab as “Proletariat Ahab besides Captain Ahab,” and think about how false consciousness functions in Ahab and Bartleby and how Melville portrayed the proletarian reality using the romantic tools.

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