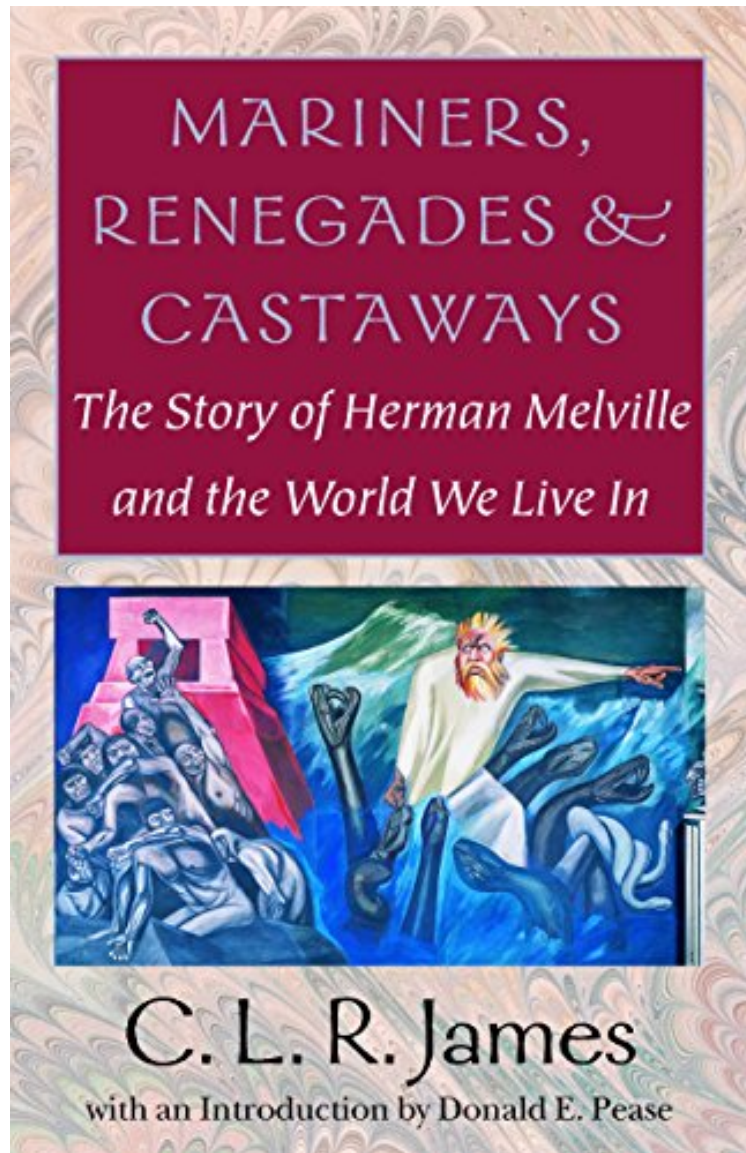


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## **Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In (Reencounters with Colonialism: New Perspectives on the Americas)**

*C. L. R. James*

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**C. L. R. James : Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In (Reencounters with Colonialism: New Perspectives on the Americas)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The Story of Herman*

## Melville and the World We Live In (Reencounters with Colonialism: New Perspectives on the Americas):

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Great book from a brilliant mind. By Customer CLR James was one of the earliest left wing thinkers to break from Orthodox Marxist dogmatism, even rejecting Leninism and the notion of the 'Vanguard of the Proletariat' all the way back in the late '40's, a move that left him alienated from the mainstream Left of the time and eventually led to his deportation in the 1950s. This book was written while he was in jail in New York awaiting his immigration hearing, a fact that makes this insightful look at Melville all the more impressive. James points out that Melville was a visionary who caught glimpses of new social types long before they became prevalent in society: he even makes the startling statement that Melville is the ONLY author of Industrial capitalism. Reading first this book, then going back and reading *Moby Dick*, I must say that I cannot argue with his assessment. I found this small volume challenging, engaging and at times, personally upsetting, as I read something of myself and many others like me in James' reading of Ishmael. Definite cause for pause and reflection. This book ends with a chapter describing in excruciating detail James' treatment while in jail, which I found at first quite self serving and gripey...but upon further reflection, his story is irritating because it is a banal and everyday litany of life under bureaucratic capitalism, not pretty or interesting, but it got under my skin, like the rest of this book. If you like Melville or are interested in anti-authoritarian left thinking, you could do no better than to pick this up: I couldn't put it down. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The upside and downside of critical zeal. By Lawrence Rosenwald There's something to be said for being a monomaniacal critic, which is what James is in this book - what's on his mind is totalitarianism and how to oppose it, and that lets him see things in *Moby-Dick* that I myself, scholar and professor that I am, hadn't seen. It also leads him to ignore things in the novel that are important, and to distort things; but the gain outweighs the loss. 0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars By Patti of Gaithersburg, MD gift. no knowledge of product effectiveness or quality

Political theorist and cultural critic, novelist and cricket enthusiast, C. L. R. James (1901 - 1989) was a brilliant polymath who has been described by Edward Said as "a centrally important 20th-century figure." Through such landmark works as *The Black Jacobins*, *Beyond a Boundary*, and *American Civilization*, James's thought continues to influence and inspire scholars in a wide variety of fields. "There is little doubt," wrote novelist Caryl Phillips in *The New Republic*, "that James will come to be regarded as the outstanding Caribbean mind of the twentieth century." In his seminal work of literary and cultural criticism, *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*, James anticipated many of the concerns and ideas that have shaped the contemporary fields of American and Postcolonial Studies, yet this widely influential book has been unavailable in its complete form since its original publication in 1953. A provocative study of *Moby Dick* in which James challenged the prevailing Americanist interpretation that opposed a "totalitarian" Ahab and a "democratic, American" Ishmael, he offered instead a vision of a factory-like Pequod whose "captain of industry" leads the "mariners, renegades and castaways" of its crew to their doom. In addition to demonstrating how such an interpretation supported the emerging US national security state, James also related the narrative of *Moby Dick*, and its resonance in American literary and political culture, to his own persecuted position at the height (or the depth) of the Truman/McCarthy era. It is precisely this personal, deeply original material that was excised from the only subsequent edition. With a new introduction by Donald E. Pease that places the work in its critical and cultural context, *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* is once again available in its complete form.

From *Library Journal* Literature is always open to interpretation, and Melville's *Moby-Dick* has long been a subject of study for its vast symbolism. Just when everyone thought it had been picked clean, along came James's 1953 study, which takes an economic approach to the novel. James suggests that the doomed ship Pequod, with its full whale-processing facilities, can serve as a symbol for the American factory system, with its workers being used perilously and brought to their untimely deaths by a mad captain of industry at the helm. Strictly for the academics. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. [An] amalgam of brilliant critical analysis and desperate personal pleading . . . The publication of *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* by the University Press of New England this summer the first time the book has been printed in complete form in nearly 50 years is simply the latest evidence of a major James revival now under way . . . [James] posthumous popularity makes sense. Just as he argued that Melville's novel is alive today as never before since it was written, James's work from more than 50 years ago neatly prefigured an impressive number of contemporary academic trends. *The New York Times*