

## SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION OF BILLY BUDD

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Herman Melville is (1819-1891) hailed as a brilliant American novelist. He has enriched the field of symbolic fiction which is poorer as compared to other American novelist. Billy Budd tells a symbolic tale build out of Melville's democratic meditations on the mutiny on the *Spithead* in 1797 and a family story of how Melville's elder brother presided over the court martial and the execution of an unsubordinated sailor.

Herman Melville's always focuses on the symbolic senses of major characters that which tells a deeper explicitly presented in the novel *Billy Budd* sailor. All the major characters from the novel represent certain kinds of realities – As a reality of humanity – there are two types of personality that one do something to make smile to somebody and other one feels jealous about it and try to take revenge on somebody else. By creating character such as Billy Budd who represents purity and innocence. Herman Melville interprets the natural of human psyche through the characters like Billy Budd, Claggart and Captain Vere. The impression of these three characters is above all the realities. It presents deeper meaning of the human psyche.

In symbolic terms this novel present contract between good and evil. We use the word 'contrast' and not the word 'conflict' of clash because a conflict and clash has to be a two sided affair which in this case the good is absolutely passive. John Claggart is jealous about Billy Budd and he always feel humiliated whenever he saw him on the ship in the company of other crew member so Claggart tries to underestimated him each and every moment that's why Claggart registrar fake charges against Billy Budd. These charges against him are pre planned.

**Symbolic significance of the major characters.**

In the novel Billy Budd the character Billy Budd and the Claggart are hero and the antihero. Both represents two extremes types of personality black and white or good and evil; and novel interpret the story of how these two personality act and interact. Inbetween these two personalities (Black & white) the third character is Captain Vere symbolically represent the grey colour a color which occupies in an intermediate position between black & white. Captain in the text represent goodness with strong admixture not of evil exactly but of an excessive were occupation with duty, a preoccupation is so excessive as to seem almost evil. Indeed Captain Vere's obsession with his official duty seems fanatical and even insane. In this way major character symbolically represents or embodies a particular aspect of human nature – wholly or almost wholly good. Wholly almost wholly evil and third one is a blend of nature.

**Color symbols**

Traditionally new critic relies on color symbols to analyses the events and persons as per the color and background of the events and the personalities that the nature already has it. In the novel Herman Melville focused on the color symbols to interpret the natural intentions of the various types of characters for representing deeper meaning. Traditionally colors aroused very powerfully to show or to change the mood of the characters.

In the text Billy Budd is symbolized as a white traditionally signifies as a pure innocence -clean and transparent personality as a reader confront with Billy Budd on each and every page of the text. In the whole text BILLY budd never think in ill manner or bad omen about anybody else.

As a white colour symbolizes plain and clear mindedness Billy is also plain and clear minded characters. Who creates healthy and co operative atmosphere around him, where ever he was on the Bellepotent .The master of the merchant ship regards Billy Budd as his best man can describe him as 'Jewel' of his crew.

The master of Merchantship tells Lieutenant Radcliffe that before he had acquired Billy Budd as a member of crew there used to be frequent quarrels on his ship amongst the sailors. Billy Budd's arrival on the board his Merchinship was like a Catholic priest appearing at a place where brawl was taking place.

"But Billy came; and it was like a Catholic priest striking peace  
in an Irish ship".

As Billy represent innocence in the novel the older high ranked John Claggart represent black, evil. John Claggarts innate weakness is causeless seemingly limitless, trationally black represent itself as a Satan, working timelessly to prevent goodness and defeat morality human trust. On the other ground Claggart represent the serpent traditionally it is symbols of evil, negativity and darkness. John Claggart was by nature evil minded man .The evil in him could be described as a natural deprivity.All it shows that it is natural instinct

of human nature -"to be an evil "that which is not nurtured by the black or evil intended personalities.

The third colour symbols is Captain Edward Fairfax Vere is symbolized as a mixture of both good and evil. Traditionally it is grey colour that interprets the character and personality of Captain Vere. He is an officemate character who never knows humanity in the legal code. It is the defeat of morality

Billy a symbol of Innocence; purity, goodness and simplicity

Billy Budd is a hero or protagonist of the novel. Who gives rise to a feeling of youthful happiness within the mind of reader because of its association with red bud? Billy Budd is a personification of simplicity, goodness and innocence. There is not the least touch of evil or wickedness in the character of Billy Budd; and he is even unaware of the fact that evil exists Billy Budd is blinded by his own openhearted nature.

Melville portrays Billy's unconvinced as something to be both to be admired and pitied. Billy's fate parades that of Jesus Christ. Suggesting that the sacrifice of Billy's convince reprints both a significant loss for the world and a hope for mankind's redemption.

#### **Claggart a symbol of Evil:-**

Claggart is personifies as a evil Melville has taken special; care in drawing the character of clag art and I psycho analysing claggart's mind. Clag art is evil by nature Evil is innate in him it is not an ordinary kind of evil. The evil in him becomes a mania with him Clag art develop a strong antipathy towards Billy but clag art kept this antagonism a secret on two worlds he gave every sign of liking Billy. He referred to Billy as the sweet and pleasant young fellow 'This only shows clag art's hypocrisy. He was always hostile to Billy when Billy had spilt the son clag art reference was

"Handsomely done my lad and means that clag art harbored feelings of hostility toward Billy."

#### **Captain Vere – a symbol of officialdom:-**

Captain Vere is symbolically bent of both types character which represents good and evil features. It means Captain Vere neither good nor evil, but in certain limits Captain Vere see could that Billy Budd was perfectly innocent of the charge which Claggart had brought against him. Besides Captain Vere had always through Claggart to be an evil kind of man and he has been punished how his evil mindness, but the Billy Budd angel of god has yet to receive his redemption. He is put on trial by a court martial. Through this events Captain Vere's character is fully revealed to us that's why we have said that Captain Vere represents the grey area between the white and the black symbolically Captain Vere is wise father terrible serve but righteous. Billy's last wish of when he is hanged are

“God bless, Captain Vere.!”

These words interprets that Captain Vere is not a villain .

Billy Budd: a Christ figure

Billy budd is a presented innocent and pure character that who is always ready to accept the reality of nature. And warmly welcomes them and teach all of followers how to be a happy and co-operative man in the life. The execution of Billy Budd is so describes as crucification of Christ even before the hanging of Billy Budd actually take place the imagery is highly symbolic it means it is martyrdom of Billy Budd for the sake of goodness, peace of all over the word.

The Symbolic representation of the novel is very much suggestive and mysteries that can hide many layers of personalities that which one can revel through the symbolical reading of the novel.

**Reference:-**

1. Billy Budd by Herman Melville.
2. Herman Melville by Tyrus Hallway.