

Q Character Analysis Billy Budd

Ans- Novelist, short story writer, and poet Herman Melville is best known for his novels of the sea, especially *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd*. Though his poetry is read less frequently, critics argue that it too is historically significant, thematically complex, and highly crafted.

Commenting at some length on the prototype of the Handsome Sailor, whose good looks, prowess, and masculine charm attract attention wherever he goes and win for him the admiration and homage of his less gifted associates, the narrator introduces Billy, foretopman in the British fleet. He, with his blue eyes and youthful figure, is the center of attention and is surrounded by many flat and stereotypical characters who go about their shipboard tasks like robots.

Billy's characterization is one of Melville's major accomplishments. A youth of outstanding beauty and sincere kindness, he exhibits ingenuous innocence reflecting his lack of awareness that evil exists. In fact, because of his innocent nature, Billy can be compared to Adam before God casts him from the Garden of Eden. His only blemish is a tendency to stutter when he is under emotional strain.

Wherever he goes, Billy is acknowledged as a peacemaker, yet he maintains his manhood by handy application of his fists when need be. For this reason, and for the role he plays in the novel, Billy resembles Christ, who also resorted to violence in driving the moneychangers from the Temple. Billy's obscure origin also accentuates his universality. His profession allies him with the journeyman. His illiteracy and penchant for song connects him with birds and the other simple creatures of nature, with whom he shares kinship. Tanned by the sun at his high post, Billy accepts the blessing of nature, to which he returns after his execution.