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Billy budd sailor

Billy Budd, Sailor (An Inside Narrative), also known as Billy Budd, Foretopman, is a novella by American writer Herman Melville, left unfinished at his death in 1891. Acclaimed by critics as a masterpiece when finally published in 1924, it quickly took its place as a classic second only to *Moby-Dick* among Melville's works. The story revolves around Billy Budd, a handsome sailor who strikes and kills his false accuser, Master-at-arms John Claggart. Despite lack of intent, Captain Edward Vere is forced to sentence Billy to be hanged.He presides over the court-martial as both prosecutor and defense counsel for Billy Budd, while also serving as sole witness in some matters. Vere intervenes in deliberations to persuade the panel to convict Billy despite their moral uncertainty about his guilt. The officers acknowledge that they did not initially believe Claggart's conspiracy charge against Billy but ultimately find themselves bound by martial law. As a result, Billy is found guilty and executed for his role in Claggart's death. Before his execution, Billy expresses gratitude towards Captain Vere, which resonates with the crew. The novel concludes with three chapters presenting ambiguity: Chapter 28 describes Vere's eventual demise during a naval battle; Chapter 29 presents an official gazette that portrays Billy as a conspirator; and Chapter 30 features a ballad composed by one of Billy's shipmates, revealing a more complex character than previously depicted.Melville initially introduced his three main characters - Billy, Claggart, and Vere - through separate stages of composition. The story began as a poem, "Billy in the Darbies," which was later expanded into a prose narrative that reached 150 manuscript pages. Each major expansion focused on one principal character, causing Melville to modify the plot and thematic emphasis. However, he never completed the revisions, leading critics to question his intentions.After Melville's death, his wife Elizabeth attempted to organize his literary materials, including notes and conjectures. Unfortunately, her editing was confusing, and professional editors mistakenly attributed some of her writing to Melville. The manuscript lay undisturbed for 28 years before being rediscovered by Raymond M. Weaver in 1918.Weaver published the first edition of Billy Budd in 1924 based on a hastily transcribed text. In 1928, he released another version with minor variations. F. Barron Freeman's 1948 edition was edited differently but still relied heavily on Weaver's original text. Later editions up to the early 1960s were essentially versions of these two basic texts.In 1962, Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Sealts Jr. conducted a thorough study, establishing what is now considered the authoritative version of Billy Budd.The publication history of Billy Budd, Sailor is marked by significant variations across different editions. Initially published by the University of Chicago Press, the book contains both a "reading" and a "genetic" text. Most subsequent editions followed the Hayford-Sealts text. Due to the confusing manuscripts, early versions displayed numerous discrepancies. For instance, some editions bore the title *Billy Budd, Foretopman*, whereas Melville's intended title was *Billy Budd, Sailor (An Inside Narrative)*. Moreover, certain versions included an excised preface chapter, while others did not conform to Melville's name change from *Indomitable* to *Bellipotent*.The book has undergone substantial critical reevaluations since its discovery. Initially, Raymond Weaver, the first editor, described it as "not distinguished". However, following positive reviews from prominent critics like D. H. Lawrence and John Middleton Murry, Weaver changed his stance. In the introduction to the second edition, he stated: "In Pierre, Melville had hurled himself into a fury of vituperation against the world; with Billy Budd he would justify the ways of God to man." Thomas Mann, a German novelist, praised Billy Budd as "one of the most beautiful stories in the world" and wished he had written the scene of Billy's dying.By 1926, Billy Budd had achieved joint billing alongside *Moby-Dick* as one of the great books of Western literature. The book has maintained this high status ever since. In 1990, Melville biographer Hershel Parker pointed out that early estimations were based on flawed transcription texts by Weaver. Some flaws, such as the famous "coda" at the end of the chapter containing news about John Claggart and William Budd's deaths, are crucial to understanding Melville's intent.Developing Captain Vere, Melville eliminated the endnote, as it no longer applied to the expanded story. Early readers, like Murry and Freeman, saw this passage as a philosophical statement on life. Parker questions what they could have understood from the passage in its original form.[6] There are three main conceptions of Billy Budd's meaning: the first holds that it is Melville's "Testament of acceptance," his final benediction; the second view sees Billy Budd as ironic, with a real import opposite to its surface meaning. A third interpretation suggests that the work has no abstractable meaning and cannot be used to infer an author's character or opinion. All three views are true in their own sense. R. H. Fogle[1] Parker agrees that "masterpiece" is a fitting description, but with a caveat. After examining Billy Budd's history and reputation, he believes the book deserves high stature, although not precisely the stature it holds, and that it's wondrously teachableas long as it's not taught as a finished, complete work.[6] Given its unfinished quality and Melville's reluctance to present clear lessons, the range of critical response is unsurprising.Melville's novella "Billy Budd" is often seen as a portrayal of homophobia, set against the backdrop of the law. The story explores the tension between the requirements of the law and the needs of humanity, making it an iconic text in the field of law and literature. Earlier readers viewed Captain Vere as a good man trapped by bad law, while Richard Weisberg argued that Vere's actions were wrong and that he deliberately distorted the applicable laws to bring about Billy's death. Judge Richard Posner has criticized these claims, arguing that literary significance should not be ascribed to legal errors that are not part of the imagined world of Melville's fiction. The hanging of Budd is also seen as a commentary on capital punishment, with some suggesting that it may have been inspired by events on board USS Somers. Additionally, Claggart's character has been analyzed as potentially sociopathic or psychopathic, and Vere's motives have been subject to scholarly inquiry regarding the legal necessity of Billy's condemnation.Herman Melville's novel has been subject to various criticisms, including the use of external information, but Weisberg argues that the laws described in the book allowed for sufficient liberties to avoid a capital sentence. The character of Billy Budd has been an inspiration for other authors, such as Darryl Ponicsan, who wrote the novel "The Last Detail" featuring a protagonist named Billy Buddusky, a homage to Melville's character. This novel was later adapted into a film in 1973. In addition, the story of Billy Budd has been adapted into several stage productions, including a 1951 Broadway production and an opera by Benjamin Britten. The opera, which premiered in 1951, follows the earlier text of the novel and has undergone revisions over the years. Other adaptations include a film directed by Peter Ustinov in 1962 and a song by Morrissey on his album "Vauxhall and I". The story has also been interpreted in different ways, such as in Claire Denis' film "Beau Travail", which is loosely based on the novel. Various audio dramas and audiobooks have also been produced, including a 2002 adaptation by Focus on the Family and a 2018 audiobook narrated by Liam Gerrard. The novel's themes and characters continue to be relevant today, with "Beau Travail" being ranked seventh in the 2022 Sight and Sound decennial poll of film critics and directors.Some Personal Letters of Herman Melville and a Bibliography, edited by Meade Minnigerode, were published in New York by Edmond Byrne Hackett. ^ Vincent, Howard P. (1971). Twentieth Century Interpretations of Billy Budd was also published in New Jersey by Prentice-Hall. ^ Melville, Herman (1962). Harrison Hayford & Merton Sealts, Jr. edited Billy Budd, Sailor: An Inside Narrative which is available at the University of Chicago Press. pp. 3. ISBN 0226321312. LCCN 62-17135.Billy Budd and its Operatic Adaptation Details

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