

Tribhuvan University

An Eye-less Genesis: Reading Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor*

A Thesis Submitted to
The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Narayan Prasad Adhikari has completed his thesis entitled “**An Eye-less Genesis: Reading Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd, Sailor***” under my supervision. He carried out his research from March 2008 A. D. to October 2008 A. D. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

.....
Deepak Giri

Supervisor

Date:.....

Abstract

This research on Herman Melville's seafaring narrative, *Billy Budd, Sailor* consists of theoretical generalizations on its origin or empirical correlations of a multitude of attitudinal and theoretical variables on human sexuality, homosocial 'euphoria' in particular. The present study relates homosocial practice in *Billy Budd, Sailor* to the rejection of powerful sex-normalised social institutions. It does so by theorization and application of the concept of homosociality in the text, which refers to social preference for crew members of one's own gender; specifically between Captain Vere and Billy Budd, but does not necessarily imply erotic attraction. This concept is tested for its relationship with homosocial utopia in the research. Traditional explanations of homophobia (which center around religious and sex-role conservatism) are similarly explored and dissected to support proposed hypothesis that the zone of romantic male friendship is destroyed and the hopes of homosocial utopia are pitilessly crushed because of the society that regards homosexuality as exceptional and unnatural.

Contents

Page No.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Contents

I. Introduction

Dangerous Crossings: Herman Melville's Voyage to the Invisible 1-9

II. Theoretical Modality

Homosociality 10-13

The Queers 13-16

Human Sexuality 16-26

III. Eveless Genesis: Homosociality and Queer Desire in

Billy Budd, Sailor 27-48

IV. Conclusion 49-50

Works Cited