

Tribhuvan University

The Tragedy of Justice in Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, the Sailor*

A Thesis Proposal Submitted to the Central Department of English, Faculty of
Humanities and Social Sciences for the Partial Requirements of
Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

Ramesh Dahal

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

August 2014

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
Central Department of English
Kirtipur
Letter of Recommendation

This thesis entitled “The Tragedy of Justice in Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd, the Sailor*” by Ramesh Dahal has been completed under my supervision. He carried out his research from June 2013 to August 02, 2014. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted to the Research Committee for further examination.

.....

Raj Kumar Baral
Central Department of English
Date:

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
Central Department of English
Kirtipur

Letter of Approval

This thesis titled “The Tragedy of Justice in Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd, the Sailor*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Ramesh Dahal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Acknowledgments

First of all, my sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor Raj Kumar Baral, lecturer, Central Department of English, TU for his encouragement and scholarly guidance.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Amma Raj Joshi, Head, CDE, for his scholarly guidance. Besides, all the teachers of the Central Department of English also deserve my sincere gratitude.

Similarly, Dr. Bholanath Pokhrel and Mr. Balajit Rai from Summit Higher Secondary School, Dharan deserve my thankfulness for providing me with an opportunity to conduct this research.

I also owe the highest level of thankfulness to my late father and mother for their endeavor and inspiration in every step of my life. I also would like to take this opportunity to express my love and respect to wife Sushila Neupane, children Abhilasha and Adhishree, brother Durga Prasad and sister-in-law Sarala for being my inspiration and motivation.

My sincere thanks go to my friends and colleagues for their inspiration and encouragement to complete the thesis.

August 2014

Ramesh Dahal

Abstract

This study makes an attempt to explore the idea of justice from a critical point of view, in consideration to Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, the Sailor*. The idea of justice is as old as the human civilization; however, the notion of fairness and equality associated with it are often in controversy. It is often found that justice becomes arbitrary in the hand of those who hold power. In *Billy Budd*, we find that Captain Vere is the commander-in-chief of a British ship in the Pacific Ocean. During one of the events occurring in the ship, a foretop man by the name Billy Budd knocks one of his seniors to death as an outcome of a momentary dispute. Now, in the eye of law, this event is purely accidental; however, Captain Vere goes on to punish Budd with death penalty. The idea of justice imposed by the authority like Captain Vere is both amusing and disturbing; as it is no correct way of imposing justice, even though it is in the name of law and order provided by the law of the land. The idea that justice is fairness and equality is thus, under serious scrutiny and critical observation.

Contents

Letter of Approval	i
Acknowledgments	ii
Abstract	iii
I. Contextualizing Justice in <i>Billy Budd, the Sailor</i>	1-15
II. The Tragedy of Justice in <i>Billy Budd, the Sailor</i>	16-30
III. Fall of Justice in <i>Billy Budd, the Sailor</i>	31-32
Works Cited	

