INTRODUCTION

Depuis la session de juin 1995, le baccalauréat en série littéraire comporte une épreuve orale de spécialité dite "langue de complément LV1".

I. ŒUVRES AU PROGRAMME

La liste des œuvres étant en partie renouvelée tous les deux ans, le programme de lecture retenu pour les sessions 2009 et 2010 est le suivant :

- **Anciennes œuvres** (de juin 2007 à juin 2010)

Auster P., *The Brooklyn Follies*
Gaines E.J., *A Lesson Before Dying*
Johnston J., *How Many Miles to Babylon?*
Keats J., *Selected Poems* (édition Aubier)
Pinter H., *The Caretaker*

- **Nouvelles œuvres** (de juin 2009 à juin 2012)

Cather W., *My Antonia*
Lessing D., *The Fifth Child*
Martel Y., *Life of Pi*
Melville H., *Billy Budd*
Naidoo B., *The Other Side of Truth*
Shakespeare W., *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
Woolf V., *A Haunted House and Other Short Stories*

II. MODALITÉS DE L'ÉPREUVE

Les modalités de la première partie de l'épreuve sont précisées comme suit dans le *Bulletin Officiel* n° 18 du 1er mai 2008 :

"Il est rappelé que la première partie de l'épreuve comprend le compte rendu, par le candidat, d'un des passages les plus significatifs de l'œuvre complète étudiée et un

échange, entre l'examinateur et le candidat, portant sur l'ensemble de cette œuvre. Pour cela, le candidat présente une liste d'extraits représentant un volume global d'environ vingt pages.

La seconde partie de l'épreuve est un entretien prenant appui sur un document non étudié en classe.

Pour l'anglais, langue de complément LV2 en série littéraire, LV1 ou LV2 en série économique et sociale, les professeurs sont libres d'utiliser ou non le programme de lecture prévu ici.

Lorsque les professeurs ont procédé à l'étude d'une œuvre complète en classe, l'épreuve est identique à celle de la langue de complément LV1 en série littéraire. Dans le cas contraire, la première partie de l'épreuve, compte rendu et échange avec l'examinateur, porte sur un des textes étudiés en classe ; la seconde partie demeure un entretien prenant appui sur un document non étudié en classe."

Pour le ministre de l'éducation nationale et par délégation

Le directeur général de l'enseignement scolaire Jean-Louis NEMBRINI

III. LE PRÉSENT OUVRAGE

Herman Melville, *Billy Budd*, Penguin Classics (the 1986 edition).

L'objectif principal de cet ouvrage est de permettre à l'élève d'acquérir une bonne connaissance de l'œuvre en l'étudiant efficacement selon une méthode d'approche en trois parties.

➔ *La première partie* traite de l'arrière-plan général : la biographie de l'auteur, la publication et la genèse du roman, le genre, les sources (littéraires, historiques, bibliques, mythes et légendes), le contexte nautique (terminologie et hiérarchie).

➔ *La deuxième partie* concerne l'étude des aspects fondamentaux du roman : résumé de l'histoire, structure et contenu des chapitres, principaux personnages, thèmes, langue et style.

Chacune de ces deux parties est étayée par des "**Main points"** qui mettent en lumière les éléments à souligner.

La deuxième partie comporte par ailleurs des "**test sheets"** permettant à l'élève d'aboutir à un **travail personnel de synthèse** sur des points essentiels : structure narrative, peinture des personnages, intégration des thèmes dans le récit, éléments linguistiques.

➔ *La troisième partie* comporte des "**worksheets**" qui font l'objet d'un travail précis et ponctuel sur quelques chapitres ou extraits importants.

Une présentation de **l'épreuve orale** suivie d'un **lexique spécifique**, permet à l'élève d'enrichir davantage le lexique de l'analyse et de la critique littéraires.

THE GENERAL BACKGROUND

I. HERMAN MELVILLE'S BIOGRAPHY

Read the author's biography while memorizing as much information as you can.

- **Family background**

Herman Melville, the third of Allan and Maria Gansevoort Melvill's eight children, was born on **August 19, 1819** into a wealthy New York family.

When he was 7, his father, a merchant of Scottish origin, labelled him (*le catalogua*) as "backward in speech and somewhat slow in comprehension... (but) of docile and amiable disposition."

In **1830**, the family's import business failed (*échoua*), and soon after, in **1832**, Allan Melvill died. Herman's eldest brother, Gansevoort, took over his father's business before the family moved to Albany (East New York state). Melville's education was shortened by constant quarrels with his mother, but he spent most of his time reading books from his father's library.

In the mid 1830s, he joined his brother in the business after working as a bank messenger, then as a farmhand, and much later, as a country schoolteacher in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

- **Seafaring**

Finally in the summer of **1839**, in the aftermath (*le contrecoup*) of the Great Depression, his brother went bankrupt, and Melville signed on the *St. Lawrence***,** a British merchant ship bound for (*à destination de*) Liverpool. Back in his native country, Melville helped out his family by taking several teaching positions in rural Massachusetts, then ventured inland to Illinois while stockpiling material he would use in his writings. Meanwhile, he studied engineering in hopes of qualifying for a position on the Eire Canal. In January **1841**, he returned east and signed on the whaler *Acushnet* on a voyage to the South Seas. In June **1842**, the ship anchored in the Marquesas Islands. Melville jumped ship with Richard Tobias Greene whom he immortalized as Toby in his first novel, *Typee*. The book is based on Melville's stay among the

cannibalistic Typee natives (*indigènes*) away from the hustle and bustle (*agitation*) of "civilization". Later, he signed on an Australian whaler, the *Lucy Ann*, which he left at Tahiti where he had joined a mutiny led by dissatisfied shipmates; then he boarded his last whaler, the *Charles and Henry* to Hawaii, where he spent time watching surfers until he was assigned to the frigate *United States*, which in October **1844** took him back to Boston. Melville was discharged from the Navy, but kept vivid memory of this naval experience to the point that he dedicated *Billy Budd* to Jack Chase, who had been Captain of the Maintop in the *US* frigate in 1843.

• **A novelist's career**

Melville rejoined his family whose fortunes had much improved, and started on his career as a writer. In **1846** he published *Typee*, an imaginative narrative about his everyday life among the Typee natives, which also featured (*mettait en vedette*) an exotic beauty, Fayaway. In the meantime, his brother Gansevoort died in London.; therefore Melville committed himself to writing to support his family, later adding the responsibility of married life when **Elizabeth Shaw**, daughter of the Chief Justice of Massachusetts, agreed to become his wife. In **1847** he published his second novel *Omoo*, a sequel to *Typee*. Melville also resumed (*reprit*) work on *Mardi* (**1849**), an allegorical novel which begins as another Polynesian adventure but soon sets its hero on a symbolic quest that ends up in disaster. After its disappointing publication, Melville dashed off (*fit en vitesse*) two more books: *Redburn* (**1849**) made up of material from his first voyage to Liverpool; and *White Jacket* (**1850**) born of his naval service aboard the *United States*. For months after returning home from London where he arranged the British publication of the book in February **1850**, he worked steadily on his next novel entitled *The Whale*, later published as *Moby Dick* (**1851**). Meanwhile, he befriended (*se lia d'amitié avec*) **Nathaniel Hawthorne**, his nextdoor neighbour on a farm in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, to whom he dedicated *Moby Dick* which brought its author neither acclaim nor reward (*récompense*). Then he set himself to writing *Pierre, or the Ambiguities* (**1852**), a confused and melodramatic novel which attacked conventional morality and publishing practices. Rather dejected and unwell, Melville wrote his long-planned historical novel, *Israel Potter* (**1855**), then *Piazza Tales* (**1856**), a collection of short stories which included:*"Bartleby"* (**1853**), *"The Encantadas"* (**1854**), *"Benito Sereno"* (**1855**), which reflected the author's contempt for human hypocrisy and materialism. After travelling to Europe and the Holy Land to renew his spirits, Melville published his last novel *The Confidence Man* (**1857**), a satiric tale about an America corrupted by the shabby (*mesquins*) dreams of commerce.

• **"Low tide"** (*marée basse*)

Three American lecture tours were followed by his last voyage around Cape Horn in **1860**, when he joined his brother Thomas, captain of the clipper *Meteor*; but he gave up the trip in San Francisco. From **the late 1850s** onwards he took to writing verse, and then published several volumes of poetry, including: *Battle Pieces and Aspects of the War* (**1866**) for which Melville had followed stories of the Civil War (1861-1865) in the newspapers before visiting one battlefield to get a firsthand look. Later, he found work as a customs inspector on the New York docks; a post he secured for 19 years. In **1867** his first-born son Malcolm "accidently" shot himself. His second son, Stanwix, who had gone to sea in **1869**, died in San Francisco in **1886** after a long illness. However, **1876** marked the publication of the last great work that appeared in his lifetime:*Clarel: a Poem and a Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*. His second collection of verse, *John Marr and Other Sailors* was published in **1888**. In **the late 1880s**, he devoted his leisure time to "certain matters as yet incomplete", among which,*Timoleon* (**1891**), a final verse collection; and then returned to prose with his final masterpiece, *Billy Budd, Sailor*, which began as a headnote to a poem. Though the manuscript ends with the date **April 19, 1891**—five months before Melville's death on **September 29, 1891**—, three decades would pass before it was printed in **1924**.

Main points

1. Why can Melville be said to be self-taught (*autodidacte*)? Why is this important?
2. What did he derive from his numerous travels?
3. Which of Melville's ideas appear in some of his works?
4. To what extent (*dans quelle mesure*) are some of his books autobiographical?
5. What could one guess about the conditions in which *Billy Budd* was published?

II. AROUND *BILLY BUDD*

1. The publication of the book

In the spring of 1891, Melville wrote on the manuscript of *Billy Budd* that he started the "book" on Friday 16 November, 1888; and then: "End of Book/April 19th 1891" inscribed below the ballad; which may have meant that the ballad was actually

(*en fait*) to conclude the book, instead of the news account (that now constitutes chapter 29) that had once stood at the end. Therefore, one could think that Melville may have not quite "finished" his work. As a matter of fact, he soon took a pencil to "revise" and clean up his writing, which remained "unfinished" on account of his death five months later.

At first, it must be pointed out that the additions and omissions made by his wife some time after his death, may have made Melville's composition even more complex, unreadable and problematic for all editors of the manuscript.

The first to produce a copy for mass production was **Raymond Weaver**, in **1924.** He had been entrusted with Melville's manuscript by the writer's granddaughter, Eleanor Melville Metcalf. However, Weaver took the liberty of making changes in some portions of the text so as to clarify its incomplete sentences, unreadable words or "marginalia" (*notes en marge*). The edited text was first published in London, in 1924; then in New York in 1928.

In the 1950s, later editors such as **F. Barron Freeman** and **Elizabeth Treeman** took up the manuscript in order to "correct" Weaver's misreadings; but they made the same mistakes as their predecessor, besides inserting chapters where they thought those "might" fit.

In **1962**, **Harrison Hayford** and **Merton M. Sealts, Jr.** undertook a close study of Melville's manuscripts stored (*stockés*) at Harvard's Houghton Library, and produced both a **"Reading Text"** complete with notes, which now stands as the official version of Melville's work; as well as a **"Genetic Text"** that reflects all markings and corrections made by the writer and his wife.

2. The making of the novel

As a matter of fact, in **January 1886**, Melville himself had decided to tackle (*s'attaquer à*) unfinished works that were in his study (*bureau*), mostly poems among which was the first version of a ballad entitled ***"Billy in the Darbies"*** (*"Billy aux Fers"*), with a short prose headnote pointing to the soliloquy of a convicted (*reconnu coupable*) sailor "who was to be hanged for **plotting a mutiny**". The story originated from a real event, **the Somers affair** (mentioned in the novel in chapter X).

The main facts were as follows: In **1842**, at the time when Melville's own cousin, Guert Gansevoort, worked as a petty officer (*sous officier*) on a brig-of-war (*brick de*

guerre), the *Somers*, three men—an officer, a petty officer and a sailor—, tried to plot a mutiny and were subsequently sentenced (*condamnés*) to be hanged at sea on the decision of a drumhead court (*cour martiale*).

According to H. Hayford and M. M. Stealts, Melville first wrote the ballad, then reconsidered the character of Billy, young and innocent, against the backdrop of 18th century British Navy's concern with mutiny as a threat (*menace*) to fleetwide (*à l'échelle de la flotte tout entière*) order. To that effect, Melville referred to **the 1797 mutinies** which took place at **Spithead** and at **the Nore**, at the same time borrowing details from the *Somers* events.

Initially, Melville rewrote and expanded the prose headnote preceding the ballad to the length of a short tale entitled *"Baby Budd, sailor"*, which he later revised and also expanded.

As a consequence, the text was written in several stages, each corresponding to the introduction of one character in the story. The most significant addition he made involved John Claggart, who emerged as a major character, apparently preceding that of Vere, who is supposed to have been created by the writer to suit the story of Billy Budd as it was developing. To some extent, Vere seems to have grown out of Claggart. It is interesting to point out that both share outstanding characteristics, among which their level of education.

In **the autumn of 1888**, Melville gave his novel its final touch. Here are some of its main features (*traits*), most of which make up today's version of the writer's work:

- more historical details;
- numerous biblical and mythical allusions;
- the dramatic rendering of a few episodes;
- probings (*investigations*) into Claggart's and Captain Vere's backgrounds and souls;
- the introduction of a drumhead court at sea;
- Billy's execution and its aftermath (*contrecoup*);
- the initial ballad in way of an epilogue to the novel in the last chapter.

NB: In Melville's manuscript, Captain Vere's man-of-war (ship) is called the *Indomitable* as well as the *Bellipotent* (could it have been a play-on-words: *Billy-potent*?).

3. *Billy Budd* as a "genre"

Melville's late masterpiece, *Billy Budd* is liable (*sujet à*) to **many levels of interpretation** as to how it emerged from the writer's numerous revisions, additions and allusions to a variety of sources (from mythology to history or politics) including his own life and experience. Here are a few angles from which the text could be interpreted, although none of them–given **their limitations**–, could really help to label the book "a classic work of American literature".

a. An autobiography

Some critics have argued that *Billy Budd* stands for Melville's "testament of acceptance" of the ways of God to mankind; others have asserted that it constitutes his "testament of resistance" against tyranny and injustice, whether in early societies or in the Universe. These two different viewpoints show that *Billy Budd* is problematic as to what it really represents.

Therefore could it be regarded as Melville's personal "Apologia"? After all, in the character of Billy Budd he partly seems to present the dominant tendencies of his young manhood: for example, recalling his own horror of flogging (*flagellation*) and his efforts to avoid reprimand, he created Billy much in his own image, while in Captain Vere he reveals in essence the later Melville.

Besides, the novel is dedicated to **Jack Chase** whom he had known, and who had served as "Captain of the Maintop" (*Chef de la grand-hune!*) i.e. foretopman (*gabier de misaine*) during the writer's hitch (*séjour*) aboard the frigate *United States* in 1843.

The story opens on the docks of Liverpool (England) where Melville had been taken on his first voyage aboard the *St. Lawrence*. It is obvious (*évident*) that as a first-person narrator, he draws extensively upon the experience of his adventurous years for a knowledge of nautical terms and procedures at sea; as well as upon his extensive reading for the various allusions to be found in the novel.

However, does the subtitle, **"An inside narrative"** –though unobtrusively (*discrètement*) in brackets– allude to some psychological or even psychic probings (*investigations*) relating to characterization? Or is it akin to (*apparenté à*) the first-person narrator's own frame of mind underlying (*sous-jacent*) the so-called "real story" that he is relating? "That is the question" as Hamlet would have put it.

b. A realistic novel

Melville kept thinking about his own life and writing while "creating" Billy. The latter (*ce dernier*) is by no means presented as a romantic hero. At the outset (*dès le début*) of his novel, Melville made it clear that he was writing no "romance" (meaning that his story bore none of the fantastic or supernatural elements of novelistic romance). His interest was in "truth uncompromisingly (*sans concessions*) told". Therefore the story is based on **real facts** inspired from the *Somers* affair which had taken place years before when Melville was in the South Seas.

In chapter 28, Melville insinuates that he is writing about what is real and true: *The symmetry* (l'harmonie) *of form available in pure fiction cannot so readily* (aisément) *be achieved* (obtenue) *in a narration essentially having less to do with fable than with fact"*. He goes on saying that "*How it fared* (ce qu'il advint) *with the Handsome Sailor during the year of the Great Mutiny has been faithfully given*". But he owns to the fact that "*Truth... will always have its ragged edges* (bords irréguliers)". In the last three chapters, "*in way of sequel* (suite) to Billy's story, he reports facts that are seemingly "true": the engagement between the French line-of-battle ship, the *Atheist*, and Captain Vere's *Bellipotent* near Gibraltar (although Vere is everything short of Admiral Nelson!); the distorted account (*compte -rendu*) of the Billy-vs-Claggart affair in the "News from the Mediterranean" (chapter 29); the lines "*rudely* (grossièrement) *printed at Portsmouth"* (chapter 30).

However, in chapter 28, Melville himself warns the reader that "*the conclusion of such a narration is apt to be less finished than an architectural finial* (faîteau)". Therefore, one question arises: Isn't the reader entitled to (*habilité à*) doubt any truth or at least **verisimiltude** (*vraisemblance*) in the "three brief chapters" that Melville added "in way of sequel"? After all, before launching into the "sequel" chapters, the narrator says that "the story ends with (Billy's) life"!

c. A political fable

It might be interesting to consider the political background of the time when Melville was writing (or revising) *Billy Budd*. As a matter of fact, he seems to have had a rather conservative standpoint (*point de vue*) as he shared the fear of some of his fellow citizens (*compatriotes*) that "the people", i.e. the urban masses, might be influenced by the Paris Commune, started in 1871), and follow suit (*en faire autant*).

It is quite obvious that Captain Vere's "obsession", as it were, is the fear of an uprising (*soulèvement*) among the sailors that might not be far short of the Spithead and Nore mutinies. Indeed, Vere's main concern in condemning Billy is to rule out any kind of misconduct, and to get "the people" on the ship, and mostly potential ringleaders (*meneurs*), to comply with (*se conformer à*) his own leadership, and behave according to the code as exemplified in the Articles of War. The commander-in-chief applies the King's Law, irrespective of any extenuating circumstances.

Hence (*d'où*) these two questions: Is Billy a modern Antigone, sacrificed on the altar of 'the reason of State'? or: Does Captain Vere's decision to condemn Billy arise from 'a misuse of power' (*abus de pouvoir*)? The answers are to be found once again in the late 1890s political debate in the United States about capital punishment (*la peine de mort*). It turned out (*il s'est avéré*) that there were no 'goodies' or 'baddies', but it all was a question of a lawful 'code of conduct' regulated by rules.

For Melville, the issue is: 'Who is pulling the ropes?' (*Qui tire les ficelles ?*)

In fact, *Billy Budd* is not so much a political 'pamphlet' as the fable of the rebellion of the 'innocent' (even 'simple-minded') against the violence of 'the intellectuals', those who have the monopoly of thought and communication; somehow like 'at school', where everyone should learn his lesson and keep to his place. Both Claggart and Captain Vere are well-read and articulate (*s'expriment bien*) while Billy is helplessly hampered (*gêné*) by a vocal flaw. The only way for him to answer Claggart's impudent accusation is to symbolically hit his accuser on the forehead, 'so shapely and intellectual-looking a feature in the master-at-arms'!

Finally, although Melville implicitly criticizes the laws and institutions rigidly championed (*défendues*) by Captain Vere, it is obvious that the latter is shown, on the whole, as a likeable 'dreamer'; and life on board the *Bellipotent* is not so unbearable for Billy and the other sailors in spite of naval discipline.

d. A "Greek tragedy"

In classical and Renaissance drama, tragedy is defined as a play in which the main protagonist, usually a man of importance and outstanding personal qualities, falls to disaster through the combination of a personal failing (*défaut*) and circumstances with which he cannot deal.

As a matter of fact, *Billy Budd* seems to square with (*cadrer avec*) this definition of tragedy.

Although **the hero**, Billy, is a foundling, "*noble descent (is) as evident in him as in a blood horse*" (chapter 2). In addition, he is good-natured, righteous and brave. but he suffers from **a fatal flaw** (*défaut*): a stress-induced stutter (*bégaiement*), or even speechlessness (*mutisme*) that will lead him to disaster. When Claggart wrongly accuses him of plotting a mutiny, Billy is unable to defend himself verbally, so he instinctively hits his accuser to death, which brings about **his downfall**.

Moreover, like the tragic hero, Billy is warned by the oracle or seer (the Dansker) of his possible **fate** (*destin*). However, he does not understand "Old Chiron's" Delphic messages; consequently, he is not aware of impending (*imminent*) danger inasmuch as his natural innocence blinds him to evil. Therefore, as he lacks (*manque de*) this **sense of awareness**, he fails to be regarded as a tragic hero.

NB: A dramatized version of *Billy Budd*, written by Louis O. Coxe and Robert Chapman in the late 1940s, appeared in the first Dramabook Edition of Hill and Wang, Inc., 1962.

The entire action takes place aboard *H.M.S. Indomitable* at sea, August, 1798, the year following the Naval mutinies at Spithead and the Nore, with the same characters as in the novel.

e. *An ethical tale*

First of all, it seems that by limiting space to the *Bellipotent*, Melville presents the man-of-war as the microcosm of a larger world–namely society–, in which the situation as well as the main characters participate in t**he eternal conflict between good and evil**. Indeed, the main story in *Billy Budd* boils down to (*se résume à*) the interplay (*interaction*) of these two entities that exist in the very nature of things as can be inferred from Melville's own words: "*Here ends a story not unwarranted by what happens in this incongruous world of ours–innocence and infirmity, spiritual deprivation and fair respite.*"

Therefore, in the working out of human institutions, evil has a place as well as good: Captain Vere loves Billy as a son, but he condemns him to be hanged according to the Articles of War, although he knows the Handsome Sailor is innocent, and Claggart, his accuser, a despicable (*méprisable*) liar (*menteur*). Thus, for the sake of justice, he does a deed at variance with (*en contradiction avec*) his nature: though conscious of good and evil, he must act in obedience to the codes that are imposed upon him by an impersonal social order. However, the outcome (*issue*) seems to point

to some kind of **ambiguity**: Melville leaves the reader unsatisfied as he avoids telling him how to interpret the captain's decision. Should Captain Vere have proceeded with the drumhead court so as to assert his authority and forestall (*anticiper*) any potential mutinies? Or should he have waited to try (*juger*) Billy after consulting with his superiors? Such questions obviously (*de toute évidence*) remain unanswered: there is no moral to the story!

f. A biblical allegory

An **allegory** is a genre in which both **characters** and **events** are used to **symbolize** a deeper moral or spiritual meaning. To what extent (*dans quelle mesure*) does *Billy Budd* illustrate this genre?

Indeed, no one can overlook (*ne pas remarquer*) the use Melville makes of **religious symbolism** as well as the **biblical allusions** to be found throughout the novel.

For example, the execution of Billy at the yard-end (*à l'extrémité de la vergue*) has much to do with the crucifixion of Christ, "the Lamb of God"; Captain Vere sentencing the innocent sailor to death reminds one of Pontius Pilate condemning Jesus Christ or Abraham about to sacrifice his son, Isaac; Claggart's "petty harassment of Billy"—mainly by proxy (*par personne interposée*)—to reach his goal (i.e. cause the young man's downfall), obviously refers to the Serpent—in fact, Satan—tempting and deceiving (*trompant*) Adam until the latter is driven out of the Garden of Eden.

However, if one looks closer at characters and events as shown in the novel, it seems obvious that such similarities should not be taken for granted (*comme argent comptant*).

Even if, to some extent, Billy is seen as a Christ-figure, he is not entirely so: like Billy facing the drumhead court, Jesus remained silent before the Pharisees, but he had no vocal impediment (*handicap*). Contrary to Pontius Pilate, Captain Vere does not "wash his hands", but takes the "agony" (*angoisse*) of the execution upon himself. Unlike Satan, Claggart is no Fallen Angel; besides, he is not sufficiently motivated at first as he uses his henchmen's services (*les services de ses hommes de main*) to trap Billy before he finally accuses him.

So, the biblical references in *Billy Budd* should not be taken at their face value (*au pied de la lettre*). However, they help the writer give both characters and events a wider dimension, thus enhancing the complexity of the story.

Main points

1. Why did some critics think that at the outset, *BB* might be Melville's autobiography?
2. To what extent could Billy be regarded as a tragic hero?
3. Bearing on the main story, explain the conflict between good and evil.
4. Compare some characters in the Bible with those in the novel.
5. Why is it difficult to define *BB* as a "genre"?
6. What is your own interpretation of *BB* as a "genre"?

4. Melville's sources in *Billy Budd*

The most challenging task in reading the novel is either to draw on one's scholarship (*érudition*) or, at least, reserves of information; or to resort to a sourcebook of the appropriate kind in order to identify or clarify the innumerable allusions that Melville's work is "peppered" (*émaillé*) with.

Therefore, to make the reading of the book easier, the most helpful allusions and references are presented here in alphabetical order and grouped according to the specific categories they belong to. Others will appear as notes in the chapter-study sections of this booklet.

While reading *Billy Budd*, refer to these sources and try to find out how any one of them is illustrated or dealt with in the novel.

NB: You are given a few clues (*indices*) in this section.

a. Literary figures

Writers are mentioned throughout the novel for literary, political, historical, philosophical, legal, religious or metaphysical contribution to the contents of the novel in a large number of chapters.

Bentham, Jeremy (1748-1832): an English philosopher and founder of the philosophy of utilitarianism, according to which ideas, thoughts, institutions, and actions should be judged on the basis of their utility. Utility was defined by the ability of something to produce happiness or pleasure for the greatest number of people.

Burke, Edmund (1729-1797): a British politician, author and orator who claimed that the colonists who fought Britain during the American Revolution deserved the

same rights as British citizens. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), he accused the French of violating individual Rights, of attacking the Church and trying to establish a new social order.

Calvin, John (1509-1564): one of the leaders of the Protestant Reformation and founder of Presbyterianism. The principles of his religious philosophy, developed in *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536), clarified his support for constitutional and representative government, the separation of civil government from church government. He also supported the theory of the 'Elect', which, for Melviille is flawed (*imparfaite*).

Dibdin, Charles (1745-1814): a British playwright famous for his sailor songs, one line from which is quoted to illustrate British loyalty ("And as for my life, 'tis the King's!").

Diderot, Denis (1713-1784) a French philosopher during the "Age of Reason", who voiced his revolutionary sentiments in his famous *Encyclopedia,* as well as through his fiction and drama.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel (1804-1864): a major American writer, who became a friend of Melville's as they were neighbours in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Like Melville, who refers to his short story, "The Birthmark", he was interested in the darker side of human nature.

Marvell, Andrew (1621-1678) a Renaissance poet of the 1650s whose lines (from the poem, "Lines upon Appleton House, to My Lord Fairfax"—he had been Lord Fairfax's daughter's tutor—) are quoted because Vere was the family name of Fairfax's wife.

James, William (1799-1860): a prolific and popular British novelist whose works include *Naval History of Great Britain* (1880).

Martial, a.k.a. Marcus Valerius Martialis (approximately 40-140 A.D.): an ancient Roman writer famous for his epigrams that he used, to criticize the vices of his society. Melville alludes to him in chapter 2 after mentioning **Caspar Hauser** (1812-1833), a young man who had been found wandering (*errant*) in Nuremberg in 1928. Imagined to be of noble birth, his presence aroused international attention, before he was assassinated in 1833.

Montaigne, Michel Eyquem, seigneur de (1533-1592): a French writer famous for his personal essays in which he expounds his "realities" or own experiences.

Paine, Thomas (1739-1807): a radical political writer who influenced the political ideas of the leaders of the American and French Revolutions. Among other works, he published *The Rights of Man* (1791), a reply to Edmund Burke's criticism of the French Revolution.

Plato (427-347 B.C.): the famous ancient Greek philosopher and scientist whose ethical philosophy was based on the principle that all people wish for happiness, the natural consequence of a healthy soul. Melville partly uses his theory ironically, by insinuating that Plato's explanation of "Natural Depravity" is not really convincing.

Radcliffe, Ann (1764- 1823): an English writer known for her masterpiece *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), a popular novel written in the Gothic tradition (old castles, dark chambers, woods, chasms, grim atmosphere, etc.).

Tennyson, Alfred, Lord (1809-1892), a famous English poet in the Victorian era. Melville alludes to lines from his poem, 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington", in which the poet celebrates General Arthur Wellesly who defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.Tennyson actually refers to Nelson as "the greatest sailor since the world began".

Voltaire, François Marie Arouet (1694-1778): a French writer and philosopher who wittily (*avec beaucoup d'esprit*) satirized the faults of the French government.

b. Historical allusions

Melville mentions historic figures and important events as background references and landmarks (*repères*) throughout his narrative.

- ***Sovereigns***

Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.): a Macedonian king and conqueror of the Persian Empire who established an empire that extended from the Mediterranean Sea to India. He is said to be a descendant of Hercules on his father's side and Achilles on his mother's. One of his earliest feats (*exploits*) was his taming (*domptage*) of the great horse Bucephalus, which carried him all the way to India before it died.

Charles II (1630-1685): ascended the throne of England in 1660 after being exiled by Oliver Cromwell for 9 years. A conspirator, **Titus Oates** (1649-1705) exposed (*dénonça*) a Popish plot against the king (1678), which was later revealed as a fraud (*imposture*).