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# Commentary “Benito Cereno”

“Benito Cereno” is considered to be most hotly argumentative short stories of Melville’s which deals directly with the slavery. This story is maddeningly enigmatic as figuring out the attitude of Melville is not possible. The famous Benito’s interpretation has also been changed depending on the academic and political atmosphere of each critic. I believe that the historical incident on Benito Cereno is based on very much similar to the film of Steven Spielberg known as Amistad. The plot of the film is completely sympathetic to slaves. The character of their masters is displayed as cruel monsters who deserved to die. The character of slaves is shown as the fighter of righteous freedom who need nothing more than to go back to their home. The slaves who are portrayed are both cunning and brutal. I also believe that Benito Cereno is a story of pro-slavery. The author’s character of cunning slaves might have been inspired by his experience with Cannibals. He was deliberately trying to portray that black people are condemned to slavery. Moreover, it is also an exploration of the relationship between whites and blacks.

The drama in this story is ultimately related to death and life and also with the suspense that who is going to survive till the end of this story. Until the very end of the story, Cereno revealed to be some type of villain. It is the type of story which demands to read again and again. After reading the story, the audience can understand the behavior of Cereno in any given condition. For example, the readers can understand why the eyes of Cereno go glassy when Delano inquires him about the ship. Similarly, when Babo showed Cereno the razor, the audience could understand that he is threatening Cereno. All these secrets were revealed at the very end of the story, and the process of getting these understanding is also very painful for some audience.