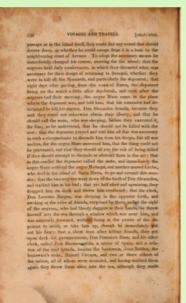
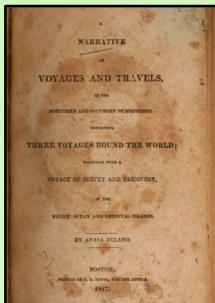


ADAPTIVE REVISION

is any transformation of an originating work into a different form or genre. It is material evidence of one reader's interpretation of another writer's work. We generally think of "announced" Adaptations—let's say a play or film version; see Sample 8—as the only form of adaptive revision, but we also take the use of Sources as adaptive.

"*Benito Cereno*" includes numerous word-for-word borrowings as well as meaningful revisions of language taken from HM's source, Delano's *Narrative* (1). The novella is effectively HM's version of Delano. But HM also made significant departures, in particular his treatment of slave-owner Don Alejandro Aranda's body.

For its reading text of "*Benito Cereno*," MEL uses the Putnam's *Monthly Magazine* text as the edition's Base Version (2). Along with its textual and contextual notes, MEL links to Revision Narratives (3) discussing HM's borrowings, revisions, and departures from the Delano source. The notes also takes readers into the Delano original.



1

negroes had their meeting, the negro Mure came to the place where the deponent was, and told him, that his comrades had determined to kill his master, Don Alejandro Aranda, because they said they could not otherwise obtain their liberty, and that he

Revision Narrative: HM revises Delano (366).
Delano reports that the slaves kill Aranda "because they said they could not otherwise obtain their liberty." — But in "*Benito Cereno*" the killing is a warning to the remaining Spanish sailors not to resist the freed slaves.

But HM also **departs** from Delano. We learn at the end of the novella the nature of the slaves' warning: Aranda's body has been stripped of its flesh, and his skeleton hangs hidden in shrouds over the deck. It is also hinted that Aranda has been cannibalized.

2

little after day-break, and soon after the negroes had their meeting, the negro Babo came to the place where the deponent was, and told him that he had determined to kill his master, Don Alejandro Aranda, both because he and his companions could not otherwise be sure of their liberty, and that, to keep the seamen in subjection, he wanted to prepare a warning of what road they should be made to take did they or any of them oppose him; and that he means of the death of Don Alejandro, that warning would best be given; but, that what the negroes did do, he could not, at no time comprehend, nor could not, further than that the death of Don Alejandro was intended;

vived that Yan was bad to Leobe; that Yan was the man who, by Babo's command, willingly prepared the skeleton of Don Alejandro, in a way the negroes afterwards told the deponent, but which he, so long as reason is left him, can never divulge. That Yan and Leobe were the two who, in a certain night, hid the skeleton to the bow; this also the negroes told him; that the negro Babo was he who traced the inscription below it; that the negro

"Benito Cereno" Base Version

...
To keep the seamen in subjection, he wanted to prepare a warning of what road they should be made to take did they or any of them oppose him.

...
Yau was the man who, by Babo's command, willingly prepared the skeleton of Don Alejandro, in a way the negroes afterwards told the deponent, but which he, so long as reason is left him, can never divulge.

2. Adaptive Revision: Melville Transforms Delano