“The Newfoundland dog is referenced to by Captain Delano. The Captain ‘took to negroes... just as other men to Newfoundland dog.’ This remark occurs just before Babo begins to shave Cereno, and Delano is observing as Babo prepares his master for the daily procedure. Delano has been on the ship for quite some time, and his suspicions are wavering and he constantly bounces back and forth from apprehensive to assured at the current state of affairs.”

“The Newfoundland dog represents more than simply the idea of a servant. The idea becomes a paragon for Delano’s views on the topic of race. The fact that he considers not only Babo but all slaves to be as benevolent as these passive creatures is the epitome of his ignorance. Babo is meant to be the perfect servant in the same manner that the Newfoundland dog is the perfect pet. Babo is and should be loyal, benign, controlled, mild, obedient, and patient. Benito Cereno is under the tender care of Babo, alike how a man feels comforted by the presence of his dog. To the naive onlooker he would seem to be just that. However, the signs are there to contradict this theory, and thus the allusion to Newfoundland Dogs becomes even more important to the reader. It depicts Delano’s views of blacks as ‘jolly’ and ‘fun-loving’ creatures who are intrigued by pretty colors and bright objects. More importantly, he is also comparing them to animals. In our world, animals are dominated by humans. Humans use them as pets, for food, sometimes transportation, and work. The slaves are humans meant to embody those animal characteristics but also possess their innocence.”


These stereotypical views are a signature of antebellum racist ideology that sought to legitimate slavery.