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## THE FORCE OF PREJUDICE: MELVILLE'S ATTACK ON MISSIONS IN *TYPEE*

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Melville's attack on missions in *Typee* has an exceptional meditative depth, embodying his reflections on the ways in which collective prejudice can distort experience. But the subtlety of Melville's treatment has not been understood because critics have not recognized how the relatively limited anti-missionary passages extend Melville's central thematic interests. Charles Anderson regarded the attack on missions as an excrescence, charging that Melville lapses "into his customary artistic error," when he "drops the role of dramatist for that of propagandist."<sup>1</sup> More recent scholarship has acknowledged that the attack belongs to *Typee* as part of Melville's extensive contrast between civilized and primitive life, but studies of that contrast have assumed that it represents Western and Polynesian character as fixed types only, and have stressed the "gap" between them.<sup>2</sup> Melville recognized, however, that Polynesian life was being altered in a dynamic social interaction with Westerners, and as he sought to comprehend that interaction he fixed upon the mission effort as the key to its meaning. He arraigned it as the source of erroneous conceptions of Polynesian life that directed and justified the rapid expansion of Western interests in the area.

The central drama of *Typee* becomes a study in the tenacity of prejudice as "Tommo" is compelled to abandon his preconceptions of native life and struggles for a truer vision. As Melville elaborates this drama, he invokes themes and motifs from the tradition of missionary writing about Polynesia with which he had become acquainted as he read travel books in preparation for writing *Typee*. The essentially Calvinistic emphases of Tommo's initial response to the natives correspond to the missionary condemnation of native character. But Melville's treatment of Tommo, and his attack on missions, is equally informed by a rival tradition of Western response to Polynesia, that of the scientific explorers who took a generally sympathetic and tolerant attitude toward the strange ways of the natives.<sup>3</sup> Melville's analysis of the force of prejudice in Polynesian affairs reveals its distinctive subtlety when we recognize how he managed the insights of these two opposed ways of envisaging native life.

## II

Protestant missions in the South Seas were uniformly of Calvinistic slant; their express purpose was to destroy the tyranny of Satan over his Polynesian victims. Americans took up this task in 1808 when a group of conservative Congregational ministers formed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The "American Board" quickly established close relations with the London Missionary Society, equally conservative and Congregational, which was already at work in Tahiti. In 1819 the Board sent Hiram Bingham to Hawaii as the first stage of what became under his increasing dominance a missionary theocracy in the Sandwich Islands.<sup>4</sup> As the pious work expanded, missionary spokesmen came to view Christian dominion as the proper means of freeing the native from his bondage to sin, so that spiritual liberation became spiritual conquest. Looking back over thirty years of thrilling successes, the New Englander proclaimed in 1851 that "Christianity remains aggressive. . . .

Onward, over the wreck and ruin of Satan's empire, it urges its way to the conquest of the world. Nothing less has ever been its aim: nothing less will satisfy its adherents. . . . *The World-THE WORLD*-is their battle-cry."<sup>5</sup>

The Rev. Charles Stewart visited the Marquesas thirteen years before Melville, for purposes of missionary reconnaissance, and found there "an iron-clad tyranny-the tyranny of superstition, over the darkness of minds and hearts lost in ignorance and sin."<sup>6</sup> During the 1830's Stewart's *Visit to the South Seas* (1931) achieved commanding authority in America, rivaled only by the magisterial *Polynesian Researches* (1829) of William Ellis. These works strengthened a widespread vogue of travel writing in which the Islands were pictured as places of idyllic physical beauty inhabited by diabolical heathen, whose personal appeal was granted only to arouse pity for their utter depravity (Strauss, pp. 156-59). Because the American reading public had endured the pious lurid conception of Polynesia for over two decades, Melville could denounce it in *Typee* merely by recounting the conventional exaggerations: "that human victims are daily cooked and served up upon the altars: that heathenish cruelties of every description are continually practised; and that these ignorant Pagans are in a state of the extremest wretchedness in consequence of the grossness of their superstitions."<sup>7</sup> Like Melville, however, Stewart himself had fought to supplant a traditional picture; his *Visit to the South Seas* contained an attack on Otto von Kotzebue, who had condemned the missionaries at Tahiti as fanatical tyrants.<sup>8</sup> This dispute was a notable skirmish in the long struggle through which the Calvinist vision of Polynesia displaced a venerable rival.

Kotzebue was the last in a sequence of scientific explorers who embodied the impulse of the Enlightenment to gain more knowledge of the non-Western world. Their response to the South Seas had gained wide currency half a century before as a result of Captain Cook's astonishing descriptions of the amiable and lovely people of Tahiti. Once established as the prince of navigators, Cook set a standard of tolerant and objective reporting, but the account of his first voyage (1773), which brought him instant fame, was written up by a playwright, John Hawkesworth. Hawkesworth glossed Cook's straightforward journal with stylish musings over a condition of native virtue and tranquillity that made civilized endeavors, like Cook's voyage itself, look like so much strenuous nonsense.<sup>9</sup> "Yet if we admit that they are on the whole happier than we," Hawkesworth mourns, "we must admit that the child is happier than the man, and that we are losers by the perfection of our nature, the increase of our knowledge, and the enlargement of our views" (Hawkesworth, II, 105). Assuming the South Sea islanders into such a version of the noble savage became more difficult as accounts of atrocities against whites, including the murder of Captain Cook, began to filter back from the South Seas. But the voyages of scientific exploration continued, and the reports of such men as Georg von Langsdorff and Kotzebue display a considerable measure of sympathy for Polynesian culture in their efforts to give exact and balanced accounts.

Melville knew all these writers in the rival traditions of European response to Polynesia and was well aware that the most spectacular disagreements between them were aroused by the sexual mores of the islanders. The scientific explorers had generally taken an amused interest in native sexual liberalities, while John Hawkesworth had stressed them with elaborate flourishes of philosophical tolerance (Hawkesworth, II, 128). The Calvinist missionaries, on the other hand, recoiled in horror from what seemed to them a detestable licentiousness. Melville ridicules such pious abhorrence in his first observations on the missionary enterprise, reporting that a recent effort to convert the Marquesans was frustrated when the natives stripped naked the missionary's wife. "The gentle dame was not sufficiently evangelised to endure this, and, fearful of further improprieties, she forced her husband to relinquish his undertaking" (p. 7). Melville's failure to be shocked by Polynesian indifference to Western proprieties did not prevent him from condemning Europeans who exploited the islanders sexually (pp. 15, 256-57), but neither was he excluded from an appreciation of native culture by prudish dismay. Even the Rev. Charles Stewart recognized that his own frequent spasms of disgust could be a barrier to understanding: "A man of nice moral sensibility, and one alive to the purity of affection essential to genuine piety, is exposed, in a disgust at the

licentiousness unavoidably obtruded on his notice, to lose eight of all that is pleasing and praiseworthy in the nature and condition of the inhabitants' (Stewart, I, 345-55).

All Western observers were horrified by Polynesian cannibalism, and the peoples of the Marquesas Islands, where Melville stayed, had long been infamous as man-eaters. Georg von Langsdorff, the only scientific explorer to devote substantial attention to the Marquesas, visited there in 1803 and was prompted to a lengthy discussion of this "horrible" practice.<sup>10</sup> By the time Melville's whale ship arrived in 1842 friendly relations had developed with the coastal tribes, so that the burden of this unnerving notoriety rested upon their inland enemies, the Typees. Vehement resistance to the approaches of whites had given the Typees a reputation for savage ferocity, and coastal natives confirmed the white man's dread by charging them with every barbaric crime. The Rev. Charles Stewart paid the Typees a special visit, in the company of an armed party, to see "pure heathenism" only to hurry away "in a horror of disgust" (Stewart, I, 262).

The general reputation of the Typees nicely confirmed the Calvinistic ascription of unmitigated diabolism, so that Stewart confidently used them as a base line against which to measure the advances of missionizing elsewhere. Conversely, Calvinistic ideas themselves could be used to heighten and authenticate horrifying pictures of native life invoked to serve quite different purposes. Like those of Melville's whaling captain who characterizes the Marquesans as "cursed heathens" (p. 34) in a speech intended to frighten potential deserters. Fragments of dogma afforded points of crystallization around which loose but forceful systems of opinion could form, in the minds of men who never gave a reflective thought to God's primal curse. In this way missionary rhetoric became influential far beyond the circle of active believers.

Melville, conscious that a peculiar blending of images formed the conventional stereotype of Polynesian life, stressed its religious core. In recounting the "strangely jumbled anticipations" aroused by his own initial approach to the Marquesas, he reserved the climactic emphasis for visions of "horrible idols- *heathenish rites and human sacrifices*" (p. 5). Melville also realized that such stylized preconceptions are extraordinarily tenacious because they have the power to shape the perceptions of those who hold them, and thus to acquire apparent, but misleading, confirmations. He emphasizes this process as he portrays his achievement of the recognition that the Typees enjoy a life valuable in itself. Melville's portrayal embraces a struggle to transcend the Calvinistic notion that the natives are children of the devil, but it goes beyond the "tolerance" of Enlightenment observers to express a firm loyalty to native interests.

### III

The adventures of "Tommo," which Melville presents as his own, are no sure guide to Melville's literal biography,<sup>11</sup> but they clearly dramatize the travail of achieving a fundamental insight. Fleeing the cruelties of the whaleship, Tommo and his friend Toby get lost in the interior of the island and blunder into the valley of the Typees. But before Tommo can enter into the joys of native existence, he undergoes a psychic transformation. He isn't merely frightened by the natives; before they reveal their essential falseness, his conventional expectations of Typee life arouse terrors that drive him to despair.

The natives' initial friendliness affords the adventurers only superficial comfort. "Might it not be that beneath these fair appearances the islanders covered some perfidious design?" (p. 76). Their apprehensions increase when they are taken to the Taboo Groves, where "the frightful genius of pagan worship seemed to brood" (p. 91). Around midnight they find the natives dancing around the fire "like so many demons" and come to the horrified conclusion that they are about to be eaten; but the suspense evaporates in laughter when it appears that nothing worse than a

pork supper is being prepared. Melville's comic effect depends upon the horrible imaginings which a perfectly innocent situation inspires in Toby and Tommo, imaginings which emerge from a prejudice whose Calvinistic savor is revealed in their moments of greatest terror, when they speak of the natives as "devils" and "fiends incarnate" (pp. 94, 95). This comical plight contains the essential structure of Tommo's worsening distress. He is provided with a servant and begins to enjoy the attentions of Fayaway, a lovely native maiden. But he is shaken by the fear that even these "smiling appearances" conceal the approach of a horrible fate.

Tommo's inner disturbances come to a crisis after the departure of Toby, when the intention of the natives to prevent his own return to civilization becomes unmistakable. At length his "dismal forebodings" overwhelm him altogether. "Gradually I lost all knowledge of the regular recurrence of the days of the week, and sunk insensibly into that kind of apathy which ensues after some violent outbreak of despair" (p. 123). Ceasing to hope, Tommo now ceases to experience time itself in its purposive Western march. Thus Melville presents Tommo as resigning important aspects of his own cultural outlook in a way that frees him for fresh insight into native life. In explaining the islanders' childlike spontaneity, Hawkesworth had sought to distinguish a Polynesian trait fundamentally alien to the Western mind: since the natives have "no habits of thinking which perpetually recall the past, and anticipate the future, they are affected by all the changes of the passing hour" (Hawkesworth, II, 104-5). Melville's Tommo emerges from his psychic crisis into just such a flexible immediacy of consciousness. "I began to experience an elasticity of mind which placed me beyond the reach of those dismal forebodings. . . . I gave myself up to the passing hour" (pp. 123-24).

Thus Tommo enters a period of unalloyed delight in the life he leads among the Typees, but after several weeks his "forebodings of evil" begin to revive. His uneasiness comes to a head when he discovers that the natives actually practice cannibalism. Once again Melville presents the change in Tommo's attitude as a psychic shock. "The last horrid revelation had now been made, and the full sense of my condition rushed upon my mind with a force I had never before experienced" (p. 238). But Tommo does not merely snap back into his initial horror; he does not now perceive the natives as uniformly menacing. Melville makes it clear that Tommo's escape is possible only because they disagree among themselves (p. 248). Fayaway and the household in which Tommo had stayed represent a large group that sympathizes with his desire to leave, while the one-eyed chief Mow-Mow is brought forward as a figure for those who wish to keep him in captivity. Tommo himself is inwardly divided, and is torn with dismay even as he makes good his escape by striking Mow-Mow with a boathook (p. 252). Melville's final response, as indicated by these correlated ambivalences, is more complex than the embracing horror which had wrung Tommo at the outset of his stay.

Melville describes the central period of Tommo's stay in the valley as a time of radically fresh insight. "In the altered frame of mind to which I have referred," he tells us, "every object that presented itself to my notice in the valley struck me in a new light, and the opportunities I now enjoyed of observing the manners of its inmates, tended to strengthen my favorable impressions" (p. 126). The attentions of Fayaway, needless to say, now exert a stronger charm. But even native religion, envisaged as "*heathenish rites*" in his earliest anticipations, now reveals the capacity to elicit an impulse of the profoundest solidarity. Gazing upon a ceremonial coffin-canoe, in which a figure of the deceased sits upright in the stern holding a paddle, Tommo finds in it a symbol for the religious yearnings of all men: "I loved to yield myself up to the fanciful superstition of the islanders, and could almost believe that the grim warrior was bound heavenward. . . . Aye, paddle away, brave chieftain, to the land of spirits! To the material eye thou makest but little progress; but with the eye of faith, I see thy canoe cleaving the bright waves, which die away on those dimly looming shores of Paradise. This strange superstition affords another evidence of the fact, that however ignorant man may be, he still feels within him his immortal spirit yearning after the unknown future" (p. 173).

The Typees never dreamed of the distinction between a "material eye" and the "eye of faith," but Melville invokes it to convey the sympathetic communion he considered essential for a truer understanding of their life.<sup>12</sup> All inherently Western interpretations of Polynesian culture are not equally mistaken, and Melville's response to his sources shows his confidence in the superiority of his new insight. He shrewdly attacks Stewart's account of imposing the categories of Calvinist anti-Romanism upon the religious life of the natives.<sup>13</sup> "One would almost imagine from the long list that is given of cannibal primates, bishops, archdeacons, prebendaries, and other inferior ecclesiastics, that the sacerdotal order far outnumbered the rest of the population, and that the poor natives were more severely priest-ridden than even the inhabitants of the papal states" (pp. 169-70).

Tommo's awakening sympathy for the Typees prompts him to amplify Hawkesworth's theorizing about innate human virtue and to scoff at Calvinistic moral pessimism. Hawkesworth had stated that the natives' social tranquillity resulted from a spontaneous adherence to the Golden Rule which their spiritual unity with nature guaranteed. "These people have a knowledge of right and wrong from the mere dictates of natural conscience; and involuntarily condemn themselves when they do that to others, which they would condemn others for doing to them" (Hawkesworth, II, 101-102). The Calvinistic missionaries, by contrast, believed that man's innate unruliness necessitated firm legal restraints, and they consolidated their Polynesian theocracies through a rigorous imposition of Western law (Strauss, pp. 54ff). Remarking on the social harmony of the Typees, Melville specifically rejects this Calvinistic tenet in an eloquent declaration of the inherent dignity of man. "They seemed to be governed by that sort of tacit common-sense law which, say what they will of the inborn lawlessness of the human race, has its precepts graven on every breast. The grand principles of virtue and honor, however they may be distorted by arbitrary codes, are the same all the world over; and where these principles are concerned, the right or wrong of any action appears the same to the uncultivated as to the enlightened mind" (p. 201).

Melville does not, however, merely recapitulate Hawkesworth's version of the noble savage; he appropriates it as needed to explain what his intimate experience of native life had revealed. Scientific explorers like Cook and Kotzebue viewed the native with the tolerant detachment of observers commissioned to bring intelligible reports from the remote portions of the globe; Hawkesworth himself never even left England. Melville's more emotionally drastic response is conditioned by his participation in native culture. He eulogizes native virtue with a larger voice, as we have seen, and he is far more deeply shaken by native wickedness. Instead of displaying the philosophic equilibrium with which Hawkesworth discusses infanticide, or the urbane comprehensiveness which Langsdorff brings to his study of cannibalism,<sup>14</sup> Melville conveys a real fear of being eaten.

But Melville equally rejects the Calvinistic view that Polynesian cannibalism betokens the total moral worthlessness of Satan's slaves. He indicates clearly his awareness that such notions had been a critical element in the responses that had earlier denied him any true comprehension of native life. "So pure and upright were they in all the relations of life, that entering their valley, as I did, under the most erroneous impressions of their character, I was soon led to exclaim in amazement: 'Are these the ferocious savages, the blood-thirsty cannibals of whom I have heard such frightful tales! They deal more kindly with each other, and are more humane, than many who study essays on virtue and benevolence, and who repeat every night that beautiful prayer breathed first by the divine and gentle Jesus'" (p. 203).

Melville does not suppress contrary elements of his response for the sake of a schematic consistency, but presents his reactions in all their paradoxical richness. In his summary statement on cannibalism, he declares that "horrible and fearful as the custom is, immeasurably as it is to be abhorred and condemned, still I assert that those who indulge in it are in other respects humane and virtuous" (p. 205). Melville's vision of Typee culture presents it as intershot with shining virtue and ghastly evil, and thus takes up emphases from the conflicting versions of

Polynesia with which his reading had made him familiar. But it transcends both Calvinistic and "enlightened" conceptions, in recognizing the one-sidedness of each, and in dramatizing the special difficulties of appreciating an alien culture. Becoming aware that mistaken preconceptions can severely distort insight, Melville found it possible to appreciate the complexity and essential human worth of native life only by yielding himself up to its spirit. As he did so he came to view the transactions between natives and Westerners with an exceptional sympathy for the native point of view.

#### IV

Missionaries as well as scientific observers acknowledged that the Polynesians had suffered terrible evils since the coming of whites, and they disputed the causes along established lines of Western rivalry. The enlightened Kotzebue blamed the miseries of the Tahitians on the political mismanagement of the ignorant and fanatical missionaries (Kotzebue, I, 163-69). The Rev. Charles Stewart laid great stress upon the damage done by irreligious merchants and singled out for special blame the cruelty of a French Catholic sea-captain (Stewart, I, 296-98; II, 192-210). All respectable Western observers joined in blaming licentious seamen, more particularly those that desert their vessels. Melville offered a judgment less gratifying to civilized parochialisms, declaring that in the South Seas "as in every case where Civilization has in any way been introduced among those whom we call savages, she has scattered her vices, and withheld her blessings" (p. 198). Having been held captive by the most dreaded of Island natives, this runaway seaman arrived at the realization that the Polynesians were being destroyed by the multiform pressure of white Western culture. Melville rejected the general but unspoken assumption that the culture of the South Seas was a field in which vying Western interests rightfully contend: he conceived the essential confrontation as occurring between the natives and all "civilized" interests. His attack on the Christian missions arose from his insight into their integral role in the devastation wrought by that civilization of which they were so proudly the herald in the "Isles of the Sea."

Melville recognized that the mission effort aided this process by confirming the assurance of Westerners that their own culture was morally as well as materially superior. He saw that the very act of sending missionaries included a presumption of moral superiority, and stated that "so far as the relative wickedness of the parties is concerned, four or five Marquesan Islanders sent to the United States as Missionaries might be quite as useful as an equal number of Americans dispatched to the Islands in a similar capacity" (pp. 125-26). Melville was aware that the Calvinistic belief in native diabolism gave added strength to this generalized Western arrogance, as becomes clear in his evocation of the responses that distort the realities of Western depredation in the South Pacific. When accounts of atrocities committed by whites reach Western ears "we coolly censure them as wrong, impolitic, [and] needlessly severe." But when the natives in reply massacre white men "how we sympathize for the unhappy victims, and with what horror do we regard the diabolical heathens, who, after all, have but avenged the unprovoked injuries which they have received" (p. 27).

Melville's insight into the role of orthodox Christianity in the processes which wrecked Polynesian societies goes considerably deeper than Kotzebue's contempt for the tyrannical enthusiasts at Tahiti. Melville recognized the perverse self-justifications accruing to the "civilizers" from a scenario in which the degradations imposed by civilization made native character conform to Calvinistic dictates. Melville considered the term "savages" a blanket distortion: "None really deserving of it were ever yet discovered by voyagers or by travelers" (p. 27). But he saw that Western pursuits, guided by such prejudiced conceptions, produced results that strengthened those very prejudices; the atrocities of Christians goaded the islanders into reprisals that appeared to reveal an innately savage nature. Admitting the Typees' notorious hatred of Europeans, Melville traces it to the attack of an American Navy Captain who burned their villages, leaving a scene which "proclaimed to its pagan inhabitants the spirit that

reigned in the breasts of Christian soldiers. . . . Thus it is that they whom we denominate 'savages' are made to deserve the title" (p. 26).

Melville saw an analogous perverse logic at work in the subjugation which the establishment of permanent colonies imposed upon the islanders. Enjoying a plentiful natural supply of food, the islander in his pristine condition obviously confounded the Calvinistic belief that fallen man was cursed to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow. This patent contradiction was invoked by Kotzebue to scoff at pious dogma (Kotzebue, I, 1 29). Melville likewise states that he scarcely saw any work "which caused the sweat to stand upon a single brow" as he explains his satiric observation that "the penalty of the Fall presses very lightly upon the valley of Typee" (p. 195). Melville immediately continues, however, to contrast the happy condition of the Typees with the bondage of those peoples with whom Western man has had his way. In an astute analysis of the demoralization and social collapse suffered by the islanders, he observes that the Christianizers themselves impose this ostensibly divine penalty, and then collect its proceeds:

Among the islands of Polynesia, no sooner are the images overturned, the temples demolished, and the idolators converted into *nominal* Christians, than disease, vice, and premature death make their appearance. The depopulated land is then recruited from the rapacious hordes of enlightened individuals who settle themselves within its borders, and clamorously announce the progress of the Truth. Neat villas, trim gardens, shaven lawns, spires, and cupolas arise, while the poor savage soon finds himself an interloper in the country of his fathers. . . . The spontaneous fruits of the earth, which God in his wisdom had ordained for the support of the indolent natives, remorselessly seized upon and appropriated by the stranger, are devoured before the eyes of the starving inhabitants. . . .

When the famished wretches are cut off in this manner from their natural supplies, they are told by their benefactors to work and earn their support by the sweat of their brows! (pp. 195- 96).

Thus the natives are crushed into apparent conformity with the dictates of missionary theory. The spiritual ascendancy enforced by their self-styled benefactors initiates a process which reduces the native population into a labor force for the support of what rapidly becomes a bitter material oppression, and the doctrine of the Fall is invoked to interpret and justify the results of the process.

Melville's profoundest abhorrence is excited by the "missionary rhetoric" which transforms such gross injustice into a proud instance of the "progress of the Truth." The unspeakable miseries of the islanders thus "robbed of the bounty of Heaven" become invisible in the reports which the missionaries send back to their sponsors. "Behold the glorious result!-The abominations of Paganism have given way to the pure rites of the Christian worship. . . . A community of disinterested merchants, and devoted self-exiled heralds of the Cross, located on the very spot that twenty years ago was defiled by the presence of idolatry. What a subject for an eloquent Bible-meeting orator! Nor has such an opportunity for a display of missionary rhetoric been allowed to pass by unimproved!" (p. 196). With his eye fixed upon the practical fate to which the natives had been consigned, Melville declares that such eloquence is the direct implement of their subjugation. "The small remnant of the natives, . . ." he says, have been "civilized into draft horses, and evangelized into beasts of burden" (p. 196).

## V

Melville's awareness that he was contending with an entrenched system of prejudice is indicated clearly by his

pious disclaimers. He protests that the cause of missions "in the abstract" must command the support of every Christian, and claims that his own objections are limited to incidental "errors and abuses" (p. 197). Hoping that his attack would have some influence with religious readers Melville tried to present himself as a morally reliable critic:

"subject as Christianity is to the assaults of unprincipled foes, we are naturally disposed to regard everything like an exposure of ecclesiastical misconduct as the offspring of malevolence or irreligious feeling" (p. 198). Melville had reason to expect that missionary spokesmen would reply to his charges, and his repudiation of "malevolence or irreligious feeling" shows that he gauged quite accurately how the Calvinistic rhetoric would be applied to him.<sup>15</sup>

These disclaimers do not mean that Melville intended to weaken his attack nor do they vitiate his insight into the social function of missionary theory. In the story of Tommo, he had arraigned that theory as the source of those "erroneous impressions" that had made it impossible for him to appreciate what was lovely and virtuous in native character. In the attack on missions he extends his analysis to show how the blindness he had dramatized in Tommo plays a major role in bringing about the ruin of native culture. His outbursts against missions are passionate, but they are shrewdly concerted as well; Melville sought to break through the sturdy fabric of delusions in which missionary rhetoric had enmeshed the Polynesians.

## NOTES

1. Charles Roberts Anderson, *Melville in the South Seas* (1939;rpt.New York, 1966), p. 98.
2. Milton R. Stern, *The Fine Hammered Steel of Herman Melville* (1957; rpt. Urbana, 1968), P. 35, outlines the character of "Western Civilization" and "Marquesan Civilization" in parallel columns as representing "mind" and "body." Because he sees the contrast as a matter of set categories he recognizes "no need to reopen the arguments about the nineteenth-century missionaries in Polynesia" (p. 30n). Edgar A. Dryden, *Melville's Thematics of Form: the Great Art of Telling the Truth* (Baltimore, 1968), presents the narrator of *Typee* as a truth-seeker and discusses his effort "to bridge both the smaller gap between the successive moments of his *Typee* experience and the larger one between the primitive and civilized worlds" (p. 38). But Melville was equally concerned with the perplexities created by the collision between the primitive and civilized worlds; his attack on missions, which Dryden does not discuss, brings that concern to a climax. James Baird, *Ishmael, a Study of the Symbolic Mode in Primitivism* (1956; rpt. New York, 1960), p. 99, mentions the "zeal of missions" as a sign of the "symbolic impoverishment" of Western culture that prompted Melville to explore the vital myths of primitivism. But Melville learned that the "symbols" of missionary rhetoric had immense vitality as he saw how they shaped the impact of Western culture upon Polynesia.
3. Anderson, pp. 118, 243, establishes Melville's reliance on all the sources I treat except one. See note 9. Intent upon clarifying the relation of Melville's account to the literal facts of his own biography, and to ethnologically correct observations of the *Typees*, Anderson does not use the sources primarily to achieve an understanding of Melville's distinctive response to Polynesia.
4. W. Patrick Strauss, *Americans in Polynesia 1783-1842* (East Lansing, 1963), pp. 44-50. Cited in the text as Strauss. See Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids, 1964), p.

252, for the congregational affiliations of the London Missionary Society. Stephen Neil, *Colonialism and Christian Missions* (New York, 1966), p. 235ff, discusses the development of missionary theocracies.

S. "The Results of Modern Missions Permanent," *New Englander*, IX, (1851), 219.

6. Charles S. Stewart, *A Visit to the South Seas, in the U. S. Ship Vincennes, during the years 1829 and 1830*, 2 vols. (New York, 1831), I, 266. Cited in the text as Stewart.

7. Herman Melville, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston, Ill., 1968), p. 170. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text.

8. Stewart, II, 192-210. Otto von Kotzebue, *A New Voyage Round the World in the Years 1823, 24, 25, and 26*, 2 vols. (London, 1830), I, 159-70. Cited in the text as Kotzebue.

9. John Hawkesworth, *An Account of the Voyages... by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook... drawn up from the Journals*, 3 vols. (London, 1773). Cited in the text as Hawkesworth. Melville's use of this work has not hitherto been recognized. The year following this London publication the section on Cook was published by subscription in America as James Cook, *A New Voyage Round the World*, 2 vols. (New York, 1774). For echoes of Hawkesworth in *Typee* see below pp. 10, 12. Another of Melville's sources, the anonymous *Historical Account of the Circumnavigation of the Globe. . . from the Voyage of Magellan to the Death of Cook* (New York, 1845) uses Hawkesworth and mentions him by name, but eliminates his perspectives. The volume is devised in part to make his account available to an American public dominated by pious responses to the South Seas. Melville would doubtless have noted that the anonymous editor, in citing Hawkesworth's work, states that "its publication was fatal to the author's character. The dangerous tendency on his views on religion, the gratuitous lubricity of his descriptions at once excited a storm of public indignation" (p. 143n). The *Historical Account* is one of Harper's Family Series, and in its endpapers are four pages advertising "Valuable Theological Works Recently Published by Harper and Brothers." Hoxie Neal Fairchild, *The Noble Savage, a Study in Romantic Naturalism* (New York, 1928), pp. 104-11, discusses Hawkesworth's transformation of Cook's report.

10. Georg H. von Langsdorff, *Voyages and Travels... during the years 1803, 1804,*

*1805, 1806, and 1807* (Carlisle, 1817), pp. 128-37.

11. Anderson, pp. 191-193.

12. William Ellery Sedgwick, *Herman Melville, the Tragedy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass., 1944), states that Tommo's experience with the Typees finally expresses "an inward and universal phase of human experience . . . the phase in which life lies long the easy slopes of spontaneous, instinctive being" (p. 28). Richard Chase, *Herman Melville, A Critical Study* (New York, 1949), is equally committed to such emphasis on inward psychic process. He declares that Tommo "withdrew into the recesses of his own infantile sexuality and then escaped. to a higher level" (pp. 10-12). The struggle with cultural stereotypes which Melville depicts in Tommo certainly has its inward component, but Melville clearly indicates its essential social dimensions. Stern rightly insists that the meaning of psychic self-definition in Melville's work is inseparable from its relation to historical and social worlds. He also discusses the significance of the way Melville stages Tommo's escape (see p. 46).

13. The fact that Melville here refers to Stewart is especially clear as he scornfully observes that Stewart's contact with the natives was limited to "little kid-glove excursions in the daytime, attended by a armed party" (p. 170). This accurately describes Stewart's operations, even to the kid gloves. "When my hands were discovered in a pair of black kid gloves, stitched with white, I could scarce free myself from the throngs gathering round with wonder and delight" (Stewart, I, 240).

14. Hawkesworth, II, 207-208; Langsdorff, pp. 128-37.

15. See Hugh W. Hetherington, *Melville's Reviewers* (Chapel Hill, 1961), pp. 47-51, for a thorough account of the pious counterattack. William C. Bourne struck the anticipated note when he concluded that Melville was "actuated, either by a perverse spirit of intentional misrepresentation, or that he is utterly incapable, from moral obtuseness, of an accurate statement" (p. 49).

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