

# Herman Melville and the Continuous Quest: An Analysis of the Archetypal Journey through *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Mardi*

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## 1. Introduction

Though the author of *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Mardi* denies any connection of storyline among the works, *Omoo* is indeed the continuation of a quest that the narrator takes up in *Typee*, and *Mardi* is the tale's conclusion. Melville informs us that "the present narrative [*Omoo*] necessarily begins where *Typee* concludes, but has no further connection with the latter work" (326). Strictly interpreting his words along the lines of plot, perhaps this is true, but the overarching archetypal narrative remains consistent. Archetypally-speaking, *Omoo* is the continuation of what was begun in *Typee*, the conclusion of which is not realized until the closing pages of *Mardi*. These are three completely separate novels, by the author's reckoning, yet what is this thing that is begun and carried over into the two latter novels? Where is the continuity which Melville so clearly denies? What binds these works together, what bond superseding plot and setting?

The answer partly lies in the identification of the genre of these particular novels. Considering their setting, they can most easily be classified as South Sea Narratives and are therefore, by definition, concerned with the roamings of sailors, pirates, merchants, explorers, and the like. *Roamings* is our key word here, for it directly points to travel, which in turns indicates *direct* experience, and Melville, claiming these stories as true events, must “syntactify” experience, “turn [it] into speech” and, by betraying experience, “deal with it all” (qtd. in Foulke 1). These three novels are bound together by the eternal and archetypal search for significance.

The narrator, whom we shall henceforth call Tom (for he is identified as such in *Typee*), is enveloped in “the search of the . . . desiring self for a fulfillment that will deliver [him] from the anxieties of reality but will still contain that reality” (Frye 193). A tale about deliverance from the “anxieties of reality” can find no better setting than the paradisiacal South Sea archipelagoes. Let us, therefore, hie ourselves hence to those isles and consider the particulars of the three novels, their interconnectedness in the Quest, and the hallmarks of the quest which one may find emblazoned on virtually every page of the text.

## 2. Escape and Liberation

Basing our argument on the claim that *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Mardi* are in essence one continuous story of a man’s quest for significance and revelation of the self, it is logical to begin at the opening of the tale: the first few pages of *Typee*. A sailor is a peculiar sort of man, for what the landsman might think is storytelling “strange and romantic” is to the seaman commonplace (Melville 9). He is the adventurer, the romantic, willing to shake a defiant fist at Fate, laugh in the face of death, jump at the

first scent of adventure, and brave the dangers of long sea-voyages on the slim chance of rumored fortune. The sailor's willingness to experience all that the wide world has to offer makes him eligible for great discovery, particularly, self-discovery. And if the writer, in Jungian terms, is the Unconscious, then what better medium through whom to communicate is there than the sailor?

Motives for taking to ship of course vary, and it is true that not all men hold the purest of intentions. Nevertheless, sailors are a rare breed of adventurer, for they have either conquered their fear of the unknown or have buried it beneath their overwhelming curiosity. The contrast between the sea and the ship is striking: the ship is narrow, confined, with brutal discipline and hard rules; the sea is limitless, without boundaries, and is the incarnation of freedom. It is in this dichotomy that the sailor finds himself open to new and frightening experiences, and these experiences in turn open the door to self-discovery, the greatest of all finds.

Such a man is Tom. He and his companion, Toby, discontent with life aboard their whaling vessel, decide to escape to the island of Nukuheva (known today as Nuku Hiva), to the bay of which they have come to rest, trade, and gather supplies. Tom fantasizes as to what it might be like if he does escape: "how delightful it would be to look down upon the detested old vessel from the height of some thousand feet, and contrast the verdant scenery about me with the recollection of her narrow decks and gloomy forecandle" (Melville 43). Immediately, we see two worlds clashing: the narrow ship and the wide world. Escape and liberation become the novel's earliest theme. Through inhibiting weather, Toby and Tom make their escape, during which, Tom recalls, "we had never once turned our faces to the sea" (53). They are leaving one world for another completely different, and like Lot leaving Sodom, so Tom must take nothing with him from his

previous life. He must be willing to forsake everything he once valued for the promise of a better life.

The promised life, however, is not an easy life. Through trials of eating decayed fruit to survive, thirst, high mountains, and deep valleys, the protagonists finally come to the Valley of the Typees, inhabited by a feared race of cannibals. Tom then gives us his first impression of the land: “the whole landscape seemed one unbroken solitude, the interior of the island having apparently been untenanted since the morning of the creation” (Melville 58). This description immediately calls to mind the powerful images of the Narcissus myth, a story that represents man’s connection to nature. We find ourselves with Tom in the garden, which “symbolizes that pristine sense of unity (man in accord with nature)” (Hughes 19). The land seems to be untouched by civilization, not tampered with by man, and thus unaffected by the Fall. Indeed, this unspoiled land produces “Nature’s noblemen,” and the men of Typee are an unfallen people whose tattooing “denote [their] exalted rank” (Melville 97). Tom is introduced to a race of men quite different from the European stock, men who do not struggle against Nature in an attempt to master it but instead live harmoniously with the natural world, living and dying in her care. Fayaway, a native Typee girl, is described thus:

the easy unstudied graces of a child of nature like this, breathing from infancy an atmosphere of perpetual summer, and nurtured by the simple fruits of the earth; enjoying a perfect freedom from care and anxiety, and removed effectually from all injurious tendencies, strike the eye in a manner which cannot be pourtrayed. (Melville 106)

Tom’s quest is leading him away from modern civilization with all of its “injurious tendencies” and complexities and into a world where simplicity is restful and Eden is a place of healing. Fayaway is a true child of Creation,

and she “clung to the primitive and summer garb of Eden” (107). Like Narcissus instinctively wishing to return to the pool, Tom escapes the violence of his situation aboard ship by entering the Valley of the Typees. Without knowing it, Tom looks for a way to return to the safety of the womb. Typee natives like Fayaway teach Tom that deliverance from “the anxiety of reality” can be realized.

Ritual plays a large and significant part in the tale. Upon entering the valley, the protagonists are treated to a fantastic banquet by the natives, and though Tom and Toby think they are to be the main course in the celebration, they escape uneaten. They are taken to the pagan temple, wherein they are subjected to strange rituals involving dances, mysterious processions, and great feasting. They find afterwards that they have participated in some esoteric rite, the significance of which they are unaware. It seems to be a celebration of some sort of rite of passage, for after this banquet, Tom is dressed in the native garb, thus casting off the exterior shows of his European heritage. He is being assimilated by the Eden-like setting. He is being made a child of Nature. He re-enters the garden unknowingly, and like Narcissus, he has retreated back into himself (Hughes 19). Tom is offered repose and a symbiotic existence with the natural world, but he is not content. He grows restless in Eden. Though man has forever been striving to re-enter the eastern gate of Paradise, that same gate from which he was expelled (19), Tom wishes to leave the protective embrace of the Mother-Pool soon after arriving.

He looks upon his stay in the valley as captivity, for the natives are clearly reluctant to allow him to depart. Their reasons for keeping him there are not immediately elucidated, so Tom cannot help but live in fear and suspicion. The early theme of liberation has now turned from escape from virtual slavery aboard ship to escape from Paradise. Though the

Typees are rumored to be savage cannibals, never do they threaten Tom's life. Tom never witnesses them feasting upon human flesh, but still he cannot dispel his learned prejudices. They *must* be cannibals, for that is what he has always been told. Despite his preconceptions, Tom believes that “a more humane, gentlemanly, and amiable set of epicures do not probably exist in the Pacific” (Melville 119). Tom presses his hosts and discovers that one reason for the Typees' reluctance to let their guest depart is the fact that they are hemmed in on every side by murderous tribes. Is this the true state of affairs, or is it a convenient excuse concocted by the Typees? Tom labors under this suspicion, and the fantasy of his captivity grows in his mind; it preys upon him until he can think of nothing other than escape. Tom toils no more; he lives in apparent safety and health. And yet he desperately wishes to escape. Why? For what reason would he flee Paradise? This question drives the narrative of all three of these novels. We will discover, as Tom's story progresses, that he is content nowhere, even in the most tranquil of Edens such as the Valley of the Typees. He seems to be forever cursed, a curse of his own making, to wander the world, seeking to find that which he ultimately will not want. He seeks, but he does not care to find. That is the paradox of Tom.

Trapped, Tom can do nothing but lament his state, mourning his removal from “country and friends” (Melville 131), expressing his fear of the “perils of the valley” and “all the dangers by which [he is] surrounded” (132-133). What perils? Where is the danger that he fears? No violence has been done to Tom since his arrival with the Typees. He has been their honored guest; he has found sanctuary, but he cannot perceive it. Though he has entered Paradise, he has not attained self-knowledge. In the Typee valley, he is “removed [from] so many of the ills and pains of life” (149). He *could* be

free from the “anxiety of reality,” but instead he creates an anxiety of unreality, thus making himself prisoner in Eden. Despite his inclination to deny his good fortune, Tom occasionally sees clearly:

When I looked around the verdant recess in which I was buried, and gazed up to the summits of the lofty eminence that hemmed me in, I was well disposed to think that I was in the “Happy Valley,” and that beyond those heights there was nought but a world of care and anxiety. (149)

But Paradise is not enough for Tom; he feels care and anxiety even in this blissful bower. He cannot accept Eden if it robs him of his freedom and his personal liberties. It seems that he must have his freedom, even if he must accept with it the cares and anxieties of the world.

Tom, convincing the chiefs to let him go with an ambassadorial group to meet a ship that lies in the Typee port, makes good his escape from the Valley of the Typees after a brief but violent struggle with the natives. And so it is that he departs Eden and re-enters the world to which he is accustomed, the outside world that does not protect him from worry, trouble, and violence. He has fled the sanctuary in favor of conflict. He has, in essence, rejected the “restoration of an earlier state of things” (qtd. in Hughes 19). Tom wants none of the serenity, unity, or childlike innocence (20).

### 3. Wandering through *Omoo*

So Tom, the restless wanderer, moves his narrative into *Omoo*, the second novel in our analysis. Having escaped “the end of the journey [which] is re-absorption into the All,” he takes to ship (the *Julia*) again, another whaler (Hughes 21). The Polynesian word “Omoo” means to wander, so there can be no question as to Melville’s theme for this second

novel. It is a tale primarily concerned with the kind of directionless exploration in which Tom indulges. Tom leaves Typee behind forever, exchanging his Typee-native tappa cloak for a sailor's blue frock, getting a shave and a haircut, even sleeping on his "wretched 'bunk'" (Melville 330-331). The symbolism is quite clear: the exterior transformation reflecting Tom's inner desire to be rid of the whole Typee experience. He is desperate to leave all that behind him, and yet he may be surprised to find someday that he has taken something of the Typee people with him, that there are certain aspects of his experience that have changed him forever. But for now, he sleeps upon a dirty, uncomfortable sailor's bunk in cramped quarters, and he cannot help but compare it to his pleasant mat in Typee. And as the island fades from view, he cannot help but feel a bit melancholy at leaving behind forever those people who had, in retrospect, treated him so kindly and that paradisaical valley which had cradled him all those months. Can it be that he yearns for Eden in the very hour that he has escaped her?

The *Julia* is in an ill state of affairs when *Omoo* opens. It has a weakling for a captain and a brute for a first mate; they have poor provisions and water, and there is a general fear amidst this undesirable situation of men abandoning ship. Into this unsound state of affairs, into this prison willingly enters Tom. After taking up with a doctor known only as Long Ghost, he immediately begins planning his escape from the *Julia*. Pricked on by his doom to be forever a wanderer, Tom leads Long Ghost and others to abandon the *Julia* when she puts into port. They dock, and the sailors going ashore refuse to board the ship again when it is time to depart. The British consul of the island has the deserters thrown into a kind of makeshift jail, though the native in charge of guarding them often allows them to wander about the area unfettered, only commanding the prisoners into the stocks



when some passersby come along the road.

Adamant despite their imprisonment, the deserters refuse to re-board the *Julia*, so the craft sails without them. Their present jail is more bearable than the ship. The consul, now with the unwanted burden of the care of prisoners, releases the deserters. Tom has entered a landscape of undefined laws and a colonial authority that seems to be only nominally present. Tom and Long Ghost waste no time in striking off by themselves, and this is where *omoo*, the wandering, truly begins.

Tom wanders the islands of the South Pacific, so let us acquaint ourselves with this setting. What kind of world is the South Pacific? We had already had a glimpse of it, albeit a narrow one, in *Typee*. It is an amenable world, and the author often attributes to it the qualities of a perfect, unfallen, and serene paradise. Tahiti itself, where the prisoners are detained, is like “walking into the Garden of Eden” (Melville 394). Imprisonment cannot diminish the perfection of that unspoiled island. So it is with the other islands Tom and Long Ghost visit on their travels, particularly Tamai and Imeeo. In Tamai, we find the narrator approaching a world that is lost, like Eden, a world of unparalleled beauty and innocence. The maidens are “the most beautiful and unsophisticated,” and their village is “so remote from the coast” that it was little affected by colonization and European influences as Tahiti was (562). Indeed, here Tom is graced with another glimpse of what Eden must have been like. The people in Tamai are “more healthful,” “far fresher and more beautiful” than the people of the bays and coasts (566). Does Tom perceive these characteristics in the natives because they are untainted by the modern, economically-dominant civilizations of the world? Are these indeed living examples of Rousseau’s noble savage? Going about the village, Tom finds a community “comparatively free from the deplorable evils to which the rest

of their countrymen [were] subject” (566). They are an industrious people without “many articles of foreign origin” (567). That is, they do not rely on the conveniences of European technology but instead work through traditional means. They remain connected to the land through the use of their hands.

For all of Tom’s talk of paradise and Eden, the world Melville presents in *Omoo* is one of deep-seated equivocation. Extreme beauty is followed by extreme ugliness; lavishness by poverty; hospitality by unfriendliness and sometimes overt aggression. After a dance in the valley in which the narrator and his doctor friend are entertained by the gentle maidens, the latter worthy goes about the next morning in search of one of those amiable girls. Remembering how pleasant they had been the night before, Long Ghost accosts one in the village and is immediately spurned: “giving him a box on the ear, [she] told him ‘harree perrar!’ (be off with himself)” (Melville 570). The girls who disappeared that night like beautiful phantoms are encountered that morning like irritable devils. A mysterious doubleness surrounds them. Perhaps this altercation simply stems from Long Ghost’s misunderstanding of their culture, but even if this is so, then we are left with a world in which the protagonist stands confused, unable to make sense of his surroundings amidst bewildering equivocation. In the following chapter, Tom himself gets something of a shock: an ugly village hermit who continually pesters and follows the pair about beckons Tom to follow him into his abode. Tom does so, and upon arriving is met with a most distressing scene: a “kennel” for a house, “foul old mats, and broken cocoa-nut shells, and calabashes strown about the floor of the earth” (572). Ugliness follows beauty. Filth follows cleanliness. In the midst of this pleasant village lives this hermit who offers to trade a pair of musty old sailor trousers for some tobacco. Disgusted, Tom flees the hovel, but the

hermit follows like one gone mad, screaming at him. What are we to believe about the people of Tamai? What sense can Tom make of this? Is this hermit a kind of scapegoat? Why is his continued existence suffered by the other villagers? These questions Tom cannot answer. The previous night, he felt safe. This morning, he wanders about bewildered. Why does such ugliness exist amongst such beauty? Perhaps they are not as equivocal as they seem. A world may seem mysterious and hostile when one does not understand the rules. Tom and Long Ghost are ignorant of local customs, rituals, and taboos, and the people must therefore seem capricious.

We shall delay any discussion of narrative pattern until we reach the last novel, *Mardi*, but something must be said of mode. Tom, being the central character of all three novels, is a man whose power is “no greater or less than that of ordinary men,” but only “a little luckier” (Foulke 16). His fortuitous escape from the Valley of the Typees, and his escape from prosecution after abandoning the *Julia* demonstrate that it was not so much Tom’s power over events but chance and good fortune that has brought him safe thus far. The arrows that barely miss him in *Mardi* is not a testament to his power of action but rather his extreme good luck. Tom is not great like Hamlet, a character who initiates events around him, so large a personality that the stage can barely contain him. The pages of the novel hold Tom quite comfortably. Instead, he is more like Tom Jones, who “is no greater but simply luckier for the events that *happen* to him” (15). Society as represented in these three Polynesian novels is certainly “naturalized” (16). Their simple agrarian or hunter / gatherer lifestyles make this hard to deny. The societies of the South Pacific which Tom visits are cultures where man has decided to live in unity with nature “rather than to control or order it” (16). Nature is an organic process, a living organism, not a machine with rigid boundaries (16). The natives’ pleasant

lives, their freedom from anxiety, and their unparalleled beauty and innocence all attest to this fact. They benefit from their communion with Nature, and they have found meaning in the “ideal [to] represent and be an agent of nature” (16).

Though Tom does not participate in the conceptual systems of the native cultures he encounters, specifically Imeeo, he cannot help but be affected by them. Simply being in paradise alters his perception of reality: “thus exhilarated, we went on, as light-hearted and care-free as we could wish” (Melville 580). But why care-free? Not long before, he lived in a world of care aboard the *Julia*, and now he has escaped it. The answer to why he lives care-free lies in Natural Provision: “in these genial regions, one’s wants are naturally diminished; and those which remain are easily gratified” (580). An end to want is “a consummation devoutly to be wished,” and Tom has found it in Imeeo. He has found what all men strive for: an end to want and the peace that naturally comes with it. But will he stay? We know Tom too well, and it will not be long before wanderlust seizes him once again: “weary somewhat of life in Imeeo, like all sailors ashore, I at last pined for the billows” (642). Has he dwelt in this terrestrial paradise so long that he has forgotten the hardships of a sailor’s life: the danger of starvation, or murder, or drowning, or mutiny, or greed? Has he forgotten all these dangers which he has successfully escaped? Let us turn to Tom’s final narrative: *Mardi*.

#### 4. Conflict of Irony and Romance in *Mardi*

*Mardi* is the most elusive of the three works under analysis here, for it is difficult to classify archetypally. It possesses strong elements of both irony and romance, two narrative patterns that are in direct opposition to each other. The answer to the question “to which narrative pattern does *Mardi*

belong” would entirely depend on what aspect of the story one is considering. It is sometimes ironic: King Media usurped, Taji pursued by the three avengers, Hautia’s heralds, Samoa and Jarl’s deaths, and of course the way in which the tale closes. We find vengeance, violence, death, and an upheaval of the social order. But we also find strong elements of romance: the characters are well defined, “events and characters come in sets of three” (Foulke 46), nature is amenable, questions with inevitable answers are raised, characters participate in a “conceptual system” (46), all forces are either aligned with or opposed to Taji (there is no middle ground), and “places . . . take on meaning as coordinates of morality” (50).

It would at first appear that the romantic themes outweigh the ironic elements, but a closer inspection of the narrative patterns is necessary to truly understand in which direction the balance tips. To facilitate understanding of the tale, a brief summary of *Mardi*’s plot shall be here set down. The narrator, whom we shall call Taji (as the novel calls him), finds himself as the tale opens on a whaler heading for the North Pole to seek the ever-elusive Northwest Passage. Unwilling to die in such a perilous venture, Taji, along with his Scandanavian companion, Jarl, abandon ship, stealing a lifeboat and provisions to sustain them on their journey. After many days’ travel, they come to the Pacific archipelago called Mardi. Before they reach land, however, they are involved in two episodes. The first is meeting up with a ship manned by only a Polynesian native and his wife. This native, Samoa, becomes Taji’s and Jarl’s fast friend. (Note Samoa’s name, the same name as the Samoan islands. This is no mistake and will be explored further in the discussion of characters as archetypes.) The second event is an altercation involving some natives of the island of Amma. An old priest, Aleema, and his three sons are, with other sundry

natives, transporting a young, white girl named Yillah to be sacrificed to the gods. Taji, seeing a European girl being held captive, “rescues” her by slaying the old priest and fleeing from the old craft. They travel on, forgetting about Aleema and his sons, and come to the islands of Mardi. In that time, Taji comes to adore Yillah, almost worship her for her beauty, innocence, and perfection. This theme of unspoiled beauty and innocence reaches even into *Mardi*, and the recovery of these two virtues embodied in human flesh is the driving force of this novel’s plot. Yillah tells Taji that she was raised to think of herself as a goddess. Of her European heritage, she knows nothing. That knowledge comes to Taji via Aleema’s avenging sons, later in the tale.

The four companions land on an island called Odo, ruled by the king Media. The islanders gaze upon the narrator, this white-skinned sailor of European extraction, and immediately assume that he is Taji, god of the sun who was prophesied to return to them after five-thousand moons. And so the narrator is given a name, and nothing of his European heritage is mentioned. Indeed, he seems to go native, immersing himself in this new land, as he could not do in the Valley of the Typees or in the various locations he visited in *Omoa*. The narrator, now Taji, thinking the mantle of godhood might serve him well, does nothing to dissuade the natives in their beliefs, and sometimes he slyly encourages continued support. Media, a self-proclaimed demi-god, entertains Taji and his friends with all hospitality. And so Taji is at peace for a while, until the day Yillah vanishes from Odo, nowhere to be found. Taji is resolved to go looking for her, and he proclaims that he will not stop until he has searched every part of the globe. Samoa, Jarl, and Media go with him, and along with their king come Babbalanja, the philosopher, Mohi, the historian, and Yoomy, the poet and minstrel.

Throughout their travels which touch virtually every island they come to in that archipelago, King Media decrees that while they are in the boat, all are equal in rank and free to speak their minds. A kind of intellectual democracy reigns. Babbalanja philosophizes (and his democratic postulations sometimes, ironically, anger the divine Media), Mohi recites the history of those islands which they plan to visit, and Yoomy keeps them in favorable spirits with his singing and his verse recitation. They visit many islands, meeting all manner of people and experiencing a wonderful variety of local customs, but no Yillah is found. It is interesting how these islands can be so close together, and yet each possess a distinct and unique culture. Taji and his companions sail through a wonderful tapestry of diverse customs and cultures. Meanwhile, throughout the tale, Taji is relentlessly pursued by Aleema's three avenging sons, and they manage to slay Samoa and Jarl. Taji is also mocked by the three mysterious, dark-eyed maidens, Hautia's heralds, who, when they come, bring him flowers, the meaning of which Yoomy interprets: the floral messages are harbingers of doom, failure, and mockery of his quest. Aleema's sons, the deaths of Taji's companions, and Hautia's heralds signify an underlying but strong ironic element to this tale. Though Taji rejects the heralds' embassy on the part of their queen, he finally comes, at the end of the tale, to Hautia's isle, where he is told that Yillah lives among the denizens of that isle as a thrall to the evil queen.

Taji does not find her on Hautia's isle, and on he searches, until he comes to Serenia, the land of Love. Herein, the natives convert Babbalanja, Mohi, Yoomy, and Media to the worship of Alma, the god who "opens unto us our own hearts" (Melville 1288), the god of love and charity who, when "he dwelt in Mardi, 'twas with the poor and friendless. He fed the famishing; he healed the sick; he bound up wounds" (1292). Alma is a

personal god of compassion who at one time allegedly had an incarnation, or at the very least, a theophany in Mardi. After their stay on Serenia, Media returns home to find Odo in rebellion against his rule; Babbalanja stays in Serenia, his spiritual home and rest; and Taji is pursued over the open sea by the three avenging sons.

With the plot briefly sketched, we come to the key question: is *Mardi* an ironic or romantic narrative? The presence of Hautia's mocking heralds and Aleema's avenging sons would suggest the former, but the fact that they are *three* in number also suggests romance. Perhaps the number merely mocks romantic convention, as irony often does. King Media's throne is lost due to his absence, but he can hardly be classified as an ironic character since he is a demi-god, albeit a self-proclaimed one. The portrayal of his personal character is never ironically-rendered but treated with nobility and eloquence. Media is a man of grace, courage, and learning. He is no brute. But the land he rules, Odo, is somewhat different, and this difference might reflect on Media himself. The ironic element of equivocation sneaks in again, this time in the theme of appearance versus reality: "to look at . . . Odo seemed a happy land" (Melville 854). But we come to find that the reality is far from that initial appraisal: "men were scourged; their crime, a heresy; the heresy, that Media was no demi-god" (853). Along with torture, we find slavery: "serfs . . . war-captives held in bondage, lived in secret places hard to find . . . the whole isle looked care-free and beautiful. Deep among the ravines and the rocks, these beings lived in noisome caves, lairs for beasts" (853). Such depravity and monstrosity lurking beneath a beautiful surface mocks the romantic idyll of the story. Is Mardi a paradise? Perhaps to the casual observer, yes, but better looked into, with just a bit of exploration and analysis, one finds "infants turned from breasts, whence flowed no nourishment" (853).



Beyond the isle of Odo, Hautia's heralds, and Aleema's avenging sons, nothing more seems ironic about the world of *Mardi*, except perhaps the end of the story, with Taji flying across the open sea, closely pursued by the avengers. The world is not hostile (though some of the characters are); it is not sterile as it is in narrative irony; the characters are not weak or "inferior in power and intelligence" (qtd. in Foulke 865). But one element of narrative irony is quite strong in this tale: it seems that Taji "can neither control nor understand his experience" (869). He is a European man out of his element. Yoomy must interpret the meaning of floral messages, for Taji cannot comprehend them. When at Serenia the rest of his companions find peace in the worship of Alma, Taji rejects the teaching, boldly setting off in search of Yillah again. It is as if Taji (and Tom) is searching for something with eyes closed, so that when he finds that for which he searches, he does not know it and passes over it and continues on.

An underlying ironic narrative is undeniably present in *Mardi*, but the romantic elements of the tale are equally strong. The fundamental question that drives the plot is "Will Taji find Yillah and thus eternal peace?" One could argue that this question has an inevitable affirmative answer. Someday he will find Yillah, when he has sought the world over and learns to be at peace and rest from his wanderings. Babbalanja alludes to Taji's eventual transformation: "and when all is seen, return, and find thy Yillah here [in Serenia]" (Melville 1300). Yillah is not a woman; she is an ideal. Yillah is not beyond the horizon; she is here within Taji's grasp. But Taji continues the search far and wide, and in a sudden exclamation of emotion, cries out, "Oh stars! oh eyes, that see me, wheresoe'er I roam: serene, intent, inscrutable for aye, tell me Sybils, what I am" (840). In *Mardi*, he finally understands that he is roaming, that his journey is a *straying*, a quest that involves so much *wandering* that he cannot reach his final goal.

Though the story leaves off without Taji finding his rest, all textual clues point to his eventual return to the bower of Paradise.

Another aspect of the tale that supports narrative romance is the novel's characters: all are either fast friends with or bitter enemies of Taji; there is no middle ground. Media, Jarl, Samoa, Babbalanja, Yoomy, and Mohi all love Taji and protect him with their lives. But Aleema's sons seek his life with all vengeance, and Hautia's heralds bitterly mock his quest for Yillah. Forces symbolized in these characters are aligned either for or against Taji in his quest.

Nature is amenable, a strong romantic element. They are caught in only one storm, and the damage it does is minimal. The reader is inundated with pleasant green groves, sweet fruits, good wine, warm sunshine, fragrant flowers, and the like. This is a typical tropical paradise. When the characters travel about these islands, time and distance are never mentioned, for they are irrelevant in romance: "localities become habitations of the universal [and] places . . . take on meaning as coordinates of morality" (Foulke 50). We do not know if Odo is near Vivenza or if Diranda is a hundred leagues from Serenia. That is not important. For the tale, it is enough to know that Odo is the seat of Media's power, Vivenza is a land of republican democracy without kings, Diranda is a divided kingdom (wherein the two kings slaughter their surplus population in games resembling the Athenian Olympics), and Serenia is a place of transformation, religious conversion, and self-discovery. It does not matter where Serenia lies geographically. It is enough to know that here Media renounces his demi-godhood in favor of a higher, "common chief"; that here, Mohi feels Alma's breath "on [his] soul" and "see [s] a bright light"; that here, Yoomy finds the source of all his poetic inspiration, all his "dreams are found, [his] inner longings for the Love

supreme” (Melville 1293); and Babbalanja, the ever-philosophically-restless, “at last . . . find [s] repose” (1292). But for Taji, he rejects all this in favor of continuing his fruitless search. Again, the ironic narrative sneaks back in.

The characters in *Mardi* pass beyond symbolism and become archetypes. Mohi *is* history; Yoomy *is* poetry and song; Babbalanja *is* philosophy; and Taji *is* that restlessness within all of us, that yearning to be free to go and fearlessly explore where we will (even if the journey is fruitless), and to finally return to the bower of Eden, the pool of Liriope, and the find rest for our souls.

A final word about Taji’s fate, and this analysis is ended. “Serenia is our haven. Through yonder strait, for thee, perdition lies. And from the deep beyond, no voyager ever puts back” (Melville 1316). Such are Yoomy’s final, unheard words to Taji as the latter makes for the open sea. The poet echoes Hamlet’s immortal words, his reference to that “undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns.” Free from the isles, Taji breaks away from the romantic theocentric dimension of the tale by proclaiming himself his “own soul’s emperor; and my first act is abdication! Hail! realm of shades!” (1316). In an almost blasphemous manner, he rejects the peace that his companions have found and sails off into danger. Does Taji go down to death? If so, he has found his everlasting peace; he has found eternal rest for his wandering soul. His translation is complete. If he escapes the dangers of the sea and the vengeance of Aleema’s three sons, then he will someday return to Serenia and live beneath her shady branches. He will once day escape the violence of his situation and return to the safety of Liriope’s pool. In either case, his search is at an end.

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## 要約

「ハーマン・メルビルと継続的探求：『タイピー』、『オムー』、『マーディ』における古典的航海物語の分析」の概要

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メルビルは、ポリネシアを舞台にした自らの三作の小説『タイピー』、『オムー』、『マーディ』における全ての関連性を否定しているが、三作品の主人公が乗り出す古典的航海物語における、物語の展開の統一性が認識できると強く考えられる。『タイピー』に始まる楽園探求は『オムー』を通して継続され、『マーディ』において完結される。これら三作の物語は、人生と体験の意義を探求する一人の男の放浪を主題としている。彼は二つの目的を達成しようと板挟みに悩む人間であり、一度漂着した楽園の平安を拒絶する一方で、同時に現実の不安や自分の置かれている荒々しい状況からの解放を追求している。