Melville's Spell in *Typee*

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LET ME BEGIN with a well-known story. Published as an autobiographical travel narrative in 1846, *Typee*, Melville's first book, provoked a controversy among readers and reviewers. English publisher John Murray's Colonial and Home Library, the series in which *Typee* was published, specialized in the real-life experiences of travelers in exotic places and promised factual accuracy. But the taint of fiction that was taboo in Murray's series clung to Melville's manuscript. Readers doubted that "Herman Melville" was a real person, and that his account of his experience in the Marquesas Islands was true. British readers in particular were incredulous that any common sailor could write so well. Murray, who worried from the start about the authenticity of both the author and the tale, repeatedly begged Melville to substantiate the truth of the narrative somehow, even after "Toby," one of the book's main characters, fortuitously appeared, "happy to testify to the entire accuracy of the work, so long as I was with Melville."[1]

Although today we know that "Herman Melville" was a real person who had shipped as a common sailor to Polynesia and jumped ship in the Marquesas Islands, we also know that the authenticity debate over the book was well founded. Herman's brother Gansevoort, acting as his agent in London, assured Murray that the author of *Typee* had "never before written either book or pamphlet, and to the best of my belief has not even contributed to a magazine or newspaper."[2] But Melville had already published at least several letters and one piece of fiction in the local press. Furthermore, as Charles R. Anderson demonstrates in his groundbreaking *Melville in the South Seas* (1939), *Typee* was a substantially embellished version of the "facts," converting Melville's "relatively slight contact with primitive life" during a four-week sojourn in

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the Marquesas into Tommo's extensive interaction during a four-month captivity,[3] a premise that rendered *Typee* an authoritative source for subsequent generations of ethnologists. Anderson also shows that Melville borrowed heavily from previous travel narratives, even in constructing allegedly "first-person" observations, and argues that almost all of Melville's recorded "experiences" in *Typee* were in fact derived from the travel literature he read upon his return home. Melville frequently copied not only the subject matter for his chapters and their arrangement, but also entire phrases and figures of speech. Anderson concludes that he must have worked with his source books open in front of him, and that he "might have written *Typee* without ever having seen the Marquesas Islands."[4] Hershel Parker similarly concludes:

> All in all, the evidence seems to show that Melville's last-minute cobbling was not inspired by his publisher but by his own desire to eke out his brief impressions from his four weeks among the Typeeans (rather than the four months he was claiming), plundering sourcebooks for passages which could be rewritten as his own experiences.[5]

Thus Melville's written account of his experience in the Marquesas violated what Nina Baym calls the "implicit genre contract" with his readers to tell the truth, a truth that contemporary admirers of *Typee* adamantly defended.[6]

Although Melville's use of sources in *Typee* is well known among Melville scholars, the implications of this writing practice have not been adequately grasped. Literary criticism of this first novel has concentrated on the conflict among European, American, and Polynesian cultures to which Melville was an eyewitness. Although different moments in the history of criticism approach this conflict in different terms—in some cases by invoking contrasting notions of "civilization" and "the primitive," in others by exploring Melville's role as impassioned critic of the Euro-American destruction of Polynesia or, alternatively, as complicit tool of imperialism[7]—the underlying focus on cultural conflict as such remains constant. Melville's position (sometimes differentiated from, and sometimes equated with, Tommo's) within a range of cultural discourses about missionary activity, "the primitive," imperialism, Manifest Destiny, Indian removal, and so on have long

occupied the discursive center of the book for literary critics. Milton R. Stern's overview of *Typee* criticism is right to stress its "depressingly repetitive" character.[8]

But while a conflict among cultures is indeed the conflict Melville recounts in *Typee*, the tradition of readings I have described largely reproduces Melville's own terms, merely disagreeing over which side of the debate to assign him to and which side deserves our moral valuation, fluctuations useful mostly for what they reveal about literary studies at a given historical moment. The problem with this critical tradition is that its attention to the cultural conflict Melville explicitly addresses has largely blinded us to the importance of the conflict the text struggles so hard to repress: the fact that this "first-person" account of experience is in fact largely copied from other books.

The crucial implications of this repressed conflict, to which I will turn in detail presently, have been obscured by the discomfort Melville scholars have felt in the face of the specter of plagiarism. Anderson and others, for example, writing in the critical style of their time, argue that Melville recast his borrowed material "to secure greater artistic unity and effect" or to make the material "his own."[9] Their investment in this position is meant to secure the status of Melville's "authorship" and to absolve him of any blame for a practice that a less-favorably inclined party might call plagiarism.[10] Indeed, when reading accounts of Melville's use of sources, one cannot escape vigorous pronouncements about how definitively he was *not* a plagiarist. Writing in 1949, Howard P. Vincent summarizes Anderson's findings this way: "Anderson showed how carefully and how deftly Melville adapted many details from travel books to insure accuracy and authenticity for his own narratives of travel," and summarily concludes, "Melville transformed his borrowings with such skill that the charge of plagiarism is inadmissible."[11] Melville's second novel, *Omoo* (1847), was also heavily "borrowed," and Gordon Roper's Historical Note to the Northwestern-Newberry edition of that text (1968) remarks:

> Melville's extensive borrowings from his source books were not those of a plagiarist. He had been in the islands, and had seen native life with his own eyes and reacted to it in his own way. He had been there only a short time, it is true, but what he experienced he experienced vividly and particularly; what he

> lacked was the broader knowledge which longer residence had given such an observer as Ellis.[12]

Defenses like Vincent's and Roper's suggest most forcefully the felt presence of the "charge" rather than its dismissal. Harrison Hayford and Walter Blair's Introduction to the Hendricks House edition of *Omoo* (1969), which supplements and extends Anderson's account, points out that "his [Melville's] claims about the truth of *Omoo* were by no means candid," and that

> He had not plagiarized, merely, for he had always rewritten and nearly always improved the passages he appropriated. Yet he had composed his books in a way he had not really acknowledged, and in a way that even his most suspicious contemporary critics had never dreamed.
>
> But we believe that even Anderson understated the pervasiveness of these fictional procedures in *Omoo*.[13]

Their formulation that Melville "had not plagiarized, merely," usefully displays the critical hesitancies about this issue: the word "merely" changes the sense of the claim from "He had not plagiarized" to "He had plagiarized, but he had also done more than that," an important and more accurate inflection of the "plagiarism" issue than the other defenses I've cited.[14]

The contemporary version of the argument that Melville made the borrowed material "his own," by another critic writing in the style of his time, is well represented by John Samson's *White Lies: Melville's Narratives of Facts* (1989). Samson claims that Melville carefully chose the passages he lifted, intricately deconstructing the ideological foundations of each as he revised it for inclusion in his own text. Samson's approach is meant to bolster his ultimate argument that Melville was politically forward-thinking and engaged in a deliberate and conscious critique of his sources as representatives of "white" ideology.[15] Melville's reliance upon sources is rendered fully justified in this scheme because it is construed as an integral part of his ideological critique. Samson and Anderson represent the same position because both act as advocates for Melville, whether for his artistic genius or his correct politics. They seek thereby to redeem his writing practices, redemptive gestures that are common in source studies of Melville's work.

The most serious flaw in these redemptive gestures with respect to *Typee* in particular is that they avoid and obscure the fact that Melville borrowed so much of his first novel *as such*. The scholar's discomfort with "plagiarism" produces the scholar's need to find ways to justify Melville's use of sources, and therefore—and this argumentative turn is a crucial one—to dismiss the ultimate importance of the sources to Melville's final product. But by dismissing the ultimate importance of the presence of source-texts, scholars also dismiss a crucially constitutive component of Melville's relation to his own text and to its production. We cannot dismiss, ignore, or otherwise justify away Melville's copying from the books open in front of him without distorting his relation both to his writing practice and to the text that practice produced.

I will argue that Melville's writing practice in *Typee* is one that the author himself is disturbed by, and that he wanted and needed to disavow. He famously concludes his Preface to *Typee* ". . . trusting that his anxious desire to speak the unvarnished truth will gain for him the confidence of his readers" (xiv). The author's equivocation is clear: he claims not that he *does* speak the truth but only that he desires to do so. He also reveals that the issue of truth-telling provokes his anxiety. This anxiety, I will argue, centers in his own awareness of his extensive copying from source books.[16] Hayford and Blair's formulation that "he had composed his books in a way he had not really acknowledged" points usefully to the author's anxiety and disavowal to which I want to call attention. I will also show how this anxiety shapes the terms of the text, particularly its terrifying facial tattoos.

When I refer to the "presence of writing" in *Typee* that provokes Melville's anxiety, I mean to designate two compelling senses of this phrase. First, I mean the presence of printed texts during composition, from which Melville secretly copies to construct his "first-person" account. Writing in this sense interferes with the premise of autobiographical "experience" at the heart of *Typee*. Second, the "presence of writing" signifies Melville's own handwriting, the marks on the page that must efface themselves in order to deliver the pure realm of sound and experience they promise to conjure.[17] The transparent transmission of such a pure realm is impossible, of course, as poststructuralism and particularly deconstruction have long stressed within our own historical moment. But my focus at present is less the impossibility of that

transparency in a philosophical sense than the particular anxiety that the interfering ineffaceability of writing provokes for this particular author in this particular text, and here I will show Melville's notoriously bad handwriting and spelling to be crucial components of his scene of writing. The presence of writing in the two senses I have sketched, and Melville's anxious disavowal of that presence, stand at the core of the narrative's anxieties. Furthermore, these anxieties are in fact closely related, since Melville's heavy "borrowings" from printed sources are one kind of nagging indication that *Typee* is made of written marks and not of the world of experience and sound to which he so wishfully appeals.

Part of *Typee*'s project was the representation of a foreign language. Melville invented his own orthography:

> In the Polynesian words used in this volume—except in those cases where the spelling has been previously determined by others—that form of orthography has been employed, which might be supposed most easily to convey their sound to a stranger. In several works descriptive of the islands in the Pacific, many of the most beautiful combinations of vocal sounds have been altogether lost to the ear of the reader by an overattention to the ordinary rules of spelling. (xiv)

Melville's claim to represent the lost sounds of Polynesia is part of his project to represent his subject truly and without distortion.[18] But readers of *Typee* and *Omoo* familiar with the languages Melville renders have long been puzzled and disturbed by his orthography, rather than impressed with its naturalness. Robert Louis Stevenson, for example, was aghast at Melville's bad ear and "grotesque misspelling," and Anderson refers to his "usual phonetic inaccuracy."[19] The effect of Melville's Marquesan orthography on readers familiar with the "beautiful . . . vocal sounds" in question has dramatized the non-aural nature of his combinations of letters, rather than the non-written nature he wants to claim for them.

Melville was in fact a chronically frustrated speller.[20] For example, he habitually misspelled words like "accont" (for account), "acknoledge" (for acknowledge), and "pont" (for point), as well as "ie" words in general ("beleive," "cheifly," "acheivment"). Moments of spelling frustration erupt in his correspondence in response to words he has just penned: "(how the devel [sic] do you spell it?"); "(I spell the word right

from your sheet)"; "(what a devel [sic] of an unspellable word!)"; "(How is it spelt?)"; and "Pardon me, if I have unintentionally translated your patronymick into the Sanscrit."[21] Although American spelling practices were not fully standardized by this time, during the course of the nineteenth century spelling moved toward increasing standardization. Melville reported to John Murray in 1849 that his American printers had instructed him to spell according to Webster.[22] Spelling by the book—and Melville ordered at least three copies of Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* in 1847 and 1848[23]—is presumably one of the kinds of alterations to his writing practice resulting from the difficult logistics of readying *Typee* for the press. Leon Howard importantly stresses that the editorial additions and attentions to Melville's first manuscript are important "because they affected the character of the book and perhaps its author's later habits of writing."[24] Murray had felt it necessary to employ Henry Milton, the reader of the manuscript, to revise Melville's text, and Milton spent seventy-seven hours revising Part I and ninety-one and one-half hours revising Part II. For his extensive labors he was paid just over half the amount Melville himself was paid for the manuscript.[25] But since the manuscript of *Typee* does not survive—with the exception of the sixteen leaves, covered on both sides, constituting a working draft of chapters 12–14, only one of which had been found by the time the Northwestern-Newberry edition was produced—we can finally only speculate about exactly what Melville's manuscript looked like before it was revised.[26] Looking back on his experience publishing his first book, Melville assured Murray in July 1846 that his new manuscript (*Omoo*) "will be in a rather better state for the press than the M.S.S. handed to him by my brother. A little experience in this art of book-craft has done wonders."[27]

Among Melville's various problems producing manuscript, I mean to stress for the moment the importance of his spelling difficulties as they relate to *Typee* in particular, although they certainly resonate throughout his writing in ways scholarship has overlooked. The most compelling relevance of spelling for Melville was its difficulty and its resistance to self-evidence; it constituted one of the material obstacles intruding upon his scene of writing.[28] By "material" here I mean the physical object that is a word, as opposed to the transcendent meaning to which the object-word can be construed as a transparent window—a crux at the center of Melville's writing and his writing difficulties. In

addition to the obtrusiveness of his spelling frustrations, we can see in Melville's misspelling important effects of meaning. On this matter I disagree with critics and editors who believe that Melville's spelling should be corrected in the service of producing a more adequate text. Norman Eugene Jarrard's edition of the published poems, for example, concludes that "legitimate interest in such spelling errors is non-literary."[29]

In *Typee*, Melville's confrontation with what was for him the endlessly frustrating problem of how to spell words becomes an explicit part of his writing process by way of his orthographic project. His chronic problem with spelling usually had no occasion for explicit mention in his published works, but in his first novel the need to represent a foreign language introduced the subject of spelling as such as a pertinent one. While his characteristically errant spellings of standardized words would be regularized during the publishing process, his Marquesan orthography was not subject to conventions of Western spelling. His spellings were meant to reproduce "beautiful combinations of vocal sounds" that "the ordinary rules of spelling" might destroy, and these were "sounds" about which Melville, as a "first-person" observer, was an authority.

In practice, of course, his intention to naturalize writing is self-defeating on two counts. First, Melville's relation to spelling as part of the practice of writing was not at all comfortable and so did not flow naturally. And second, the promise to render spelling a transparent window to sound is an impossible attempt to bypass the writtenness of writing, to naturalize and thereby dissolve its mediating presence. Since letters do not have a transparent relation to sound, the purity of sound reproduction to which Melville appeals is already marred by writing since it must be constituted by it. The "easy" conveyance of sound Melville claims as his orthographic goal accords perfectly with the narrative's pretensions to "genuineness" and pure experience, since, in reproducing Polynesian sounds unmediated by the "ordinary rules of spelling," he attempts to dispel forms of writing that could only interfere with a true experience of the Marquesas. The pretense of dissolving writing into sound, of dispelling spelling and in its place restoring "beautiful combinations of vocal sounds . . . altogether lost to the ear of the reader," is part of Melville's more thoroughgoing and anxious need to disclaim the writtenness of the text.

The beautiful vocal sounds he claims to restore are inescapably words, and I will now detail how his relation to these words blocks any claim to transparent writing in a way that was, I maintain, compelling to the author himself. Manuscript leaves for the extant draft reveal, for example, that spellings are not always consistent: many of the spellings eventually published as the "natural" ones were different at this stage of composition, and some were in a clear state of transition within the draft from one spelling to another. "Kory-Kory" is usually "Kori Kori" at this stage, although in one case it appears to be "KoKiri" and in another "Kiri Kiri"; "Happar" is "Hapaa," or sometimes "Haapaa"; "kokoo" is "cuckoo"; "Marheyo" is "Maheyo"; "Typee" is "Tipii" or sometimes "Tippii"; and "Fayaway" is "Faawa" or perhaps "Faaua." We can see "Faawa" changing to "Fayaway" at one point in the draft as Melville overscores the former with the latter. The final spellings "Typee" and "Kory-Kory" don't appear at all. It is thus clear from the extant draft that what became the spellings in the first English edition, which in turn became the copy-text for the Northwestern-Newberry edition, were determined only after Melville tried many other forms of these words.[30]

On the inside of the folded and sewn paper cover of the manuscript, Melville experiments with different spellings of the name that appears in copy-text as "Marheyo"; here, he writes in a vertical column "Marheyoo," "Mh," "Mar," "Marheeyo," and "Marheyo." Several different combinations of letters can approximate one particular combination of sounds, since the letters themselves bear no essential relation to the sounds they "reproduce,"[31] and here we see Melville working through, in the case of one particular word in his Marquesan orthography, the practical problems of spelling arising from that condition. In the body of the manuscript, Melville chooses "Maheyo."[32] These examples both illustrate the lack of transparency in Melville's Polynesian words—since the "form of orthography . . . which might be supposed most easily to convey their sound to a stranger" was a product of experimentation and change—and suggest how variations in Melville's spellings produce effects only detectable in their written form, since presumably all these variant spellings "sound" the same way. These purely written differences—say, between "Fayaway" and "Faaua"—thus mark the presence of writing in a text that disclaimed its own writtenness.

In Bette S. Weidman's transcription of part of leaf 10, we find Melville wrestling with acknowledging the writtenness of Toby's words:

> As I cannot remember the words made use of by Toby on this occasion, I shall accordingly relate his adventure in my own language tho' in the same putting the words in his mouth.
>
> Though I can not recall to mind anything like the precise phraseology employed on this occasion still for the sake of unity I shall permit my companion to rehearse his own adventure in the language that most readily occurs to me.

Weidman's transcription reveals that Melville tries to get this moment right twice: he strikes out the first sentence quoted, and both are entirely absent from the published text, in which Toby merely "was sufficiently recovered to tell me what had occurred," and begins speaking.[33] The conflicted admission that these words of dialogue are not the recalled and experienced voice of Toby, but rather, Melville's own written words, is one finally eliminated. The problems of invented dialogue (like Toby's in this example) and invented spelling (Melville's orthography rather than "pure" sound) further intersect in the tension evident throughout the narrative between Tommo's ability to understand the Typees' language and his inability to do so. Thus he frequently prefaces a long paraphrase of native speech with a paradoxical disclaimer about his ignorance of the language. Tommo tells us the meaning of the Typees' words despite what is to him their opacity, a gesture that makes present to his audience what is not present to him. Tommo's position as translator thus restages Melville's position as autobiographer, since Melville presents to his audience as first-person accounts what are present to him not as "pure" sound but as printed pages.

Early on, the narrator both acknowledges and disclaims his own printed sources:

> Of this interesting group [of islands], but little account has ever been given, if we except the slight mention made of them in the sketches of South-Sea voyages . . . all that we know about them is from a few general narratives. Among these, there are two that claim particular notice. Porter's "Journal of a Cruise of the U.S. frigate Essex, in the Pacific, during the late War," is said to contain some interesting particulars concerning the islanders. This is a work, however, which I have never happened to meet with; and Stewart, the chaplain of the American sloop of war Vincennes, has likewise devoted a portion of his book, entitled "A Visit to the South Seas," to the same subject. (6)

He also acknowledges "interesting accounts" of Tahiti by Ellis (6). According to Anderson, these texts were in fact Melville's chief sources in *Typee*: Captain David Porter's *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean, in the U.S. Frigate Essex, in the Years 1812, 1813, and 1814* (1815), Charles S. Stewart's *A Visit to the South Seas, in the U.S. Ship Vincennes, During the Years 1829 and 1830* (1831), and, to a lesser extent, William Ellis' *Polynesian Researches* (1829).[34] Ellis would become what Hayford and Blair call his "major prompt-book" in *Omoo*.[35] The narrator of *Typee* defensively acknowledges having read Stewart and Ellis, but does not acknowledge his reliance upon them, and he disclaims having read Porter altogether. Meanwhile, his awareness in the Preface of how unnamed "others" spell Polynesian words shows a familiarity with previous accounts of the region. The American Revised Edition of *Typee* deleted the reference to Porter and Stewart entirely; this deletion was apparently one of the "two or three slight alterations" that Melville sent to Wiley and Putnam, his American publishers, before the wholesale revisions of July 1846.[36] Howard argues that Melville omitted this passage because his claim "may have been true when he began writing his book but was certainly false by the time he had finished it."[37] Whether Melville deleted this passage after he borrowed heavily from these sources or merely thought better of even mentioning them, this deletion marks Melville's ambivalence and vacillation about acknowledging the sources he copied from. Around the same time he is deleting the fib about his sources, he adamantly defends, to Murray and others, "the truth of my narrative *as I sent it to London*."[38]

Anderson and Hayford and Blair point out that Melville's quirky spellings and inaccuracies about Polynesia are in many cases attributable to the sources from which he copied. In this sense Melville's orthography as a textual site for the presence of his engagement with written words as such overlaps with the presence of writing constituted by his reliance on printed text. Hayford and Blair correctly point out that Melville's claim to have been governed by sounds in devising his orthography has been too uncritically accepted, and that the many words he borrowed from books would have been seen, not heard. Thus those who fault Melville's "ear" overlook the crucial fact that the sources of distortion were non-aural.[39] Hayford and Blair's observation that critics "have sought no more precise explanation of his spelling practices" than that of his "poor ear" still holds true; Hayford and Blair themselves have produced the most useful work to date on this subject.[40]

Thinking about Melville's orthography in the light of these important suggestions produces valuable results. While Stewart and others incline toward the spelling "Taipi," for example, the orthography that prevailed in the nineteenth century and that remains standard today,[41] Melville unconventionally rendered the word as "Typee," presumably a later orthographic choice than the "Tipii" that usually appears in the body of the extant draft. On the cover of the draft the later spelling, "Typee," is written in what appears to be Melville's hand.[42] A French official who visited the Marquesas around the same time as Melville notes that he spells the word "Typee" "bizarrement."[43] Early in the novel, the narrator reports of "the dreaded Typees" that their "very name is a frightful one; for the word 'Typee' in the Marquesan dialect signifies a lover of human flesh" (24). Anderson is puzzled by the "unspeakable terrors" (24) Melville aligns with the word:

> In the first place, the word "Typee" in the Marquesan dialect did not signify "a lover of human flesh." The Abbé Boniface Mosblech in his Marquesan-French dictionary gives the word "Taipi" as meaning "ennemi" or "peuple ennemi." This in itself is puzzling, for no people would take upon themselves voluntarily the name of enemy. . . . Whatever the meaning, there was nothing in the word "Typee," etymologically at least, to inspire anyone with unspeakable terrors.[44]

The image of the word's terrors as "unspeakable" is apt, since part of the narrative investment in it is a function of its spelling. The written form "Typee" echoes and bears the mark of the disavowed Porter, who also uses this unconventional orthography.[45] Melville's description also echoes Stewart's comment that the "very name [of the Taipiis] seemed to be a watchword of terror" among the Teiis,[46] so this moment in Melville's text is doubly constituted by written sources.

Writing is materially embedded in the word "Typee" not only as Porter's orthographic mark in particular, but also in the form of "type," a sign for the presence in the narrative of Melville's printed source texts in general as well as of Porter's text in particular.[47] That the word "Typee" carried the resonance of printed text is substantiated by James Russell Lowell's witticism about proofreading: "This having to do with printers is dreadful business. There was a Mr. Melville who I believe enjoyed it, but for my part I am heartily sick of *Typee*."[48] Lowell invokes the word

"Typee" as a pun for "type" ("type," of course, refers to the small blocks featuring a raised letter or other character used to print), and expresses his irritation with the latter by way of Melville and the former. The "*Typee*" he is sick of is not Melville's book, but rather everything associated with "printers" and the "business" of book production.

The presence of "type" in "Typee" for Lowell is clear; its presence for Melville is one we can see more forcefully by considering his approach to spelling Polynesian words in general. When Tommo and Toby are initially welcomed into Typee valley, a name exchange takes place. The narrator introduces himself to the Typees as "Tom" because he thinks his "real name" would be difficult for them to pronounce. "But I could not have made a worse selection; the chief could not master it: 'Tommo,' 'Tomma,' 'Tommee,' every thing but plain 'Tom'" (72), he laments. The Marquesan version of "Tom" adds to that single syllable a second syllable of "mo," "ma," or "mee." (The spelling "Tomo" also appears in the draft.) Melville's orthography in general conforms to this structural pattern, concluding an otherwise recognizable or partly recognizable English word with "ee." Thus "franee" means French and "botee" means boat. This model suggests that "type" is a seed-word as present in "Typee" as "Tom" is in "Tommo."

Melville's spelling of the island's staple breadfruit dish also orthographically embeds the presence of writing. While orthographies generally rendered this word as "popoi" or "poipoi,"[49] Melville writes "poee-poee." (In the draft, "poi=poi" appears on one occasion [p. 5] and "poipoi" on another [p. 9]; "poee-poee" never appears.) Stewart, to whom I have already pointed as one of Melville's primary sources, is another exception to conventional spellings, and writes simply "poe" (1: 261). In the extant draft, Melville writes "poe poe" on one occasion.[50] In what was presumably a later change, Melville does not adopt Stewart's spelling as such, but doubles the word and adds a final "e"—"poe" becomes "poee-poee." According to the orthographic structure by which "Tommo" embeds "Tom" and "Typee" embeds "type," "poee-poee" embeds the word "poe," this time not only Stewart's spelling but also Edgar Allan Poe, whose *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838) is an unacknowledged fictional source for *Typee*. Even more so than the travel narratives he had open in front of him as he wrote, Melville particularly needed to mask any suggestions of fiction because of the narrative's pretensions to factual accuracy.

Like *Typee*, Poe's *Pym* recorded a factual/fictional account of a sailing expedition from Massachusetts to the South Seas that made extensive use of source-texts. John T. Irwin has called attention to the way that *Pym* thematizes its own status as writing, especially in Pym's confrontation with characters hewn out of the black granite landscape.[51] While Melville's letters and journals offer no explicit indication that he read Poe, Poe's appearance as an unnamed raven-haired writer and peddler of tracts in *The Confidence-Man* is a late gesture of explicit acknowledgment.[52] *Typee* also describes poee-poee as similar to "bookbinders' paste" (73), an image whose bookishness for Melville is reinforced by the fact that he lifts this metaphor from Stewart.[53] Melville's "poee-poee" is thus a word inspired both by Stewart's "poe" and by Poe, and at the same time a disfiguration of both. Like the doubleness in the word "typee," which signifies both as a spelling indebted to Porter and as a word denoting "type," "poee-poee" signifies both as a spelling indebted to Stewart and as a word denoting the name of another printed source (Poe). Thus the disfigured presence of printed sources lurks within the "beautiful vocal sounds" in the interest of which Melville disavows ordinary spelling.

In addition to appearing once in the extant pages of the draft, the spelling "poe-poe" also appears once in the first English edition, but the Northwestern-Newberry editors regularize this spelling to "poee-poee" in accordance with the American and American Revised editions, "since the shorter form might not be given the intended pronunciation by English readers."[54] It is of course impossible to tell if the spelling "poe-poe" here was Melville's (either a slip of the pen or a deliberate choice) or a compositor's error; but it is clear, as I note above, that the spelling "poe poe" also appears on one occasion at a different moment in the extant draft, substantiating this spelling as one Melville himself used. The appearance of "poe poe" in the copy-text suggests the potentially quite meaningful effects of Melville's spelling and spelling irregularities. The editors' decision to emend it in the interest of "pronunciation" exemplifies both the way in which editorial regularization and emendation can erase those effects and the persisting notion that Melville's orthography in *Typee* is primarily aural in nature.

The identic hinge that inheres in Melville's orthographic final letter "e" is a point of fluctuation particularly connected to Melville's own written identity. His patronymic was originally spelled without its final

"e": "Melvill." His mother, Maria Gansevoort, added the final letter after her husband Allan, Melville's father, died in 1832.[55] Nevertheless, Melville still occasionally wrote his name with this original spelling.[56] In once such case, a letter to Murray in 1848 about the *Typee* controversy, Melville signed his letter "Herman Melville" but wrote within it:

> Will you still continue, Mr. Murray, to break seals from the Land of Shadows—persisting in carrying on this mysterious correspondence with an imposter shade, that under the fanciful appellation of Herman Melvill still practices upon your honest credulity?[57]

Here Melville divides himself into two, "Herman Melville" and "Herman Melvill," and raises the specter of himself as an impostor, in this case an imposture constituted by an entirely written difference (since the final "e" is silent) between "Melville" and "Melvill." His letter to Murray associates this form of self-disfiguration—the absence or presence of a final "e"—with both his own written identity and with the "imposture" issue in *Typee*. This signature effect continues to be important for Melville in subsequent writings. Philip Young points out that Daniel Orme, the protagonist of the late tale of that title, is Melville's self-portrait, and that the name "Orme" is Melville's pun for "or me." "Orme" also appears in "Pebbles" in *John Marr and Other Sailors* (1888) as "Orm."[58] Melville wrote "Orme. Orm" at the top of one page of the manuscript.[59] This fluctuation in the spellings of Orme/Orm is important for its registration of Melville's attraction to the absence or presence of a final "e" as a signature effect. It is of course interpreting the final "e" in the word "Typee" as silent that enables Lowell's reading of the word as "type."

The same graphic device, as we have seen, disfigures the presence of source texts in the "combinations of vocal sounds" in type/Typee. Melville was in fact particularly invested in the word "Typee" as the title of his narrative. Murray had published the book under the title *Narrative of a Four Months' Residence Among the Natives of a Valley of the Marquesas Islands; or, A Peep at Polynesian Life*.[60] Melville wrote to Murray:

> From the first I have deeply regretted that it did not appear in England under the title I always intended for it—"Typee" . . . .

> "Typee" is a title *naturally suggested by the narrative itself*, and not farfetched as some strange titles are. Besides, its very strangeness & novelty, founded as it is upon the character of the book—are the very things to make "Typee" a popular title. The work also should be known by the same name on both sides of the water.—For these and other reasons I have thought that in all subsequent editions of the book you might entitle it "Typee"—merely prefixing that single but eloquent word to the title as it now stands with you. If you try out the revised edition with the Sequel—that would be the time to make this very slight but most important alteration.—I trust that M[r] Murray will at once consider the propriety of following this suggestion.[61]

Typee is a title "naturally suggested by the narrative itself," but embedded in that notion of "naturalness"—as is the case with the "beautiful vocal sounds" whose primary nature is non-aural—is the felt presence of type.

This felt presence that speaks to Melville's anxieties about his specifically printed sources is one conjoined with the narrative's anxiety about its own status as handwriting on paper. These scenarios are discrete, in that one speaks to his relation to printed sources and printed text and the other to his production of manuscript, but they are also mutually significant in that both point to the written nature of his text, at odds with its pretensions. Melville's heavy "borrowings" are one kind of nagging indication that *Typee* is made of written marks and not of the world of experience and sound to which he so wishfully appeals. Although Tommo describes Typee as an island where ". . . parchments and title deeds there were none" (202), Melville's figurations of Typee nonetheless point to the compelling presence of paper, ink, and writing. Tappa, a cloth of dazzling whiteness made from the bark of the paper mulberry tree, is widely known to resemble paper.[62] Indeed, Melville's "tappa" is also known as "paper cloth,"[63] and samples of decorated Polynesian tappa on display at the Whaling Museum in Nantucket, Mass., visually—and starkly—resemble inked paper of the kind Melville wrote the *Typee* draft itself on. His description of tappa manufacture echoes stages of paper production: fibers of the "cloth-tree" are soaked, softened, and beaten with a mallet (147). Melville returns to the sub-

ject of paper production in a more explicit and sustained way in the 1855 tale "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids." The ubiquity of tappa in *Typee* (and indeed at times it feels like this substance is everywhere Tommo turns) is thus heavily loaded with the material presence of text.

We find another form of writing paper in the bodies and faces of the natives themselves, which are "human canvas" (218) inked with tattoos by "Karky the artist" (219). Tattooing as an "art" in *Typee* represents an activity of the hand and its implements that figures the act of writing. Karky works with a set of instruments and inks that resemble writers' tools, "short slender stick[s]" dipped in "coloring matter," "terminat[ing] in a single fine point" and "like very delicate pencils" (217, 218). Tommo also describes Karky on several occasions as a "painter" (219) and as "A Professor of the Fine Arts" (217). Karky's painterliness is pertinent—and requires attention since I've just claimed that he figures writing—because the particular inflection of writing it summons is not one of writing as "authorship" but of writing as penmanship, as a design produced by the hand that thus shares an affinity with painting and drawing. I'll provisionally define "authorship" as calling a particular ("original") arrangement of words into being, with the sanction of Melville's comment in a late unpublished manuscript that "authorship . . . implies origination."[64]

Penmanship manuals and advertisements by writing masters in antebellum America frequently refer to penmanship as an "art"; the common phrase "the art of writing" in the period signifies penmanship. "Writing masters" also engaged in other "arts" like painting and cutting silhouettes.[65] These manuals also frequently either pair or analogize "writing" and "penmanship" with "drawing." The title of James French's 1854 volume *The Art of Pen Drawing*, which contains "examples of all the usual hands," and Rembrandt Peale's *Graphics; a manual of drawing and writing* (1835) provide two examples. Peale treated writing and drawing as aspects of the same skill.[66] The business cards of writing master Christopher C. Fellows of New Hampshire advertised "Beauties of Writing," "Teacher of Writing & Painting," and "C.C. Fellows, Writing, Drawing & Painting Academy."[67] Instructions for ornamental penmanship describe manipulations of the hand and arm as well as of the implements of writing (such as the nib of the pen) in order to achieve a variety of beautiful effects. Penmanship specimens displayed at the

entrances to writing shops and on the title pages of manuals were often elaborate pen-drawings in which the flourishes and basic strokes of handwriting were used to form fish, eagles, angels, geese, swans, and other designs.[68] Penmanship was an art, and for it the hand needed to be trained and to use the proper tools.

Conceptions of penmanship in the antebellum North were hovering at a crux between the ornamental and the practical, between writing as a design whose flourishes should be beautiful and writing as an occupation that should be "plain, bold, and rapid," stressing speed and endurance over beauty. "Mercantile penmanship" becomes a catch phrase in the early part of the century, and training in "rapid business writing" is similarly widely advertised.[69] Some manuals speak to both conceptions of penmanship simultaneously, conjoining, for example, "writing, drawing, and book-keeping" or advertising "a hand-writing at once beautiful and practical." Ray Nash notes that during the first half of the nineteenth century, handwriting became a regular subject in American schools, including the rising commercial schools and business colleges. By the early nineteenth century, a good business hand had become the prime objective in teaching handwriting.[70]

As early as 1832, Herman's mother Maria was scrutinizing his correspondence and insisting that he improve his handwriting through assiduous practice: "His last letter was much praise'd, for its superiority over the first, the hand writing particularly, he must practise often, & daily," she wrote to her brother Peter, with whom Herman was staying at the time.[71] Howard emphasizes the vocational imperative behind Maria's insistence that Herman improve his handwriting, and attributes to Melville's "youthful failure" to do so his "disqualification" from employment as a copyist. Melville and his friend Eli James Murdock Fly both sought jobs in a tough economy, out "West" and in New York; while Fly obtained a situation in New York in 1840 "where he has incessant writing from morning to Eve[g]," Melville went to sea, presumably unable to gain employment like Fly's because of his bad handwriting.[72] Ironically, although Melville's handwriting failed to meet Maria's standards, which were in turn directed at employment, Melville nonetheless became a "writer," one who eventually needed to put his own copyists to work in order to produce his texts. Leo Marx inaugurated a tradition of reading "Bartleby, the Scrivener" as an autobiographical account of Melville's refusal to write against his heart and for the mar-

ket.[73] If Bartleby is a self-portrait, and I agree with Marx that he is, then we must also recognize the extent to which the tale suggests that Melville saw the activity of copying as fundamental to his own processes of composition. It is crucial to distinguish copying in this context from generating "original" text, the work of an "author" as Melville himself defined it. For Melville, copying means both repeatedly copying out versions of a manuscript in progress (an exhaustive and labor-intensive process for himself and his copyists) and also copying text generated by others. It is the latter that is Bartleby's writing labor, an observation that should radically revise decades of reading Bartleby's preference "not to" as a desire to renounce authorship.

The scene of writing that Karky the "Professor of the Fine Arts" conjures is not that of the writer as "author," but of the writer as penman. Indeed, Tommo can relate to the products of Karky's hand only as design since he is never able to determine what, if anything, tattooing means. Tommo is given a "choice of patterns" for his facial tattoos: "I was at perfect liberty to have my face spanned by three horizontal bars, after the fashion of my serving-man's; or to have as many oblique stripes slanting across it; or if, like a true courtier, I chose to model my style on that of royalty, I might wear a sort of freemason badge upon my countenance in the shape of a mystic triangle" (220). Melville makes a variety of designs on his manuscript itself. He writes in an ornamental hand on the cover page, and in his chapter titles,[74] and he marks his text with frequent designs including paragraphing symbols; wavy lines; diamonds; oblong boxes; concentric circles around dots; a circle transversed by two lines, each resulting wedge then marked with dots, and underlined in its entirety; and a circle transversed by three lines and then enclosed within a square. Some of these designs mark blocks of text to be moved and places where text is to be inserted.

From Tommo's perspective, Karky is a flourishing practitioner of the "art of writing," a role for which Melville's cramped and nearly illegible handwriting—a problem throughout his writing life—disqualified him. He opens an 1881 letter to his sister Kate with uncharacteristically large writing and sweeping flourishes, and comments, "Dont [sic] be alarmed by these beautiful flourishes of mine; I have been recently improving my penmanship by lessons from a High Dutch professor who teaches all the stylish flourishes imaginable—."[75] At moments like this one Melville is explicitly aware of penmanship and of his customary

hand's deficiencies from the standpoint of "beautiful flourishes." Although Melville's atrocious penmanship disqualified him from employment as a copyist, a secret scene of copying is at the heart of the genesis of *Typee* and *Omoo*. The chapter on tattooing in *Omoo*, "The Tattooers of La Dominica," was itself borrowed largely from Langsdorff.[76] Karky's "art of writing" that ultimately so terrifies Tommo is thus a particular employment of the hand that resonates for Melville as penmanship; and penmanship is in turn associated with its vocational applications of copying, of reproducing someone else's "words" rather than "originating" the words themselves. Although from the standpoint of employment Melville was disqualified from working as a copyist, the scene of writing *Typee* is predicated upon employments of the hand as copyist that Melville is simultaneously engaged in and disavowing.

The plot of *Typee* in fact localizes Melville's anxiety about his scene of writing in that which terrifies the narrator most: facial tattoos. Although critics often read cannibalism as the primary threat in Typee,[77] the fear of facial tattooing effectively usurps the primacy of cannibalism as the force motivating Tommo's fear. Thus as Tommo and his mates are about to go on shore leave, the captain warns them:

> Plenty of white men have gone ashore here and never been seen anymore. There was the old *Dido*, she put in here about two years ago, and sent one watch off on liberty; they never were heard of again for a week—the natives swore they didn't know where they were—and only three of them ever got back to the ship again, and one with his face damaged for life, for the cursed heathens tattoed a broad patch clean across his figurehead. But it will be no use talking to you, for go you will, that I see plainly; so all I have to say is, that you need not blame me if the islanders make a meal of you. (34–35)

While the overt thrust of the captain's warning is the threat of cannibalism ("if the islanders make a meal of you"), and thus of joining the ranks of the ". . . white men who have gone ashore here and never been seen anymore," the specter the captain paints most clearly is not that of the white men who are never seen (because they have been eaten), but of the white man who is seen all too vividly: the sailor who returns to the ship ". . . with his face damaged for life" because it has been tattooed. The spectacle of the sailor whose face is damaged for life is the

image that begins to haunt Tommo during an otherwise edenic sojourn in the valley. Here pressing on the slippery critical tendency to elide Tommo the character with Melville the author becomes useful, since what I am suggesting is that Tommo and his fears at the level of the plot both brandish and hide Melville's own.[78] Tommo's fears of both cannibalism and facial tattooing signal his fear of consumption by an alien culture: the literal consumption of his body threatened in the first case becomes the metaphorical consumption of his identity in the second, the particular resonance of "the fearful apprehensions that consumed me" (232).[79]

Tommo's fear of cultural consumption coexists with and gives deflected form to Melville's anxiety about the scene of writing. While it is not clear to ethnologists what purpose tattooing served in Marquesan culture,[80] it is more important for understanding Melville's relation to his own narrative to consider what "purpose" Melville's *representation* of Marquesan tattooing serves in the logic of his textual Typee. Considered from that vantage, tattooing is most notably two things: one, it is a system of writing; and two, it is a system of writing that threatens the identity of the narrator with alien marks.[81] As Mitchell Breitwieser points out, underlying Tommo's fear of tattooing is a "fear of reversed parts," the fear that "the writer may be written upon."[82] In this respect it is particularly useful to return to the captain's warning, quoted earlier, which specifically brandishes a tattooed "figurehead," here meaning "face" in the usage of the time. This moment in *Typee* marks the earliest instance of an incipient structure for Melville, for whom the word "figurehead" was deeply loaded with career anxieties. Melville's attraction to figureheads as symbols of his writing career became explicit as early as *Redburn*, and persisted through the late poem "The Figure-Head" in *John Marr and Other Sailors*.[83]

The anxiety about disfiguration of his figurehead is in a deep sense Melville's anxiety about the relation between his own text and his source texts. By using the term "anxiety" in such a context I do not mean a Bloomian anxiety of influence, a sublimated agon of figuration, but an anxiety about overtly copying whole chunks of text from other authors. The fearful tattooed faces in *Typee* delineate the disfiguration by his own hand of the disavowed printed pages open before him, a disfiguration that grotesquely conflates the copying activity of his hand and the printed source-page.[84] The project of recovery Melville claims

for the text is in fact predicated upon the sufficient mutilation of his printed sources so that, for example, his pages conjure the Typee landscape that Tommo saw rather than the pages of Stewart's text that Melville saw, and from which his descriptions of Typee are largely lifted.[85]

The presence of these texts for Melville as he composed was so strong that, as Anderson points out, he "almost habitually leaned upon his authorities even in matters with which he certainly must have had a first-hand acquaintance. For some reason, he preferred to work from the descriptions of previous authors, which he found ready to hand . . . sometimes even retaining the exact phraseology of his original." Anderson was baffled by Melville's extensive copying from sources: "Just why he followed his sources so closely, even in phraseology[,] it is hard to say. Perhaps, in *Typee* especially, he was conscious of his own inexperience as a writer. . . ."[86]

Melville's "anxious desire" to conjure a world of true experience is one impossibly predicated upon effacing the writing out of which his text is constituted. In order to hear the sounds of Typee, Melville's spelling must be rendered transparent; in order to tell the truth, his printed sources must disappear. While readers of *Typee* hotly disagreed over the extent to which *Typee* did or did not conjure an "authentic" world, Melville's "anxious desire," generated by the impossibility of those effacements, reinscribes the presence of writing in *Typee* in the ways this article has explored. In the captain's warning, what should never again be seen emerges, uncontrollably and in mutilated form, at odds with the captain's own premises. Tommo's terrified confrontation with facial tattoos stands in, for Melville, for the anxious visual scene of writing, in which the object that should not be seen is the one seen all too vividly.

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NOTES

This essay will appear in a longer version as chapter 1 of *Strike Through the Mask: Herman Melville and the Scene of Writing*, forthcoming from The Johns Hopkins University Press, spring 1996.

1. Murray was not the only publisher who smelled fiction and disliked it. The house of Harper had compared the manuscript to *Robinson Crusoe*, but rejected it because "it was impossible that it could be true and therefore was without real value." Richard Tobias Greene, the man who had appeared as "Toby" in Melville's

novel, announced through a Buffalo, New York, newspaper that he could testify to Melville's veracity. The controversy over the "authenticity" of Melville's narrative is particularly ironic since the book was published in two versions under five different titles. Leon Howard, Historical Note, *Typee*, by Herman Melville, vol. 1, *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library, 1968) 278–280, 287, 288; Editorial Appendix to *Typee* 344. All subsequent references to *Typee* refer to this edition and are included by page number in the text.

2. Quoted by Merton M. Sealts, Jr., Historical Note, *The Piazza Tales and Other Prose Pieces 1839–1860*, by Herman Melville, ed. Harrison Hayford, Alma A. MacDougall, G. Thomas Tanselle, et al., vol. 9, *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library, 1987) 460.

3. Charles Roberts Anderson, *Melville in the South Seas* (1939; New York: Dover, 1966) 192.

4. Anderson 126, 191, 166.

5. Hershel Parker, "Evidences for 'Late Insertions' in Melville's Works," *Studies in the Novel* 7 (1975): 413.

6. Nina Baym, "Melville's Quarrel with Fiction," *PMLA* 94.5 (1979): 911. On contemporary reactions to *Typee*, see Titus Munson Coan and J.E.A. Smith's remarks as quoted by Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *The Early Lives of Melville: Nineteenth-Century Biographical Sketches and Their Authors* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974) 44, 125, 127.

7. See Milton R. Stern's *Critical Essays on Herman Melville's* Typee (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1982) for a broad sampling of excerpts from the critical tradition. Some examples of the approaches I refer to include, on "civilization" v. "the primitive," D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923; New York: Viking, 1961) and Lawrance Thompson, "Eden Revisited" in *Melville's Quarrel with God* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952) 43–55. Michael Rogin maintains that Melville "entered literature as a spokesman for the aboriginal victims of Manifest Destiny" (*Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville* [1979; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985] 48). Mitchell Breitwieser argues that Tommo's "sympathy" toward the Typees is "unwittingly complicit in what it resents," and that in *Typee* Melville scrutinizes Tommo's sentiments toward this end ("False Sympathy in Melville's *Typee*," *American Quarterly* 34.4 [1982]: 396).

8. Stern, *Critical Essays on Herman Melville's* Typee 1.

9. See, for example, Anderson 146. Stanton Garner recapitulates this defense in his 1993 *The Civil War World of Herman Melville* when he addresses Melville's borrowings from *The Rebellion Record*. He writes, "What use Herman did make of the *Record* is defensible. *Pace* Edgar Allan Poe, it was not unusual or unprofessional, then or later, for an artist to exploit existing written materials in his imaginative work, providing he refashioned them. Through the power of his imagination, Herman made his borrowings his own property" (*The Civil War World of Herman Melville* [Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1993] 390).

10. Jay Fliegelman argues that the plagiarism debate over Thomas Jefferson's "authorship" of the Declaration of Independence caught Jefferson between competing aesthetics as the rhetorical agenda that valued "harmonizing" traditional thought gave way to a new aesthetic of authorship that valued originality and novel self-expression. See *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, and the Culture of Performance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993). For another exploration of that plagiarism debate, see my "'Declaration-Men' and the Rhetoric of Self-Presentation," *Early American Literature* 24.2 (1989): 120–134.

11. Howard P. Vincent, *The Trying-Out of* Moby-Dick (1949; Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1980) 6.

12. Gordon Roper, Historical Note, *Omoo*, by Herman Melville, vol. 2, *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library, 1968) 325.

13. Harrison Hayford and Walter Blair, Editors' Introduction, *Omoo: A Narrative of Adventures in the South Seas*, by Herman Melville (New York: Hendricks House, 1969) xx–xxi. Anderson had not detected how extensively Melville borrowed in *Omoo*, judging it to be "perhaps the most strictly autobiographical of all Melville's works" (197–199).

14. In a study that sees varieties of plagiarism as an important part of Melville's compositional technique in *Redburn*, Stephen Mathewson usefully points out, "Having Redburn read *The Picture of Liverpool* achieves the same end as plagiarizing it: Melville is 'swelling out' his 'volume' by using the book in two ways while writing." Mathewson also proposes that Melville is engaged in what he calls "self-plagiarism" by repeating material throughout the novel to flesh it out to the desired length ("'To Tell Over Again the Story Just Told': The Composition of Melville's *Redburn*" *ESQ* 37.4 [1991]: 315, 314).

15. John Samson, *White Lies: Melville's Narratives of Facts* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 53 ff., 56.

16. John Bryant notes that Melville's fundamental anxiety in *Typee* is that "he was publishing false goods and knew it" (*Melville and Repose: The Rhetoric of Humor in the American Renaissance* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1993] 132).

17. My formulation of this problem is indebted to the work of Michael Fried, especially in *Realism, Writing, Disfiguration: on Thomas Eakins and Stephen Crane* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986 [hereafter abbreviated as *RWD*]) and "Almayer's Face: On 'Impressionism' in Conrad, Crane, and Norris," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1990): 193–236.

18. Jonathan Goldberg has demonstrated that debates about orthography in the English Renaissance were often based on the notion that orthography represented a realm of truth that the letter should transparently signify. John Hart wrote in his *Orthographie* (1569), "Orthographie is a Greeke woorde signifying true writing" (*Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990] 190 ff.). Goldberg also notes that spelling reform in English

has always been based on the dream of reducing writing to a transparency. See especially "Letters Themselves: Inventions of the Hand" 171–229.

19. Stevenson is quoted by Anderson (444, note 24) and Hayford and Blair (344, note 2.28); Anderson 80.

20. Broadly speaking, American spelling practices, particularly in the early national period, need to be contextualized as a social issue with important determinants and consequences growing out of notions of democracy and cultural independence. For an able discussion of this issue, see David Simpson, *The Politics of American English, 1776–1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

21. To Evert A. Duyckinck, 2 and 14 Dec. 1849, and 12 Feb. 1851; to Allan Melville, 10, 13, and 14 Nov. 1856; and to Evert A. Duyckinck, 13 July 1846 in *Correspondence*, ed. Lynn Horth, vol. 14, *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library, 1993) 148, 180, 302, 50.

22. To John Murray, 28 January 1849, *Correspondence* 114.

23. Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *Melville's Reading: Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Columbia S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1988) 225.

24. Howard, Historical Note, *Typee* 280.

25. Howard, Historical Note, *Typee* 282.

26. John Bryant, "Melville's L-Word: First Intentions and Final Readings in *Typee*," *The New England Quarterly* 63.1 (1990): 125; and Note on the Text, *Typee* 303–325.

27. To John Murray, 15 July 1846, *Correspondence* 58.

28. I pursue this line of analysis in *Strike Through the Mask: Herman Melville and the Scene of Writing*, forthcoming from The Johns Hopkins University Press.

29. Norman Eugene Jarrard, *Poems by Herman Melville: A Critical Edition of the Published Verse* (Diss., University of Texas, 1960) 11. The Northwestern-Newberry edition's method for the treatment of spelling is "to correct spellings which were unacceptable by the standards" of the year of publication, but "to retain any acceptable variants." Any emendations made are cataloged in the List of Emendations to each text; thus, as the editors point out in the Note on the Text to *Typee*, using the editorial apparatus anyone can reconstruct the copy-text in every textual detail (324). See the Treatment of Accidentals section in the Note on the Text in any of the Northwestern-Newberry volumes. Jacqueline Foulque, who published a French translation of *Omoo* (1951), "corrected" Melville's erratic spellings based on her familiarity with Polynesian languages. Hayford and Blair cite her *Omoo, ou le Vagabond du Pacifique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951) extensively in their edition (xvi; Explanatory Notes). In their 1960 edition of Melville's letters, the standard edition until 1993, Merrell R. Davis and William H. Gilman "silently" normalize Melville's spelling on some occasions, and on other occasions cite their spelling changes in the notes (*The Letters of Herman Melville* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960], Textual Notes 321).

30. The spellings I discuss in this section and following are derived from my own reading of the original manuscript, which I had the good fortune to be able to study (Gansevoort-Lansing Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations). I have numbered the draft pages found in 1983 sequentially, not including the leaf extant prior to that time, which sequentially speaking would come between pp. 22 and 23 in my numbering system. Since this single leaf extant prior to 1983 has not been inserted into its place in the narrative among the leaves found together, I have not numbered it with them.

What appears to be "KoKiri" appears on what I have numbered p. 10 of the draft; "Kiri Kiri" appears on p. 21. For additional readings, see also the genetic transcription in *Typee* 366–369; and John Bryant, "Melville, 'Little Henry,' and the Process of Composition: a Peep at the *Typee* Fragment," *Melville Society Extracts* 67 (1986): 1. See *Typee* 368–369 for reproduction and genetic transcription of the page on which the overscored "Fayaway" appears.

31. The fact that one letter may represent more than one sound or that more letters may be used than are required by a particular sound perturbed John Hart in his 1569 *Orthographie*. Goldberg points out that this "independence of letters from their truth function" was one Hart condemned as "corrupted" and "false" (192).

32. See, for example, pp. 13, 16, and 17 of the draft.

33. Bette S. Weidman, "*Typee* and *Omoo*: A Diverging Pair," *A Companion to Melville Studies*, ed. John Bryant (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986) 95; *Typee* 100.

34. Melville does not mention other works that may have been useful to him. See Anderson 118–19.

35. Hayford and Blair, Editors' Introduction xxii.

36. The text from "Among . . . subject" in the passage quoted was deleted in the AR edition. See Howard, Historical Note, *Typee* 289 and List of Substantive Variants *Typee* 346, 6.4–10.

37. Historical Note, *Typee* 289.

38. To John Murray, 15 July 1846, *Correspondence* 55; emphasis in original.

39. Hayford and Blair, Explanatory Notes 345. They do invoke an aural argument when they argue that Melville's troublesome use of the letter "r," for example in the word "Happar," is attributable to the Northeastern American dialect of silent "r"'s constituting a long "a" sound (346). Their argument is complicated by the evidence in the manuscript that Melville did not spell "Happar" with the final "r" at this stage of production, so the invocation of sound reproduction as a ground again goes awry.

40. Hayford and Blair, Explanatory Notes 344.

In J. Orville Taylor's *The District School* (New York: Harper, 1834), which was one of several books Melville's uncle Peter Gansevoort gave him while he was teaching, Taylor writes that the error at the root of so much bad spelling is that children in school "correct their spelling by the sense of hearing," spelling words the teacher pronounces. But outside the classroom people need to spell words that appear

> not through the sense of hearing (the sense that has been educated, and always applied to as the corrective), but through the sense of seeing. The pupil has not been accustomed to judge whether words are spelled correctly or not by their appearance on paper, and the false spelling, not coming under the trial of the ear, escapes the unskilful observance of the eye. (147)

Melville singled out Taylor's book as "of eminent usefulness" (to Peter Gansevoort, 30 Dec. 1837, *Correspondence* 8).

41. French spelling of Polynesian words was standard at the time (Anderson, Preface 5). See, for example, L'Abbé Boniface Mosblech's 1843 *Vocabulaire Oceanien-Français et Français-Oceanien des dialectes parles aux Iles Marquises Sandwich, Gambier, etc.* (Paris, 1843). Stewart uses "Tapii" and "Taipii," 224, 283; Reverend Robert Thomson, who wrote his account in 1841 although it was not published until the twentieth century, uses "Taipi" (*The Marquesas Islands: Their Description and Early History*, ed. Robert D. Craig [Laie, Haw.: The Institute for Polynesian Studies, Brigham Young University, 1980] e.g., 4); and contemporary orthography uses "Taipi" (see, for example, Robert C. Suggs, *The Hidden Worlds of Polynesia* [New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962] 152).

42. Judging from the retrospective quality of the notes on the cover, "First Draught of 'Typee'—After which much was added & altered. Written in the Spring of 1845—Began in New York in the winter of that year & finished in Lansingburgh in the early part of the summer," this writing appears to postdate the draft itself. (This is my transcription of the manuscript at the New York Public Library; the cover also features what appears to be a large number "3" roughly centered below the title, whose meaning I have not determined.)

43. Quoted by Anderson 444, note 24.

44. Anderson 101.

45. Captain David Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, ed. R. D. Madison and Karen Hamon (1815, 1822; Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1986) 322.

46. Quoted by Anderson 91.

47. My thanks to Robert Schreur for first alerting me to the "type" in "Typee."

48. Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville 1819–1891*, 2 vol. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951) 1:281; and Leyda, *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville 1819–1891 . . . with a New Supplementary Chapter*, 2 vol. (New York: Gordian, 1969) 2:919.

49. Langsdorff writes "popoi" (*Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World* [London: 1813] e.g., 125); Thomson also writes "popoi," e.g., 27; Willowdean C. Handy writes "popoi" (*Forever the Land of Men: An Account of a Visit to the Marquesas Islands* [New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1965]); Margaret Mead writes "poipoi" (*An Inquiry into the Question of Cultural Stability in Polynesia* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1928] e.g., 74). Porter discusses breadfruit preparations under the rubric "breadfruit," but does not use the term in question. If the term "poi" appears elsewhere in his text in some form I have not been able to find it (344–346).

Foulque writes "poé" (see Hayford and Blair, Explanatory Notes 231.36, 411).

50. According to my numbering, p. 20, which corresponds to 103.7 in *Typee*.

51. *Typee*'s structural resemblance to *Pym* can be sketched quickly. Arthur Gordon Pym is a complex double for the author (Poe encoded his own name, for example, in the number and cadence of the syllables in the name "Arthur Gordon Pym"), just as "Tommo" doubles and differs from Melville; Pym teams up with a dark-skinned partner, Dirk Peters, as does Tommo with the "naturally dark" Toby (32); their adventures together include descending a dangerous precipice (an activity in which Pym follows the intrepid Peters, and Tommo follows Toby), searching for food, and hiding from the natives; and their goal is to escape by sea. For a discussion of Pym's relationship to Poe, see John T. Irwin, *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). *Pym*'s sources include Captain Cook, J. N. Reynolds, Captain Benjamin Morrell, and others (Irwin 151, 172). Irwin also argues that, as the narrative of the Jane Guy episode progresses, the polar world becomes more and more dominated by those oppositions that constitute the physical presence of writing (163). While Irwin argues that Poe's text explicitly thematizes the physical presence of writing, Melville's concern with that presence in *Typee* is different in that it is a source of anxiety and thus both disavowed and repressed.

52. Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man*, vol. 10, *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library, 1984) 195.

53. C. S. Stewart, *A Visit to the South Seas in the U. States Ship Vincennes, During the Years 1829 and 1830*, 2 vol. (New York: John P. Haven, 1833) 1:261; Anderson 144.

54. Editorial Appendix, *Typee* 320, 337.

55. T. Walter Herbert, Moby-Dick *and Calvinism: A World Dismantled* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1977) 62, note 12. By 1837, Herman and his mother cosign a bond both using the final "e" (Melville Family Papers, Gansevoort-Lansing Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, 310/9).

56. For example, to Catherine Van Schaick Gansevoort, 11 October 1828; also to Evert A. Duyckinck, 13 December 1850, *Correspondence* 5, 172.

57. To John Murray, 25 March 1848, *Correspondence* 105.

58. Philip Young, *The Private Melville* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 151, 154.

59. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University. See MSAm188 (369.4.1), "Daniel Orme." The page referred to is labeled "1" followed by a circled "3" at top left.

60. Howard, Historical Note, *Typee* 284.

61. To John Murray, 15 July 1846, *Correspondence* 57; emphasis in original.

62. See, for example, Thomson 18.

63. Thomson 18; OED, "tapa" and "paper."

64. Melville's phrase is from one of the prose chapters of *The Marquis de Grandvin*, quoted by Howard P. Vincent, ed., Explanatory Notes, *Collected Poems of Her-*

man Melville (Chicago: Hendricks House, 1947) 484. See also Fliegelman on historically evolving notions of authorship.

65. For examples of the language of "art," see Ray Nash's bibliographical transcriptions of the title pages of George Thresher's *The complete penman's repository* (1810); Eleazer Huntington's *The American penman* (1824); Cooke & Hale's *Rules and directions, in the art of penmanship* (1817); David Hewett's *Self-taught penman* (1818); William Clark's *A guide to penmanship or the art of writing simplified* (1824); and H. Anderson's *The art of penmanship* (1833) in *American Penmanship 1800–1850: A History of Writing and a Bibliography of Copybooks from Jenkins to Spencer* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1969), entries nos. 30, 96, 100, 106, 132, and 225. On the writing masters' other "arts," see Nash, *American Penmanship* 53.

66. Fried, *RWD* 21; Ray Nash, *Writing: Some Early American Writing Books and Masters*, 2d ed. (n.p.: H & N, 1943) 22.

67. French's *The Art of Pen Drawing* was in fact a republication of William F. Stratton's 1840 *The Penman's Paradise*, which was itself largely copied from John Seddon's *Penman's Paradise* (c. 1695). See Nash, *American Penmanship* 47–50, no. 227 (179), and no. 290 (210).

68. See, for example, Nash, *American Penmanship* 45–47 and no. 153; also 60, 123, 115, 100, 78, 53, 195, 210.

69. Henry F. Briggs, *Practical and scientific penmanship* (n.d.), cited in Nash, *American Penmanship* no. 288, 48; also 60. See also his bibliographical entries for Dolbear & Brothers, *The science of practical penmanship* (1837); and Henry F. Briggs, *Practical and scientific penmanship* (n.d.) 191, no. 251; 209, no. 288.

70. Nash, *American Penmanship* no. 299 (215) and no. 362 (248); 3, 23.

71. Leyda (1951) 1:56. Family letters also show that Maria insisted that her children write to one another and that, at least on occasion, she scrutinized their letters to one another or opened their mail. Helen Melville writes to Augusta, reporting that Maria requested that she leave "half a page for her use. My obedience in this case brought only sorrow to me, for Mama having scanned the pa[ge] with a critic's eye, pronounced the chirography beneat[h] contempt, and insisted upon my copying the documen[t]. This I protested against, so my good lady, to close the conference, tore the unoffending sheet into a thousand pieces. The mood for composition is gone for the present, and if you consider its destruction a loss, as I certainly do, you must lay the sin at Mama's door.—" (Brackets record where the right margin of the sheet is torn; characters in brackets are my own supposition.) Maria wrote in the same letter, "Yours of the 8th Inst was duly received its being directed to Gransevoort did not prevent our opening it without compunction soon as the sight of the Post mark assured us it was from you" (Helen Melville and Maria Gansevoort Melville to Augusta Melville, 16 [?] September 1841). (My transcription of a letter in the Melville Family Papers/Additions, Gansevoort-Lansing Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.)

72. Leyda (1951) 1:105, 110; Leon Howard, *Herman Melville: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951) 38.

73. Leo Marx, "Melville's Parable of the Walls," *The Sewanee Review* 61 (1953): 602–627.

74. See "Chapter Eleventh" and "Chapter Twelth." In both cases the words are ornamentally written and separated by a diamond design.

75. To Catherine Melville Hoadley, 28 December 1881, *Correspondence* 477.

76. Anderson 155–56.

77. For example, Anderson 100; Herbie Butterfield, "'New World All Over': Melville's *Typee* and *Omoo*," *Herman Melville: Reassessments*, ed. A. Robert Lee (London: Vision Press, 1984) 23.

78. If I am correct about the nature of the relation between Tommo and Melville, then it is all the more appropriate that, even at the level of the fiction, Tommo is presented as an autobiographical representation of Melville, but one who also operates under an assumed name, further rendering the "autobiography" a form of duplicity.

79. Other critics have also drawn this parallel. See, for example, Robert K. Martin, *Hero, Captain, and Stranger: Male Friendship, Social Critique, and Literary Form in the Sea Novels of Herman Melville* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986) 28; Warwick Wadlington, *The Confidence Game in American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) 64; Breitwieser 413–414.

80. Willowdean Chatterson Handy, *Tattooing in the Marquesas* (Bayard Dominick Expedition, Bulletin 1, No. 3 [Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1922]) 24. Since the aboriginal culture died out quickly under the white man's encroachments, the roots of tattooing practices were already lost knowledge by the time Handy did her field work in 1920.

81. At the level of generality, I agree with John Evelev that tattooing in *Typee* is "a place where Melville's attitudes toward writing get expressed," but my account of what the term "writing" means and of what those attitudes are differs from Evelev's. In his account, Melville's "conflicted reaction toward writing" in *Typee* is a function of his feelings about the marketplace: "Tommo's rejection of Typee culture in *Typee* is the sublimated and displaced textualization of Melville's own concern about being inscribed within the marketplace's demands for objectified exchange." Evelev reads the particular horror of facial tattooing as a threat to Melville's status because it represents his "transformation into an exotic 'object'" by his own text in a system of capitalist exchange ("'Made in the Marquesas': *Typee*, Tattooing, and Melville's Critique of the Literary Marketplace," *Arizona Quarterly* 48.4 [1992]: 20, 27, 21, 26, 39).

82. Breitwieser 412.

83. In *Redburn*, the narrator tells us that there is a "secret sympathy" between himself and the figurehead of a glass model ship that "perhaps more than any thing else, converted my vague dreamings and longings into a definite purpose of seeking my fortune on the sea":

> . . . her figure-head, a gallant warrior in a cocked hat, lies pitching headforemost down into the trough of a calamitous sea under the bows—but I will not have him put on his legs again, till I get on my own; for between

> him and me there is a secret sympathy; and my sisters tell me, even yet, that he fell from his perch the very day I left home to go to sea on this **my first voyage.**

(Herman Melville, *Redburn*, vol. 4, *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle [Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library, 1969] 7, 9; emphasis in the original.) This figurehead stands (or falls) at the fore end of the career that is both Redburn's and Melville's. The corollary to this fallen figurehead is the late poem "The Figure-Head" from *John Marr and Other Sailors* (1888), in which the figurehead is cast aside in a wreck. Just as the now landlocked John Marr considers a life spent on the sea, Melville casts his eye over a career spent there. He places at the end of the career an emblem that alludes to and redacts the one he chose when his career was young, but the hope and determination of the early image have been converted to pathos and desolation. Thus the content of the figurehead image as a specifically writerly one for Melville is quite explicit.

84. The notion of disfiguration I have proposed is partly compatible and partly incompatible with Paul de Man's notion of de-facement ("Autobiography As De-Facement," *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984] 67–81). For de Man, disfiguration and de-facement are inherent features of language, ones to which he brings particular weight in the case of autobiography, with its premises of conjuring the author in the text. Such a notion of de-facement is applicable to my argument that part of Melville's anxiety stems from his inability to produce the authentic worlds he promises. But my argument departs from the de Manian notion of the "illusion of reference" in which the figure is primary to the nominal referent, because, by my account, both the figure *as such* and the nominal referent are rendered secondary to the constitutive force of the materiality of writing, in this case, both printed pages open in front of Melville and his own inscribed pages. My operative notion of disfigurement here is thus much closer to the one elaborated by Fried, who calls attention to "the thematization of writing as violent disfigurement and its association with effects of horror and repugnance but also of intense fascination" (RWD 121 and 185, note 28).

85. See, for example, Anderson 71.

86. Anderson 146, 126.