



JOURNAL OF NARRATIVE AND LANGUAGE STUDIES | ISSN: 2148-4066

Melville, Media, and Narratives– Special Issue 2024, Volume 12 – Issue 25

A Modern Peep at the South Seas: Melville’s Presence in some Hollywood Films from 1920s to the 1940s

Jaime Campomar
The George Washington University
jcampomar@gwu.edu
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8814-1830>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59045/nalans.2024.51>

APA Citation:

Campomar, J. (2024). A Modern Peep at the South Seas: Melville’s Presence in some Hollywood Films from 1920s to the 1940s. *Journal of Narrative and Language Studies*, 12(25), 183-203.

Abstract

This paper will argue that alongside Melville’s literary reputation, Hollywood, and its associated industries (advertising, trade and journalistic press), produced a pop-culture image of him. It will analyze two movies, *Last of the Pagans* (MGM, 1935) and *Omoo-Omoo the Shark God* (Esla Pictures, 1949), which were publicized as adaptations of *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847) respectively but have on the surface little or nothing to do, thematically or plotwise, with their purported source texts. They can be linked back to the novels through the use of a Melville meme that recreates pre-colonial life in the South Seas, situating viewers within a taxidermic viewing position. Overall, scholars have disregarded these movies as having little to offer Melville studies, but this article will consider them and their many forms of publicity to demonstrate that they can give scholars a glance at Melville’s popular reputation as adventurer and romancer, and it will suggest that, as a national figure, Melville was not the exclusive property of academia but a contested site for the construction of national ideals. The paper will adopt a combination of approaches from film history, fluid text theory, and adaptation studies to analyze Melville’s image across mass media outfits.

Keywords: Herman Melville, adaptation, film, advertising, race.

This article focuses on two Hollywood adaptations of Melville’s *Typee* and *Omoo* that have been left virtually unexplored by Melville criticism: *Last of the Pagans* (1935) and *Omoo-Omoo the Shark God* (1949), uncovering the cinematographic traditions and practices that link them to Melville. These movies were announced as adaptations of Melville’s work, yet Melville scholars

have noted that they have little or no direct connection to their sources whatsoever. The article will analyze filmic tropes and their development into recognizable Melville memes in the movies as well as in promotional materials, such as posters and novelizations, to address whether these adaptations are of any importance to Melville studies and to pinpoint what is being adapted. It posits that these movies need to be studied because, even when they say little about the narrative content of their source texts, they say quite a bit about Melville's public image as represented by popular culture in the first half of the twentieth century. Indeed, their value to Melville scholars lies in how they digress from rather than how they perpetuate the originals.

In line with broader conceptions about the aura of adaptation as providing economic viability to a project and its product (Hutcheon, 2006, pp. 5, 87), Melville scholars have considered these films an instance of Hollywood's predatory commercialism and, as a result, devoted very little attention to them. M. Thomas Inge has said of *OmoO-OmoO* that calling it an adaptation "is an outright falsehood" since it "borrowed nothing from Melville," (1986, p. 702). Similarly, John Parris Springer has observed that:

"Perhaps the best way to approach films such as *Last of the Pagans* and *OmoO OmoO the Shark God* [sic.] is to see them as exemplifying a marketing strategy which reduces the author's name to the function of signifying 'literature' as part of the total entertainment package offered by these films" (2018, p. 348).

This is certainly the case with these movies, but one may add another element to Melville's signifying function on the margins of the screen in these or any other film adaptation of his work: a popular perception of what kind of author Melville was.

Melville studies has dedicated a portion of its efforts to analyzing how Melville's authorial function was reconstructed after his death in order to understand how and why the loosely organized movement of critics and artists known as the Melville Revival resuscitated (as its name implies) and transformed Melville's reputation into that of a canonized figure of American literature.¹ For instance, David M. Ball sees Melville as a key figure that modernist writers engaged with to find ways of "[breaking] formal and aesthetic ground in the modernist upheaval" that took place in the early twentieth century (2018, p. 307).² More recently, Maki Sadahiro finds that at the end of the nineteenth century, a group of middle-class British socialists turned to Melville for inspiration regarding their program of social reform and that the rising academic field of American literature found in Melville a figure around which it could justify its methodologies and its existence as a discipline (2022, p. 25ss). Similarly, Hollywood, which was only beginning to consolidate itself as a national and global industry, looked to Melville, as Springer argues, to find artistic legitimacy. All of them, writers, reformists, academics, and filmmakers reconstruct Melville's authorial function for their own purposes. At the same time, as this essay will show, it

¹ Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault have complicated the understanding of the authorial figure in literary theory by declaring its death. Foucault understands writing as a process that eliminates the author, making them a function within the text that readers can exhume through a series of forensic procedures (2007, pp. 905–906). Similarly, Barthes links the author to a figure born out of the reader's desire. The author is an interlocutor readers find helpful to establish the here and now of fictional enunciation (Barthes, 1975, p. 27, 1977, p. 145). From both perspectives, the author emerges as a reconstruction.

² Similarly, Kingsley Widmer sees modernist and post-modern writers wrestling with the mythical Melville projected by his work and by biographies written about him. See Widmer, K. (1986). *Melville and the Myths of Modernism*. In J. Bryant (Ed.), *A Companion to Melville Studies* (pp. 669–694). Greenwood Press.

did so to find a fresh perspective on the South Seas that would feel real and enticing to mass audiences. This perspective was accomplished through the creation of a Melville meme, the variations of which constitute a series of ethnographic filmic tropes that signal to modern viewers what a primitive South Sea islander looks like and outline the structure of

Melville's first publicly advertised Hollywood adaptation was John Barrymore's silent adventure *The Sea Beast* (1926), which was later remade into a sound vehicle for Barrymore called *Moby Dick* (1930) and into the German-speaking version directed by Michael Curtiz called *Dämon des Meeres* (1931); all of them produced by Warner Bros. As noted by Martina Pfeiler, the Barrymore films and their German counterpart produced a "paradigm shift" in the reception of Melville's novel and in the dissemination of Melville's authorial figure in the popular imagination (2017, p. 35). Pfeiler considers these films within the wider context of a transcultural network where folkloric, narrative, and visual tropes that were part of whaling stories meet. These include the hunt as glorification of the whalers' masculinity, the whale as the most potent threat to that masculinity, and the drama of masculine rivalry throughout (2017, p. 46, see also 2020). These tropes, Pfeiler suggests, were coded into popular representations of whaling that influenced how Melville's novel was adapted into Barrymore's film. More importantly, they became part of the public persona of Melville as author, whose popular association with whaling now became more widespread. In other words, the Melville name became synonymous with more than the notion of canonical literature.

In the case of *Omoo-Omoo*, the authorial function that Springer refers to is displaced to the paraliterary and the paratextual elements of film production. When referring to the paraliterary, I am adapting a concept from Merve Emre's work on Cold War reception that grapples with how "institutions adjacent to literature" articulate "the distinctive type of genres that people read in tandem with literary works" (or, in this case, in tandem with a film adaptation and, by extension, its literary source) and with the way these genres instruct readers how to read literary works (2017, p. 6). Adding film adaptation to the mix might seem to complicate the relationship between cinematographic, literary, and paraliterary texts, but we can think about these 'adjacent' genres as belonging to different levels of the audience's engagement with the literary and the cinematographic.

For instance, the poster for the film *Omoo-Omoo* portrays on its top right corner a sailor holding a gun on his right hand and woman close to his left side. As the viewer's eye follows the barrel of the gun, it perceives two sailors fighting on deck, and further down a shark attacking an octopus, and even further down two tigers battling each other. The background at the top shows a ship anchored close to an island with palm trees and mountains, at the bottom it replicates the palms as motifs for jungle vegetation. The poster also informs viewers of the connection between the movie and Melville's novel (on the lower right corner, an icon of a book reads "Based on the novel by Herman Melville, author of 'Moby Dick'"). As a paraliterary device, the poster generates expectations about the movie (that it holds some resemblance to the book) and the novel (that it holds some resemblance to the movie) that make for at least the possibility of 'misinformed audiences.' Yet it can prove to be revelatory of the popular perception of Melville that Hollywood fashioned and disseminated among these audiences, especially considering the connection it establishes to *Moby-Dick*, which was Melville's most well-known novel at the time, and to Barrymore's adaptations which still loomed large over the popular imagination two decades after

they were released.³ Unsuspecting viewers who were intrigued by the poster and attended a showing of *Omoo-Omoo* without ever having read the novel could easily leave the theater under the impression that Melville's novel involved at least some of the exotic animals, landscape, and adventure sequences sketched in the ad and portrayed in the movie.

As Barbara Klinger explains, advertising makes films resonate with viewers by giving them recognizable points of entry into a movie: the star, the director, special effects, genre, setting (1989, p. 9). Each of these points of entry are also opportunities for interpretive flight. Viewers of *Omoo-Omoo* familiar with star Ron Randell's previous performances as the British gentleman detective Bulldog Drummond might be distracted by the dissonance of his new role as a rough-and-tumble U.S. sailor on board the *Julia*. These types of digressions, which Klinger diagnoses as a "symptom" of the advertising-movie relation embedded in mass-media consumption (1989, p. 5), break the film's narrative coherence and allow spectators to interpret the film differently, potentially lending, for example, an aristocratic air of distinction to Randell's otherwise dry performance.

As scholars in adaptation studies have demonstrated, digressions can prove to be as productive as recreations (Hutcheon, 2006, pp. 4; see also Schultz, 2014; Pfeiler, 2017, 35). For instance, Nicola Sorcinelli's 2017 short film *Moby Dick* transposes the novel's chapter 93, "The Castaway," to the Mediterranean Sea. In it, a fisherwoman's struggle to provide for herself and her family is woven together with the struggles of an African mother crossing the sea on a precarious craft in search of a better life for herself and her family. The opening scene, where the fisherwoman is cast away in the sea, visually recreates Pip's abandonment in the Pacific. However, it is the film's paratext, the title (reintroduced in the narrative as the fishing ship's name), that helps viewers make the connection to the novel. Without the name "Moby Dick," there is very little to link the short to the novel. Thus, the question becomes, as Christy Desmet frames it, not whether an adaptation recreates its source text, but whether audiences are able to recognize the source in the adaptation (2014, p. 41).

As Inge and Springer suggest, digression in adaptations like *Pagans* and *Omoo-Omoo* can push the limits of infidelity and test whether announcing an adaptation is enough to establish more than a nominal link to the source text. However, though the novel's plot might not be reflected in an adaptation, there are other ways audiences can recognize its Melvillean elements.

³ After John Huston's *Moby Dick* was released in 1956, readers sent letters to the *New York Times* screen editor complaining about how it fell short compared to any of Barrymore's performance. Two of the reader-reviewers seemed to agree. One Jean M. Demos complained that "to add insult to injury, you compare the Ahab's of John Barrymore and Gregory Peck... I not so humbly submit that John Barrymore conveyed more of the angry, demonic power of Ahab in three minutes than Gregory Peck in his entire film;" and a Robert Downing added: "Gregory Peck is a feckless Ahab.... Mr. Barrymore may have been involved with bad scripts when he twice appeared in this vehicle—but what an Ahab he was!" (in Morgansen, 1956, p. 5).

Taxidermic Adaptations: Robert Flaherty, the Melville Revivalists, and the Melville Meme

As the poster for *Omo-Omo* suggests, even when *Moby-Dick* is concerned with a fictional world that is distinct from the one depicted in *Typee* and its sequel *Omo*, studios found that merging the worlds in these novels together helped add production value to their films, making the enticing qualities available in one equally available in the other. A perfect example of this transfictional merging of narrative worlds was developed by the Warner Bros. exploitation department (as publicity departments were called at the time) to promote Barrymore's *The Sea Beast*. In conjunction with Wannamaker's department store in New York city, the Warner advertising team decorated the iconic store with "Whaling Relics" and organized related activities like "Sea Chanteys and Lecture in Auditorium" ("Wanamaker's," 1926, p. 687). For the lecture, they hired well-known travel lecturer Albert K. Dawson who prepared a talk vaguely titled "Moby Dick Adventure Land" (*ibid.*). Although the travelogue is lost to us today, the reference to "Adventure Land" (ironic, considering the novel's "landlessness") suggests an exploration of the South Sea islands that are the focus of Melville's first two, a popular topic travel lecturers would have been conversant with at the time.⁴

In the 1920s, director Robert J. Flaherty refashioned the vicarious pleasures of travelogues into a whole new film genre when he shot the first documentaries: *Nanook of the North* (1922), about life in the Arctic, and *Moana* (1926), about a Samoan youth preparing for a ritual that symbolizes his transition into adulthood.⁵ Though *Nanook* came first, *Moana* made such an impact on Hollywood that it revolutionized the South Sea movie genre. Reviewer John Grierson called it an "unquestionably great [film], a poetic record of Polynesian tribal life," and famously coined the term 'documentary' to describe it as the type of movie that beautifully combines fiction and non-fictional elements in search of truth, stating that "*Moana* being a visual account of events in the daily life of a Polynesian youth... has documentary value" (in Kahana 2016, p. 86). Before *Moana*, South Sea Hollywood films typically told the story of castaways stranded on faraway islands, their unlikely discovery by potential lovers, the flowering of their romance, and their struggle to decide

⁴ During the First World War, Dawson had worked as a film documentarian on the front lines of the conflict for the American Correspondent Film Company, a propaganda outfit set up by the Germans. He was tried for his involvement in the scheme and received only a dishonorable discharge from the U. S. Army as a result. After the war, he found work as travel lecturer, discoursing on the West Indies, Russia, South America, Australia, and the Middle East. Dawson's work as a war correspondent, see van Doppen, R. (1990). Shooting the Great War: Albert Dawson and the American Correspondent Film Company, 1914-1918. *Film History*, 4(2), 123-129. For references to his lectures, see Australia Boasts World's Longest Straight Track. (1942, January 25). *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), L11; Dawson to Talk On West Indies In Post Lecture: Second of Travel Series Will Be Given on Tuesday Night. (1934, October 28). *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), S7; Dawson to Tell About His Visit To New Russia: Post Travel Lecture Is Scheduled for Tuesday Night. (1935, February 10). *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), B10; and Series of Travel Lectures Will Be Given at Masonic Auditorium, Starting October 23: Well-Known Speakers Engaged For Post's 1934-35 Program Talks on Foreign Lands and America's Picturesque Regions to Be Illustrated With Slides and Motion Pictures. (1934, October 14). *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), S7.

⁵ The Washington Post published an article promoting its own series of travel lectures by several lecturers (one of which was A. K. Dawson) that exclaimed: "Hundreds of 'Armchair' Travelers Are Taking World Tour on Post Lecture Series" ("Hundreds of 'Armchair' Travelers," 1934, p. 11).

whether to rejoin Western society or remain in isolation.⁶ After *Moana*, the South Sea islander became a subject of interest that required the construction of a visual rhetoric of ethnographic representation.

Flaherty, an admirer of Melville, was known to stage scenes with the subjects of his documentaries.⁷ In *Moana* one recognizes scenes from *Typee* where Tommo describes the customs of the Taipi. To name a few: there's the lighting of a fire "a la Typee" (chapter 14), the preparation of breadfruit (chapter 15), the making of tappa (chapter 19), the dancing of girls (chapter 20), the eating of raw fish (chapter 28), the climbing of coconut trees by children (chapter 29), and tattooing (chapter 30).⁸ These recreations illuminate Grierson's reference to the lyrical aspects of the film and to the artistic quality of Flaherty's style, which does not reproduce unscripted events as they unfold but shows their 'true nature.'

For Fatimah Tobing Rony, Flaherty's lyrically concealed artificiality represents what she terms the taxidermic mode of ethnographic representation in films (1996, pp. 14). Flaherty's documentaries were produced at a time when the South Seas and its islands were imagined to be the remaining places on Earth where one could escape the pressures of civilization's modern existence (Dixon, 2006, p. 28). The documentaries offered that escape to audiences because they recreated a 'primitive' past, an existence prior to the islander's contact with Western civilization. This reconstruction can only be ironic, because the presence of the camera itself is proof of the white man's presence. As Tobing Rony argues, the purpose of taxidermy is to make the dead look alive, and this is precisely what Flaherty accomplishes by staging the islanders' performance as 'natural' scenes that revive their prelapsarian (i.e., pre-contact) past (1996, pp. 14–15).

Although Flaherty introduces the taxidermic perspective to cinema, the perception that the South Sea's cultural past was being erased because of Western encroachment had already been circulating in travel literature of the nineteenth century and had intensified during the early twentieth century (Carr, 2002, pp. 81–82). Amid a growing trend of South Sea literature, twentieth-century Melville revivalists like Raymond M. Weaver and Frank Jewett Mather Jr. sought to establish Melville's place in that literary tradition. In his now famous biography, *Herman Melville: Mariner and Mystic*, Weaver proclaims Melville the "literary discoverer of the South Seas," vastly surpassing the likes of Frederick O'Brien, Jack London, R. L. Stevenson, and others (1921, p. 24). Contrasting O'Brien and Melville, he notes that Melville's comparative value lies in recreating the Taipi as they were in their natural state, before they were thrown into the decadent modern world of the white man: "Melville had known the Typees in their uncorrupted glory strong, wicked, laughter-loving and clean. Mr. O'Brien visited Typee not many years ago, to find it pathetically fallen from its high estate" (1921, p. 214). Just a few years later, perhaps influenced by the Flaherty's films, Mather would recast Weaver's sentiment in pictorial terms: "But it is, after all,

⁶ Perhaps the most famous South Sea movie of the pre-Moana era was director Edwin S. Porter and Mary Pickford's *Hearts Adrift* (1914), wherein Pickford plays the role of Nina, a castaway who rescues and falls in love with John, the survivor of a yacht wreck. Nina and John have a child together, but when he is rescued by his 'civilized' wife and child, Nina, in a fit of despair, takes their baby with her and jumps into a volcano.

⁷ In *Nanook*, Flaherty staged, as an allusion to *Moby-Dick*, a sequence about the killing of a white whale but did not include it in the final cut. Cf. Christopher, R. J. (2005). *Robert and Frances Flaherty: A Documentary Life, 1883–1922*. McGill-Queen's University Press, p. 381.

⁸ A catalog of Flaherty's research bibliography for *Moana* includes the entry: "Omoo. A narrative of adventures in the South Seas. Herman Melville. U.S. Book CO., New York, 1892. (Sequel to *Typee*.)"

less opinion than pictures which count in 'Typee,' and the pictures are so vivid.... Thus 'Typee' in a peculiar sense is written from the inside. The ready tolerance that Melville had learned in the forecastle... had prepared him to be the ideal spectator of a beautiful life that has forever passed" (1967, p. 158). These claims presented an image of Melville as an imaginative writer who could preserve the uncivilized way of life of Pacific Islanders, and thus repositioned Melville's perspective of the South Seas within the taxidermic mode. This repositioning was central to the Revival's reconstruction of his reputation as a canonical figure of American literature and a key aspect of Hollywood adaptations that used this legitimacy for commercial benefit.

Melville's prominence as a key taxidermic author for modernist audiences is further reflected in discussions of his image in magazines and popular fiction.⁹ As demonstrated by Martina Pfeiler, as early as 1912, journalist Edwin Emery Slosson wrote about his travels to the South Seas, commenting on Melville's work and imagining what the Melvillean first-hand experience of meeting the islanders before the "missionaries came and contaminated them" would have been like (Pfeiler, 2017, p. 56). A decade later, a 1922 issue of the educational magazine *The Mentor* focused on "The Lure of the South Seas" carried a piece on "The Men that Found the South Seas." In it, Frederick O'Brien declares Melville the first "real discoverer" of the South Pacific, who came to "know the Typees in their uncorrupted glory—strong, wicked, laughter-loving, and clean" and note that the publication of *Typee* was taken "not as fiction, but as ethnology" (1922, pp. 18, 19). Similarly, a letter to the editor of the *Saturday Review* cites the journal entry of Lieutenant Henry A. Wise of the U. S. navy who visited Nukuhiva in 1848 and having read *Typee* was already mourning the fall of Taipi culture to French imperialism as embodied in a native girl called Fayaway:

"In all the lighter sketches upon Polynesia, I cannot resist paying the faint tribute of my own individual admiration to Mr. Melville.

[...] At Nukeheva and Tahiti I made inquiry about his former associates, and without in the least designing to sully the enchanting romance of his fair Typee love, I may mention having seen a 'nut-brown' damsel, named Fayayway, from that valley, who apparently was maid of all work to a French commissary of the garrison. She was attired in a gaudy yellow *rôbe de chambre*, ironing the *crapeau's* trowsers. *Credat Judens!*" (Birss, p. 429).

The scene described by Wise inverts the one described by Tommo at the end of chapter 1, when he retells his encounter with the Island Queen of Nukuheva at a military ceremony during a second visit to the island. The Queen had been dressed by the French to present her to the American fleet as an exemplary product of their civilizing efforts, but the Queen, eager to share her tattoos with the crew of similarly-tattooed sailors turns around and lifts up her skirt, revealing "a sight from which the aghast Frenchmen retreated precipitately, and tumbling into their boat, fled the scene of so shocking a catastrophe" (Melville, p. 8).

⁹ Martina Pfeiler revitalized the forgotten figure of journalist Edwin Emery Slosson as a key figure in making Melville known to a general audience, who published on Melville as early as 1912. Slosson's association to Columbia University and Carl van Doren, makes him a cornerstone figure of the Melville Revival

J. B. Priestley's 1932 romance of the South Seas, *Faraway*, summarizes the feeling when its protagonist, William, and two of his travel companions, Commander Ivybridge and Captain Peterson, who are all in search of a South-Sea ore that that would make them a fortune, reminisce:

'Tomorrow,' he announced at dinner, 'we come to the islands. You begin to see the Marquesas. After you see something you never forget.'

'I've never seen them yet,' said the Commander, 'and I've always wanted to, especially since I read Melville's *Typee* and *Omoo*.'

William had read Melville too, and said so.

'You have read Melville's boogs about the Marquesas?' cried Peterson. 'So have I. Very good. Oh yes—good boogs. We'll drink his health.'

"But it's all different now, isn't it?" said William.

'Yes, all different,' Peterson replied, with gathering mournfulness. 'These islands they are the most wonderful, the most beautiful islands in the world—and the saddest. Yes, they are the saddest. Soon there will be nobody left on them—nobody at all. These Marquesans, they die off. Even in my time, I see them die off—one by one—two by two—they go. Elephantiasis, leprosy, syphilis, and—worst of all—tuberculosis—kill them off. [...]

And the captain's mild blue eyes suddenly looked quite hollow and his face was a large tragic mask." (p. 422).

The structure of *Paradise gained/Paradise lost* forms a narrative diptych that becomes allegorical of the overbearing advance of Modernity that changes the landscape and the people in its wake. During the Revival period, the South Seas became the ideal setting for that allegory and Melville its ideal narrator that could recreate Paradise as it was before it was lost.

As the Melville Revival cemented Melville's unique perspective, Flaherty's documentaries visually articulated it. They provided Hollywood with a cinematographic rhetoric that fiction films would use to recreate a simplified if not diluted version of it, one that is displaced to the margins of the filmic text. Examples of this appear in *Omoo-Omoo*'s advertising, its prologue, and *Pagans*' novelization. In these adaptations, this rhetoric is reduced to a series of tropes replicated so assiduously that they effectively become versions of what John Bryant has called "the Melville meme" (2013, p. 203). In other words, audiences of these films were not asked to recognize the plots of *Typee* or *Omoo* in them. Instead, they were asked to recognize an adaptation of Melville's peculiar viewpoint of the native peoples involved in his stories.

Bryant's understanding of the Melville meme is helpful in decoding and recognizing the Melvillean aspects of *Pagans* and *Omoo-Omoo*. A meme, as coined by Richard Dawkins, is a minimal unit of cultural transmission that can be communicated, recorded, and imitated in order to be communicated again, sometimes changed (2006, p. 192). A change in the meme can be significant or barely noticeable, but its bare-bones structure is still transmitted. Bryant sees the Melville meme as replicating a structure of "trauma and transformation" and cites the examples of Pip, Ahab, and Tommo, all of whom suffer some form of injury in their narrative journey and are changed as a consequence (2013, p. 203). In the case of the taxidermic version of this meme, the structure transmitted involves the Melvillean perspective of primitive customs combined with an awareness that these customs are always-already subjected to the wounds inflicted by colonialism, which will result in the decadent, hybridized version Weaver found in O'Brien.

This structure requires the viewer's perception of multiple temporalities: a retrospective peep into the primitive past paired with the knowledge of its future fall, observed through the modern lens of the audience's moment of reception in the present. For the twentieth-century reader, these temporalities surface many times in the layered narrative of the novel, as when the narrator Tommo inserts himself into the experience of Tommo the protagonist:

"I grieve to state so distressing a fact, but the inhabitants of Typee were in the habit of devouring fish much in the same way that a civilized being would eat a radish.... They eat it raw; scales, bones, gills, and all the inside. [...].

Raw fish! Shall I ever forget my sensations when I first saw my island beauty devour one?" (1995, p. 208)

Melville contrasts the enunciative present of the narrator who 'grieves' with the experiential past of the protagonist who "first saw" the custom, and he hypothesizes a present during which these traditions of "eat[ing the fish] raw" persist and which modern readers can only read ironically. In other words, he extends Tommo's remembrance of past experiences into the readers' present and relays it as if they were still happening on the island. These temporalities provide Tommo with an almost-omnipresent quality: he's on the island experiencing these events but has left to retell them to the reader.

Similarly, the camera, a sign of Western modernity, assumes a position of narrative invisibility to record 'primitive' customs as if it were not there. To achieve such invisibility, Flaherty borrowed Hollywood techniques such as following the parameters of continuity editing, and using the master scene (an editing pattern made of establishing shot, action, and reestablishing shot) which focus on reinforcing the viewer's "spatial orientation" so that figures move coherently from shot to shot (if a character enters a scene on the right side of the screen, he cannot suddenly be framed on the left side without confusing the spectator) (Bordwell, 1985, p. 56). The notion of invisibility establishes an implicit narrative contract with viewers who know the camera is there but are meant to perceive the action as if it weren't there. By recreating ethnographic scenes from *Typee*, Flaherty's camera gives modern audiences a window into an undisturbed primitive past. Flaherty achieves this by staying away from Hollywood's melodramatic emplotments but adopting the industry's techniques of narrative invisibility. Although the documentary includes intimate scenes between Moana and Fa'amgase, there are no villains and no rivals, their relationship is never at risk. The camera takes in the action as it unfolds, patiently, with a prevalence of long and medium shots of the islanders performing their tasks. Closeups, which Hollywood typically uses to explore a character's interiority and their reactions, are used to focus attention on hands and highlight the labor and skill that goes into, for example, weaving tapa. The lack of narrative tension and the focus on collective tasks rather than individual interiority produces the illusion of objectivity and allows viewers to engage with the story as if it were 'factually' taking place before their eyes. Perhaps more importantly, there are no white people onscreen since that would spoil the illusion of the action's authenticity'. Each scene recorded in this way in *Moana* would become a trope, establishing the visual rhetoric Hollywood needed to signify more verisimilarly what South Pacific cultures looked like and how they behaved.

This is, in essence, the recognizable Melville meme in *Moana*, *Pagans*, and *Omoo-Omoo*: a repositioning of the narrative device that allows viewers a "Peep at Polynesian Life." In Flaherty's documentaries, the camera assumes that position by erasing all traces of white civilization. In the fictional adaptations of Melville's *Typee* and *Omoo* that followed, where Hollywood storytelling required that tensions between primitive and civilized peoples to be

dramatized, the figure of Melville is reified as an authority on the subject and made visible in the film's advertising and paratextual frames to alert viewers that what they will see on the screen is part of the real-life, primitive past that he witnessed

Flaherty's influence in spreading the Melville meme can be traced to his failed attempts at adapting *Typee* for Hollywood. After *Moana*'s success, MGM offered him an opportunity to direct a melodrama based on O'Brien's book *White Shadows in the South Seas* (1919). Flaherty tried to convince Irving Thalberg, the studio's head of production, to adapt *Typee* instead, but Thalberg was convinced O'Brien's title was more enticing. Flaherty started work on location but left the production because of creative differences with the studio and the crew. Shortly after, he met German *émigré* director F. W. Murnau, and they agreed to work together on a South Sea story as independents. Their collaboration, *Tabu: A Story of the South Seas* (1931), is considered by many to be "the last great achievement of the silent cinema" and has left its own mark on the genre (Koszarski, 1990, p. 255).

Although Flaherty and Murnau entered the project as equal partners, Flaherty was, again, slowly edged out of the creative decisions. Mark J. Langer demonstrates that the story is Flaherty's and the direction Murnau's (1985, p. 60). Flaherty himself was quoted saying: "We're going to make the movie they wouldn't let me make out of *White Shadows*" (in Langer 1985, 44).

In *Tabu* one sees the influence of *Moana* and the Melville meme more clearly in the 'native feast' sequence. After the tabu is declared, a feast is ordered in celebration, and the whole village participates in its preparation: they gather ferns and fruits; they fashion garlands made of flowers for the women to wear as crown or necklaces; a group of men and women perform ritual dances; Reri, the female lead, also dances, resembling Fayaway. It seems clear that *Moana*'s 'poetic' recreations were taken by the industry as a model, or rather a shorthand, for signifying South Pacific islander behavior, a shorthand for their "natural action" that needs to be captured by the camera (Flaherty in Langer 1985, p. 55), and, thereby, effectively create a new version of the Melville meme. These memes were replicated in later films about the South Seas to signal the islanders' particular kind of otherness and give audiences in the West the vicarious pleasures of getting away from the pressures of modern life through the experiences of native islanders.

Unexpected Resonances: The Uses of the Melville Meme

If at the start of the 1930s Warner Bros. revolutionized audiences with its gangster cycle (*Little Caesar* [1931] and *The Public Enemy* [1931]), MGM was determined to make waves with its own cycle of South Seas films that spanned *White Shadows in the South Seas* (1928), *The Pagan* (1929), and *Last of the Pagans* (1935). By incorporating Flaherty and his documentary style into the production of *White Shadows*, MGM set the tone for a new kind of South Sea movie that adopted the taxidermic perspective to represent Pacific Island cultures.

In *Pagans*' case, the public was made aware of its connection to Melville through the trade press and a special Photoplay edition of *Typee* by Grosset and Dunlap that featured stills from the movie. On December 6, 1934, it was announced that "M-G-M's readying a production unit for a trip to the South Seas in two weeks to film 'Typee'" ("Typee' in Preparation," 1934, p.

20), and by February 12 of the following year it was established that “the largest picture entourage ever to venture forth, left here [California]” for Papeete, where they would shoot “exterior scenes for ‘Mutiny on the Bounty’ and ‘Typee’” (“Two Companies Off For the South Seas,” 1935, p. 11). On the same date, *Variety* lists Melville as “A—Author” of the screenplay together with John Farrow (1935, p. 30), and it is only on October 17 that MGM confirms that *Last of the Pagans* would be the “final title for the picture based on Herman Melville’s novel, ‘Typee’” (Wilk, 1935, p. 10).

Directed by Richard Thorpe (his first feature film), *Pagans* was advertised as an action film. The title reminds viewers of the second movie in MGM’s South Seas cycle, W. S. van Dyke’s *The Pagan*, but also strives to hit a more literary note by alluding to James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). It also expanded on *White Shadows*’ experiments with sound, using subtitles to translate the islander’s Polynesian dialect. One reviewer described it as “an authentic idyll of that idyllic land, the South Seas,” while another deemed the movie to be “[g]ood. If your appetite hasn’t become jaded with a repetition of South Sea Island tales” and remarked that it “relies for its plot upon Herman Melville’s romance, ‘Typee’” (“Brief Reviews of Current Pictures,” 1936, p. 6; “Reviews in Brief,” 1936, p. 10).

As Springer has noted, the plot of *Pagans*, in fact, does not resemble *Typee* at all. The first half of the film deals with Taro’s courtship of Lileo, where the Melville meme adopts several variations to show the villager’s primitiveness, such as nymph-like women swimming in lagoons, group dancing and the like. The village chief who wants Lileo for himself, sells Taro to a trader, who takes him away and puts him to work in a phosphate mine. After Lileo finds Taro, they manage to escape to “A new island! A new life!” (Anonymous, 1936, p. 56).

Many elements in the plot, like the chase of the women through toboggan-like waterfalls and a fight with shark, indicate that *Pagans* is closer to an adaptation of Murnau’s *Tabu* than Melville’s *Typee*. Furthermore, certain aspects of the plot structure are also similar: Taro and Lileo meet at a lagoon; there’s a brief courtship; an authority figure (Hitu in *Tabu*/the chief in *Pagans*) comes in between them; Taro is tricked into signing documents; Taro and Lileo try to build a life together on a new island; while Taro is away the authority figure reclaims Lileo (in *Pagans*, through a surrogate, the trader).

The most significant connection that can be made between *Typee* and *Pagans*, besides from its South Sea setting, comes from a digressive creative choice made by the screenwriter that rattled French authorities because it implicitly criticized France’s colonial system. In the novel, Melville famously criticizes “the shameless subterfuges under which the French stand prepared to defend whatever cruelties they may hereafter think fit to commit in bringing the Marquesan natives into subjection” (1995, pp. 17–18).¹⁰ While the most notable South Sea movies such as *White Shadows* and *Tabu* represent the exploitative dangers of the colonial trade through the ‘exciting’ venture of pearl diving, *Pagans* does so through the practice of phosphate mining. It portrays how

¹⁰ Melville insists on criticising the impact of French imperialism in the South Seas in chapters 32, 48, and 49 in *Omoo*.

the natives were tricked into indentured servitude, worked in chain gangs, and recreates a cave-in that highlights the terrible working conditions to which they were submitted.¹¹

These types of scenes participate in the revival of antebellum slavery culture that took place during 1930s Hollywood. This period marked the definitive transition from an agricultural to an urban and industrial society, during which Hollywood films took audiences on nostalgic trips to the agricultural South. In particular, the South Seas provided an ideal setting for “plantation dramas” through which Hollywood could geographically and emotionally displace the trauma of slavery oceans away (Konzett, 2017, p. 60).

Throughout *Pagans*’ mining scenes, Mala plays Taro as a good, happy-go-lucky slave who heroically risks his life to save the white overseer during the cave-in scene. In contrast, a promotional novelization of the movie, published in the January 1936 issue of *Movie Action Magazine*, adapts the script into a short story to provide a less glamorous account of Taro’s experience in the mines. The novelization, which confuses Taro’s name with Mala’s, breaks the character’s glossy exterior to show his internal fall from grace:

“FIVE months—

For Mala, five long months of blistering hell, swinging a heavy pick in the choking phosphate quarries of faraway Patua.

Those five months had transformed Mala from a laughing, care-free, child-like soul into a sullen, work-weary savage— but they had not broken his spirit.

Outwardly, Mala was a part of that cruel machine called the Oceanic Phosphate Company, whose labor recruits were “blackbired” by unscrupulous shipmasters throughout the South Seas into twelve months of unspeakable slavery in the phosphate pits—if they were tough enough and lucky enough to last that long!

Inwardly, Mala was kept alive and apart from his coughing, dying, sun-mad comrades by the unquenchable flame of his intense love for Lilleo.

As he slaved in the pits, as he gulped down the coarse and meager food, as he spread his pandanus mat in the common sleeping shed— Lilleo, his woman, was always in his thoughts” (Anonymous, 1936, p. 65).

The opening lines resemble those in *Typee* (“SIX MONTHS AT SEA!” [1995, p. 2]), linking Tommo’s feelings of exhaustion and oppression on board the *Dolly* with Taro’s at the mine. Hollywood’s own narrative imperatives required that Tommo’s desire for land (“Oh! for a refreshing glimpse of one blade of grass” [1995, p. 2]) become transposed into Taro’s romantic desire for “Lilleo... [who] was always in his thoughts”, but similarly to Tommo’s desire for escape, the fulfillment of Taro’s desire is materialized in the novelization’s (and the film’s) ending, when

¹¹ Melville mentions the pearl diving industry under French rule in *Omoo*, chapter 17. Reviewers of *White Shadows in the South Seas* singled out the pearl-diving scenes as the best in the movie. One reviewer enjoyed how they represented the struggle of the divers: “pearl diving, its perils and the toll of human life exacted in return for little or nothing, for the natives are ignorant of the value of the pearls they retrieve from the deep” (Lusk, 1928, p. 70). Another mentioned that “The sequences picturing the perils of the pearl divers, the gathering of food for the feast, and the feast and dance itself were very interesting” (Beaton, 1928, p. 15).

together with Lileo they find a new island paradise where they can flee from the strictures of white and native society.

The novelization visualizes Taro's moment of introspection with an illustration based on a still used to promote the film (see figure 1).¹² The photographic original uses a low-key lighting setting that reduces the contrast between illuminated figures and their shadows to a minimum. Interestingly, the illustration (the only one out of the eight pictures included in the novelization that is hand-drawn) recreates a high-key setting, highlighting the shadows cast by Taro's frame and countenance, giving the scene a somber tone. Overall, the novelization allows viewers to digress from the film to recognize similarities between *Pagans* and Melville's criticism of the French presence in the South Seas. These digressions, as Martina Pfeiler (2020) has argued regarding promotional stills for *Dämon des Meeres*, become sites of "transcultural creative reception." Here, Melville's plea for the reader's sympathy for the novel's white protagonist, Tommo, is transposed into the modern viewer's sympathy towards his digressive duplicate, Taro.



Figure 1. The shadows in the drawing create a somber scene that illustrate Taro's state of mind

¹² The photographic original still can be found in Grosset and Dunlap's Photoplay edition of *Typee*. See Melville, Herman. (1935). *Typee, or a Peep at Polynesian Life*. Photoplay Title: *Last of the Pagans*. Grosset and Dunlap.

While *Pagans* recreates the Melville meme in the scenes where Taro's customs are in full display, *Omoo-Omoo* emphasizes Melville's taxidermic perspective in its paratext. As Geneviève Champeau points out, travel books (in this case travel films) rely heavily on paratextual functions to "mediate between [the reader's] world and the text, define the terms of literary communication, and sketch reading cues" to aid readers in their engagement with the "polymorphic nature of the travel book (a type of border genre) and the perplexities prompted by its reception" (2008, pp. 67, 68 translation mine). Paratextual devices like the title *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* establish the travel theme by mentioning distant places; dedications to people from the author's private world like Melville's "To Lemuel Shaw... this little work is affectionately inscribed by the author" (*Typee* vii) are reminders that the text springs forth from the writer's personal experiences; and prologues tend to be included in direct proportion to travel writing's own "indeterminacy of genre," since the stories in the text might be real, fictional, or a combination of both (Champeau, 2008, pp. 67, 69–70; translation mine).

Omoo-Omoo follows these paratextual strategies at the outset of the movie, opening with a brief, fabricated prologue signed by Melville himself:

"In all my adventures throughout the world none were as amazing as the fantastic trip I made to the South Seas in the summer of 1874.

I had heard about native curses and the native tabu but never believed in them until I actually saw with my own eyes how it affected the lives of those people who were with me on that never-to-be-forgotten trip.

This is the story of the Omoo Tabu and the Shark god."

Springer interprets this attribution to Melville as "revealing of two important facts: First, it indicates the marketing value of authorship.... Second,... it is... typical of the cavalier approach to literary adaptation which has... prevailed within the film industry" (2018, p. 348). Considering Champeau's analysis of the uses of paratexts in travel fiction, I would like to add a third fact: that the figure of Melville itself served as a paratextual device that had evolved, by 1949, to be associated with the imperial imaginary of adventure, faraway islands, tropical climes, and exotic animals. In other words, the paratextual elements of this particular film adaptation are signaling that, in spite of being celebrated in the film's poster as the author of *Moby-Dick*, Melville was still remembered as the "man who lived among the cannibals" capable of bringing savage customs back to life on the page and on the screen (Corr. 1993, p. 193). However, the appellation of cannibals, which Melville uses ironically in his complaint, is a key aspect of *Omoo-Omoo*'s appropriation of Melville's onscreen authorial persona.

As pointed out by Inge, *Omoo-Omoo* is a B film, and as such requires a more liberal approach than *Pagans* (an A feature) (1986, p. 701). Such an approach is exemplified by François Truffaut, who in some instances preferred Bs over As because they involved higher artistic risks, requiring directors to make movies on tighter schedules and with lower budgets (Dixon, 1993, p. 3). But perhaps more importantly, Truffaut took B films seriously because of their irreverence and subversive potential. As a critic for *Cahiers du cinéma* he established his own personal film canon through his reviews, and in doing so aimed to destroy mainstream canons. Director Claude Chabrol explained: "To defend the *auteur* cinema it was necessary to begin by demolishing a certain number of old gents and clichés. The demolition expert was Truffaut" (in Neupert, 2013, p. 242). Adopting an attitude like Truffaut's to analyze *Omoo-Omoo* can prove valuable because it

acknowledges the subversive potential digressive adaptations can have over Melville's position as established by the Revival.

Delia Malia Caparoso Konzett takes Truffaut's argument in favor of the subversiveness of B movies a step further, arguing that South Sea Bs are the "reflection of a repressed national psyche" that "lay[s] bare the imperialist ideologies and the anxieties that nourish them, which are for the most part concealed or glossed over in A-film productions" (2017, p. 128). Her argument, used here to qualify the importance of these often-overlooked production, is not unlike David S. Reynolds's central thesis in *Beneath the American Renaissance* that there is a hidden body of work that fashioned what he termed "the subversive imagination," which in turn served as a model for canonical works of nineteenth-century U. S. literature (Reynolds, 1989, pp. 3–4). In *Omoo-Omoo*, the Melville meme is appropriated and recast to replay tropes that had been repressed by Flaherty's model of ethnographic representation.

As established by Inge, the plot of *Omoo-Omoo* has nothing to do with Melville's novel. The movie's storyline was eloquently though inaccurately summarized in *Boxoffice*: "**Adventure Drama.** A pair of stolen, valuable black pearls brings tragedy to ship captain and greedy mate who are killed by incensed natives" (1949, p. 120; emphasis in original). Taking place in the 1940s, *Omoo-Omoo* tells the story of Jeff Garland, a sailor who falls in love with Julie, the daughter of captain Guy, who commands the *Julia*. Guy is sick because he stole black pearls that were attached to the idol of Omoo-Omoo the shark god on the island of Taviti, and therefore a taboo curse ails him. The characters learn about the curse, but greed prevails and, except for Jeff Garland, they all pay a price for it: the captain is killed by his despotic first mate, Richards; Julia inherits the curse when her father dies; Richards kills Chips, his partner in crime, and so on. When Tembo, an islander who stowed away on the *Julia* to return the pearls, is discovered on board, Richards wants to punish him. Garland defends Tembo, leading to a fist fight. The fight is interrupted by captain Guy but, as expected, is resumed at the end after Richards steals the pearls and tries to run away with them. Tembo kills Richards with his spear just as the mate is about to crush Garland's head with a rock. Once Tembo recovers the pearls, Julie returns them to the idol and the curse is lifted. Julie and Garland return to California.¹³

To the simple exploration plot, the film incorporates excitement by resorting to archival material. As explained by Hans Jürgen Wulff, such archival insertions were common practice in 1950s adventure films, which become more reliant on wildlife photographic archives to stage "tours" of the exotic landscape characters are exploring: "The tour is staged according to a list compiled through the act of showing and is realized via point-of-view shots drawn from archival footage whose role... became increasingly important to the adventure film's ambitions to authenticate its locales and displays" (2016, p. 242). On board the ship, Dr. Long shows Julie the underwater confrontation between an octopus and an eel; as Tembo guides the crew through the jungle, their excursion is interrupted by exclamations from several characters ("Look!" says Garland, and a jump cut shows a python snake on a tree); Tembo himself draws their attention to

¹³ The similarities between the novel and the movie are reduced to a few names (Bembo/Tembo, Long Ghost/Dr. Long, Capt. Guy, Chips, the *Julia*) and to the power dynamic on board the ship, where the abusive first mate Richards (Jermin in the novel) remains in charge because captain Guy is sick and cannot leave his quarters (see also Inge, 1986, p. 702).

a fight between two tigers (see also Inge, 1986, pp. 701–702). These archival digressions from the plot become the sites where the return of repressed imperial ideologies manifest themselves.

For instance, during the jungle excursion, Tembo asks the crew to wait for him while he goes to the village and brings back a stretcher for captain Guy. While they wait, the sound of drums erupts suddenly offscreen. This only exacerbates the effects of the taboo curse upon the captain. When Tembo returns, a jump cut shows a closeup of a dark face looking at the crew from the brush. These two narratively incoherent scenes are recreations of old present in a sequence from *Across the World with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson* (1929), a travelogue film where explorers Martin and Osa Johnson hold a travel lecture at their apartment, projecting silent footage from movies they previously shot. During a sequence where the Johnsons are being guided to a cannibal village in Malakula, jump cuts transition from the expedition to skulls on the side of the road and faces of natives amid the brush, staring at the white explorers (and the audience) offscreen. When they reach the village, the editing overlays the sound of drums, played at a normal speed, with sped-up images of natives beating drums and performing rituals, making them seem paroxysmal. These tropes, the devilish drumming and the cannibal hidden in the brush, return in *Omoo-Omoo* as the repressed stereotypes of the South Sea islander that portray him as savage head-hunter and cannibal. In a similar fashion to how Johnson used the archive of earlier films to make *Across the World*, director Leon Leonard appropriates Melville's authoritative position to recreate the archive of cannibalistic representation of islanders and reaffirmed the imperial ideologies that portrayed them as always inferior to white men.

In this instance, the return of the repressed attempts to contain the anxieties brought about by the conflict in the Pacific theater during WWII and the new world order that resulted from it both locally and abroad. As explained by J. C. Furnas, the war suddenly made South Sea films feel inadequate:

For some time after Pearl Harbor it looked as if one minor but welcome result of war would be the extinction of the South Seas movie. GIs on duty on idyllic Pacific isles reacted most unfavorably to movies about idyllic Pacific isles. Sometimes, they say, the loud-speaker was drowned out by the raucousness of the disapproval. (1947, p. 423)

No longer the location of distant Edenic islands fashioned at the open and close of *Pagans*, the Cold War Pacific became the site of nuclear testing and was transformed, as the Korean and Vietnam war would prove, into the new site of international conflict and the hunting ground of a new kind of savage other.

The plot of *Omoo-Omoo* posits an isolationist solution to the issues raised by the United States' new role in the world. Capt. Guy represents the old imperial system, dying and diseased, which abused the natives and pilfered their natural resources. The curse that ails him looms over future generations, embodied primarily by Julia and secondarily by Richards and Chips, who still fall for the trappings of the old system. It is up to Garland, the upstanding white American, to bring about a new racial order, wherein Americans make reparations for past damages (returning the pearls), secure friendly ties with the more civilized natives like Tembo (as opposed to the cannibal threat staring at them from the brush), and return to the United States to enjoy the domestic pleasures of the American dream. This post-colonial utopia introduces a separate but equal hierarchy where the menacing Other of the Pacific is appeased through reparations and kept at bay by being left alone. The viability of the film's solution relies on Melville's authority as a white

man who lived among the “cannibals” in the nineteenth-century? to reassert the dangers that awaited Americans during the second half of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

Seen in the context of Hollywood production and promotional practices, the adaptations of Melville's *Typee* and *Omoo* are shown to be engaged in a tradition of representation of South Sea cultures which can be traced to Melville's first novel and which the adaptations disseminate in the form of a meme audiences can recognize. This Melville meme is displaced onto the margins of film production (the paraliterary element) and of the film text (its paratextual element), and reified in narrative scenes for different purposes. On the paraliterary and paratextual levels, the meme recreates a unique perspective of the South Seas that Melville Revival critics and artists like Raymond Weaver, Frank Jewett Mather Jr., and Robert Flaherty saw as a key element of Melville's authorial reputation. On the narrative level, it was deployed, as in the case of *Last of the Pagans*, to repress ethnographical notions that had shaped early exploration films like *Across the World with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson*. These repressed notions return in the form of stereotypical racial representations in *Omoo-Omoo the Shark God*, signaling cultural anxieties regarding America's new role in the Cold War order. Overall, the films rely on the adaptation of Melville's authorial persona as a paraliterary and paratextual device to introduce viewers to prelapsarian fantasies of South Sea islanders as well as the imperial mindset that is at the heart of the adventure melodrama. From a production value standpoint, studios saw Melville as invoking idyllic South Sea landscapes, the threat of cannibalism, and the dangers of the exotic edges of Western empires. This often-overlooked Melville function both reaffirms and unsettles the persona of the canonical Melville established by the Melville Revival during the 1920s.

References

- Anonymous. (1936, January). Last of the Pagans. *Movie Action Magazine*, 1(3), 48–65. The Internet Archive.
- Ball, D. M. (2018). Modernism. In K. J. Hayes (Ed.), *Herman Melville in Context* (1st ed., pp. 307–316). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316755204.031>
- Barthes, R. (1975). *The Pleasure of the Text*. Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image Music Text*. Fontana Press.
- Beaton, D. (1928, June 23). As They Appeal to a Youth. *The Film Spectator*, 5(10), 15–21.
- Birss, John H. (1932, January 2). *Point of View: Melville's Marquesas*. 8(24), 429.
- Brief Reviews of Current Pictures. (1936, January). *Photoplay*, 49(1), 6.

- Bordwell, D. (1985). Space in the Classical Film. In D. Bordwell, J. Staiger, & K. Thompson (Eds.), *The classical Hollywood cinema: Film style and mode of production to 1960*. Columbia University Press.
- Bryant, J. (2013). Wound, Beast, Revision: Versions of the Melville Meme. In R. S. Levine (Ed.), *The New Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville* (1st ed., pp. 202–218). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139149952.016>
- Carr, H. (2002). Modernism and Travel (1880-1940). In P. Hulme & T. Youngs (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (1st ed., pp. 70–86). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL052178140X.005>
- Champeau, G. (2008). Umbrales del relato y autorreferencia en los libros de viajes españoles contemporáneos. *Letras*, 57–58, 67–78.
- Dawkins, R. (2006). *The Selfish Gene* (30th anniversary ed). Oxford University Press.
- Desmet, C. (2014). Recognizing Shakespeare, Rethinking Fidelity: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Appropriation. In A. Huang & E. Rivlin (Eds.), *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation*. Macmillan.
- Dixon, W. W. (1993). *The Early Film Criticism of François Truffaut*. Indiana University Press. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=23237>
- Dixon, W. W. (2006). *Visions of Paradise: Images of Eden in the Cinema*. Rutgers University Press.
- Emre, M. (2017). *Paraliterary: The Making of Bad Readers in Postwar America*. The University of Chicago Press.
- FEATURE INDEX. A Complete Production Record of the Year. Essential Data on 1948-49 Releases. (1949, December 3). *Boxoffice*, 120.
- Foucault, M. (2007). What is an Author? In D. H. Richter (Ed.), *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Bedford/St. Martin's.
- J. C. Furnas. (1947). *Anatomy Of Paradise Hawaii And The Islands Of The South Seas*. William Sloane.
- Grierson, J. (2016). Flaherty's Poetic Moana. In J. Kahana (Ed.), *The Documentary Film Reader: History, Theory, Criticism*. Oxford University Press.
- Hollywood Productions. (1935, February 12). *Variety*, 117(9), 30.
- Hutcheon, L. (2006). *A Theory of Adaptation* (Second edition.). Routledge.
- Inge, M. T. (1986). Melville in Popular Culture. In J. Bryant (Ed.), *A Companion to Melville Studies*. Greenwood Press.
- Klinger, B. (1989). Digressions at the Cinema: Reception and Mass Culture. *Cinema Journal*, 28(4), 3. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1225392>
- Konzett, D. M. C. (2017). *Hollywood's Hawaii: Race, Nation, and War*. Rutgers University Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1p0vkk2>

- Koszarski, R. (1990). *An Evening's Entertainment: The Age of the Silent Feature Picture, 1915-1928*. Scribner ; Collier Macmillan Canada ; Maxwell Macmillan International.
- Langer, M. J. (1985). Tabu: The Making of a Film. *Cinema Journal*, 24(3), 43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1225430>
- Lucia, C. A. B., Grundmann, R., & Simon, A. (Eds.). (2016). Landscapes of Fantasy, Gardens of Deceit: The Adventure Film between Colonialism and Tourism. In *American film history: Selected readings, Origins to 1960*. John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Lusk, N. (1928, November). The Screen in Review: The South Seas as They Really Are. *Picture-Play Monthly*, 29(3), 70.
- Mather, F. J., Jr. (1967). Herman Melville. In H. Parker (Ed.), *The Recognition of Herman Melville*. The University of Michigan Press.
- Melville, Herman. (1993). *Correspondence* (L. Horth, Ed.). Northwestern Newberry.
- Melville, Herman. (1995). *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life*. Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library.
- Neupert, R. (2013). Certain Tendencies of Truffaut's Film Criticism. In A. Dudley & A. Gillain (Eds.), *A Companion to François Truffaut*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- O'Brien, F. (1919). *White Shadows in the South Seas*. The Century Co.
- O'Brien, F. (1922, February). The Men that Found the South Seas. *The Mentor*, 10(1), 18–31.
- Pfeiler, M. (2017). *Ahab in Love: The Creative Reception of Moby-Dick in Popular Culture* [Habilitationsschrift zur Erlangung der venia legendi im Fach Amerikanistik: Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft]. Technische Universität Dortmund.
- Pfeiler, M. (2020). *Warner Bros.'s Moby-Dick Adaptation Dämon des Meeres (1931) as Part of a Transcultural and Textual Network*. 48(2). https://lfq.salisbury.edu/_issues/48_2/moby_dick_adaptation_damon_des_meeres_as_part_of_a_transcultural_textual_network.html
- Reviews in Brief. (1936, March). *Silver Screen*, 10.
- Reynolds, D. S. (1989). *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*. Harvard University Press.
- Sadahiro, M. (2022). Melville's Twentieth-Century Revivals. In W. Kelley & C. Ohge (Eds.), *A New Companion to Herman Melville* (pp. 23–35). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Schultz, E. A. (2014). Feminizing Moby-Dick: Contemporary Women Perform the Whale. In J. Bryant, M. K. B. Edwards, & T. Marr (Eds.), *Ungraspable Phantom: Essays on Moby-Dick*. The Kent State University Press. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gwu/detail.action?docID=4713937>
- Springer, J. P. (2018). The Cinema. In K. J. Hayes (Ed.), *Herman Melville in Context* (pp. 347–356). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316755204.035>
- Tobing Rony, F. (1996). *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*. Duke University Press.
- Two Companies Off For the South Seas. (1935, February 13). *Motion Picture Daily*, 37(37), 11.

“Typee” in Preparation. (1934, December 7). *Motion Picture Daily*, 36(134), 20.

Wanamaker’s ‘Sea Beast’ Show: Whaling Relics, Sea Chanteys and Lecture in Auditorium Tie Up with Warner Feature. (1926, February 6). *Motion Picture News*, 33(6), 687. Internet Archive.

Weaver, R. M. (1921). *Herman Melville, Mariner and Mystic*. New York, George H. Doran company. <http://archive.org/details/melvillemariner00weavrich>

Wilk, R. (1935, October 17). A “Little” Hollywood from “Lots.” *The Film Daily*, 68(91), 10.

Filmography

Flaherty, R. (Director). (1926). *Moana*. Paramount.

Flaherty, R. J. (Director). (1922). *Nanook of the North*.

Leonard, L. (Director). (1949). *Omoo-Omoo, the Shark God*. Lippert Pictures.

LeRoy, M. (Director). (1931). *Little Caesar*. Warner Bros.

Sorcinelli, N. (Director). (2017). *Moby Dick*. RedString Pictures.

Thorpe, R. (Director). (1935). *Last of the Pagans*. MGM.

van Dyke, W. S. (Director). (1928). *White Shadows in the South Seas*. MGM.

van Dyke, W. S. (Director). (1929). *The Pagan*. MGM.

Wellman, W. A. (Director). (1931). *The Public Enemy*. Warner Bros.

Appendix: Figures

Figure 1

Caption: The shadows in the drawing create a somber scene that illustrate Taro's state of mind.

Copyright: The Library of Congress has determined that this item is not in copyright.

Resolution: 381 dpi

File: JPEG file exported from JP2 original at 500 dpi.

URL of original file:
https://archive.org/download/movieactionmagaz01stre/movieactionmagaz01stre_jp2.zip/movieactionmagaz01stre_jp2%2Fmovieactionmagaz01stre_0329.jp2