

**UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER**

“A mark peculiar”- Tattoos in Captive Narratives, 1846-1857  
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Doctor of Philosophy.  
April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

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**Abstract:**

This thesis explores the Western logocentrism that tattoo's are expressions of captivity by reading three indigenous captivity narratives; *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* by Royal B. Stratton (1857), *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life* by Herman Melville (1846) and *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey* by William Torrey (1848). This logocentrism derives from the tattoo's long history as a method of control; since at least Ancient Greece the tattoo has been used in Europe to mark slaves and crimes, and to signify the foreign 'Other.' The thesis deploys Jacques Derrida's notion of aporia to destabilize the idea that tattoos are expressions of freedom or captivity, and to illuminate them as both. In examining the texts, aporia and freedom need to be understood in the context of nineteenth century colonialism, which was cisheteropatriarchal as well as white supremacist. The context of colonialism means that the imperial gaze constructed the centre and margins through peculiarity. Tattoos, the first signifier according to Lacan, are, to paraphrase William Torrey, 'marks peculiar.' Peculiarity is an unstable notion; peculiarity shows queerness and strangeness, but it also shows belonging. Belonging can be considered in a captive sense (to be possessed) but it can also be considered in a safe sense (to be at home). Each of the captivity narratives I studied considers the themes of freedom, captivity and home differently, whilst sharing some common themes. For example, I read each text as queering tattoos and linking them to cannibalism. Through an aporic gaze I have aimed to read the texts/tattoos in a way that rescues them from the imperial gaze; yet the auto-ethnographic methodology employed in this thesis means my body and my gaze, my own ideas about gender and the language of gender, is a context. Tattoos make perceptions visible, showing both logocentrisms and aporia.

## **Declarations.**

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## UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

### Abstract

This thesis explores the Western logocentrism that tattoo's are expressions of captivity by reading three indigenous captivity narratives; *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* by Royal B. Stratton (1857), *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life* by Herman Melville (1846) and *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey* by William Torrey (1848). This logocentrism derives from the tattoo's long history as a method of control; since at least Ancient Greece the tattoo has been used in Europe to mark slaves and crimes, and to signify the foreign 'Other.' The thesis deploys Jacques Derrida's notion of aporia to destabilize the idea that tattoos are expressions of freedom or captivity, and to illuminate them as both. In examining the texts, aporia and freedom need to be understood in the context of nineteenth century colonialism, which was cisheteropatriarchal as well as white supremacist. The context of colonialism means that the imperial gaze constructed the centre and margins through peculiarity. Tattoos, the first signifier according to Lacan, are, to paraphrase William Torrey, 'marks peculiar.' Peculiarity is an unstable notion; peculiarity shows queerness and strangeness, but it also shows belonging. Belonging can be considered in a captive sense (to be possessed) but it can also be considered in a safe sense (to be at home). Each of the captivity narratives I studied considers the themes of freedom, captivity and home differently, whilst sharing some common themes. For example, I read each text as queering tattoos and linking them to cannibalism. Through an aporic gaze I have aimed to read the texts/tattoos in a way that rescues them from the imperial gaze; yet the auto-ethnographic methodology employed in this thesis means my body and my gaze, my own ideas about gender and the language of gender, is a context. Tattoos make perceptions visible, showing both logocentrism and aporia.

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## Introduction.

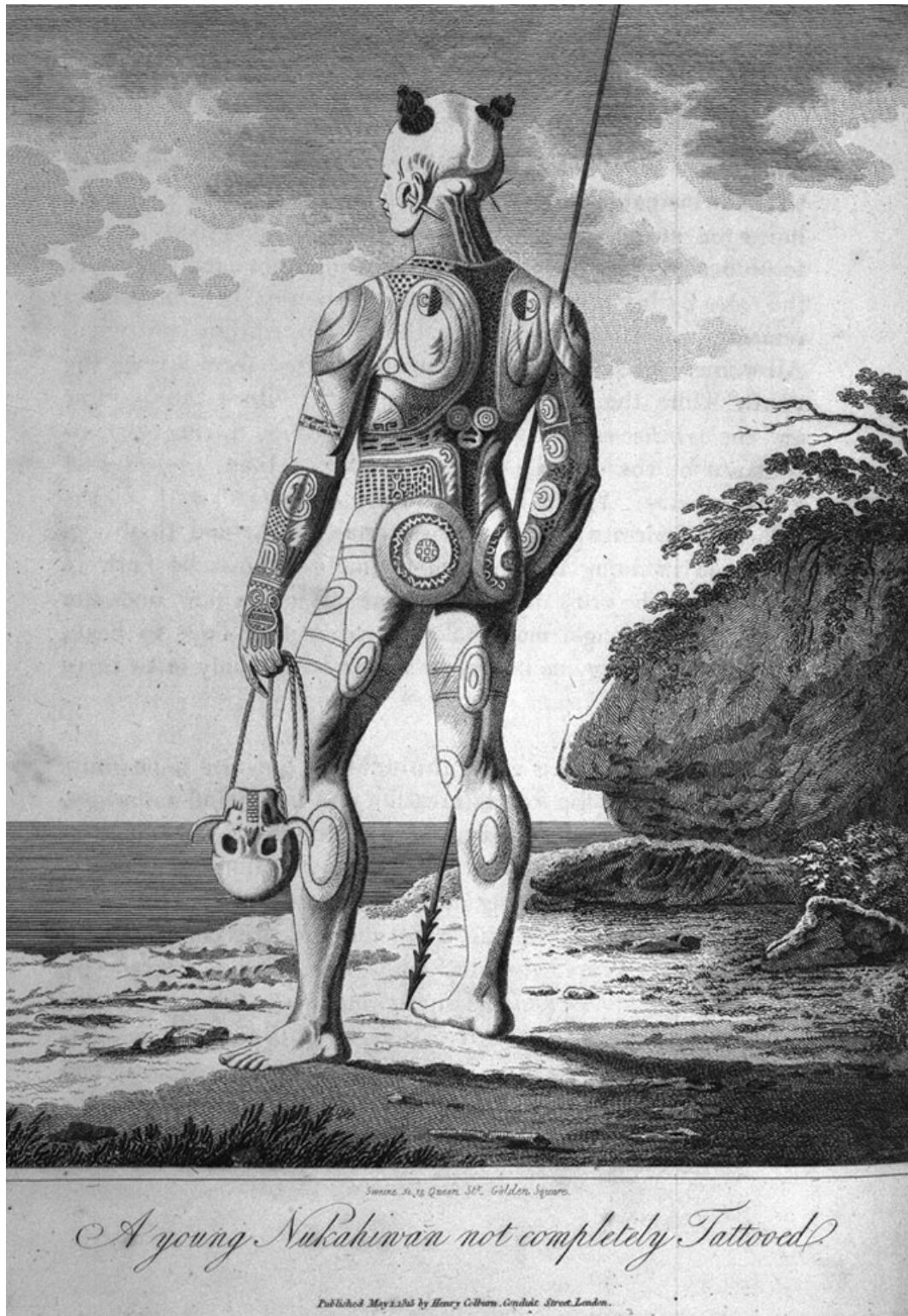


fig.1. "A young Nukahiwan Man not Completely Tattooed" by Wilhelm Gottlieb Tilesius von Tilenau, 1813.

Peculiarity is contextual and personal. It is individual and essential, and it is strange and relational. Peculiar means queer, distinguishing and remarkable, but it also means belonging; a peculiarity is a characteristic of a person, a place or a group.<sup>1</sup> All bodies and all aspects of bodies are peculiar, though some are more peculiar than others. Tattoos draw attention to peculiarity as they highlight sameness and difference, freedom and marginalization. Further, all tattoos are peculiar; every tattoo is slightly different because all people are slightly different. They distinguish people from one another and groups from other groups, yet every tattoo connects people through chains of signification.

Every tattoo is a “mark peculiar,” but the peculiar marks that are my focus are those written in three indigenous captivity narratives written between 1846 and 1857.<sup>2</sup> Stories of captivity have existed as long as people have taken other people captive. Captivity narratives could be broadly defined as stories wherein a person or people are taken from a space or into a space, forcibly, by another person or group of people, and kept with their captors, in whatever condition, for some length of time. Captivity narratives could include alien abductions, holocaust narratives, and various kinds of thriller or horror stories. In the context of this thesis, I am specifically interested in indigenous captivity narratives, in which indigenous people take white colonists captive.

*The Captivity of the Oatman Girls: Being an Interesting Narrative of Life among the Apache and Mohave Indians* by Royal B. Stratton was first published in 1857, and tells the story of Olive Oatman. Olive was a white Brewsterite whose family were massacred by a group of indigenous people that Stratton and Oatman called the Apache, on the family’s journey to find a home at the mouth of the Colorado river. Olive and her sister Mary-Ann were kidnapped and her brother Lorenzo was left for dead. In Stratton’s narrative Olive and Mary Ann lived with the Apache as slaves for a year, before being sold to the Mohave, wherein

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<sup>1</sup> "peculiar, adj. and n.," Oxford University Press, last modified January, 2018 accessed March 15<sup>th</sup> 2018. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/139494?redirectedFrom=peculiar>.

<sup>2</sup> Title quote from William Torrey in *Torrey’s Narrative: or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey* (Boston: A.J Wright, 1848), 120.

they both received facial tattoos. Mary Ann died of starvation, Olive was ‘rescued,’ and Reverend Royal B. Stratton wrote her captivity narrative. From here I will refer to it as *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, and I will discuss the third and final edition unless I clarify otherwise.<sup>3</sup>

*Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* (referred to as *Typee* hereafter) by Herman Melville was published in 1846.<sup>4</sup> It was edited and republished with an afterward apparently written by Melville’s companion Toby in 1860.<sup>5</sup> I will discuss both editions, and pay attention to the differences between them. The narrator is a sailor named Tom, though Melville claimed that the experiences were his own true experiences. In the narrative Tom absconds from a ship in Nukuheva (Nuku Hiva), and lives with the Typees (probably based on the Taipis) for four months. Tom is held captive for four months, but it is not the gruelling and arduous slavery that the Oatman girls apparently experienced. The indigenous group pampers Tom. Nevertheless he wants to escape, and after various ominous signs, Tom discovers that the Typees are cannibals. He describes tattooing at length and when a tattoo artist sets his sights on Tom it is a step too far; Tom escapes. I will also briefly discuss *Moby Dick, or, the White Whale* with *Typee*; Queequeg’s tattoos are probably the most written about tattoos in English literature for good reason; they are particularly peculiar. The protagonist and narrator Ishmael considers Queequeg’s tattoos as “a complete theory of the heavens and earth and a mystical on the art of attaining truth.”<sup>6</sup> They can be interpreted in many complex ways and although *Moby Dick* does not adhere to the indigenous captivity narrative genre, it is still interesting and helpful.

The first two of my captivity narratives are fairly well known, and there has been a considerable amount of work about and research on them. My last is more obscure. The

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<sup>3</sup> Royal B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls: being an Interesting Narrative of Life among the Apache and Mohave Indians* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1859).

<sup>4</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* (New York: J. Murray, 1846).

<sup>5</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1860).

<sup>6</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (London & New York: Richard Bentley & Harper & Brothers, 1851; Plain Label Books, 2010), 360.

title quote of this thesis comes from *Torrey's Narrative: or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, written by William Torrey and published in 1848.<sup>7</sup> It is a fantastical story in which Torrey, a working class sixteen-year-old sailor, is shipwrecked with a man called Noyce on an unnamed island (which was probably Tahuata) in 1835. An indigenous group called the Teheda hold them captive, and when the Teheda go to war with a neighbouring group Torrey and Noyce are given a choice - be tattooed and fight as a Teheda warrior, or die. They choose the former, and do not just fight for the Teheda, they eat their enemies, and enjoy it to boot.

When trying to understand tattoos in captivity in my texts alongside historical context, I interpreted several things. Firstly, that the tattoos in the texts show freedom and captivity to be subjective and contextual. Renowned tattoo artist Don Ed Hardy, claims his works to be an "expression of freedom."<sup>8</sup> This thesis does not simply agree with this apparent truism but rather examines this idea; are tattoos expressions of freedom?<sup>9</sup> Secondly, I assert that tattoos have been a sign of captivity and the foreign 'Other' for millennia; the link between the tattoo and the deviant did not begin with Captain Cook's 'discovery' of tatau in the late eighteenth century as has often been claimed by academics. These captivity narratives both reflect and produce a link between tattoos and captivity.

Thirdly, since the late eighteenth century, tattoos have become a sign that imperial systems tried to hold captive, in meaning and physically via ideological and disciplinary means. Indigenous tattoos were often misread and wrongly interpreted by whites, and whites also changed and attempted to discipline indigenous tattooing practises. I, like Nell Irvin Painter, consider whiteness as a social construct that has changed over time.<sup>10</sup> From European colonial perspectives whiteness is the norm, centre or standard against which the

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<sup>7</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative: or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey* (Boston: A.J Wright, 1848).

<sup>8</sup> D. K. Hall, *Prison Tattoos* (New York: St Martins, 1997), 5.

<sup>9</sup> I have deliberately excluded tattooing related to the Shoah for several reasons. Firstly because it took place after the captivity narratives that I have considered. Secondly, because Shoah took place within Europe rather than in an Orientalized place. Orientalized settings are a key feature in indigenous captivity narratives. Finally and most importantly I have not discussed Shoah tattooing because it is a highly sensitive subject that is personal to me as a descendant of a German Jewish Holocaust survivor. It is a subject that should and has been considered fully elsewhere, for example by Karin Beeler in *Tattoos, Desire and Violence: Marks of Resistance in Literature* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).

‘Otherness’ of blackness or indigenusness is defined, however, it can be made visible, studied, and de-naturalized. The captivity narratives I have studied show this. Because whites endeavoured to control indigenous tattooing, indigenous tattooing is an expression of indigenous freedom. Yet tattoos in captivity narratives are expressions of white freedom too. They show that white people can transverse ethnic/cultural/racial boundaries in ways which indigenous people were not allowed under nineteenth century imperial white supremacy. In my narratives white tattooed people retained their whiteness despite their tattoos and could assimilate back into white society. In the nineteenth century indigenous people lost their land, customs (including for a time tattooing) and lives.

Through the imperial gaze indigenous people were captive in their identities as indigenous, they were defined as ‘Other’ against whiteness. I define the imperial gaze using E. Ann Kaplan’s ideas, wherein the gaze is a kind of one-way subjective vision. The imperial gaze normalizes whiteness, it makes it essential; “the imperial gaze reflects the assumption that the white western subject is central.”<sup>11</sup> Through Kaplan’s thought the colonized or observed are defined by white colonial male understandings of supremacy and normality; “the “male” gaze and the “imperial” gaze cannot be separated within western patriarchal cultures.”<sup>12</sup> The imperial gaze is a look that reasserts the power of the dominant European perspective by undermining, belittling, and infantilizing people of colour’s bodies and actions. Further, I define the imperial gaze as not just racist but patriarchal and cisheterosexist, wherein the imperial gaze defines peculiarity, it marginalizes queerness and indigenusness. Gender non-conforming people defy and deconstruct the logic of the imperial gaze. Because peculiar can also signify belonging, I can find power, freedom and home in peculiarity. Although my subject is captivity narratives written by white people, I hopefully do not consider the white Western subject as central. They are my subjects because I do not want to produce the gaze by looking at indigenusness. Whiteness should be made visible so that it is not central. Nor, as someone who is not cis or heterosexual, do I consider myself as producing the imperial gaze. I will discuss this fully in my methods section.

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<sup>11</sup> E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze*, 78.

<sup>12</sup> E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze* (London: Routledge, 2012), xi.

Fourthly, truth and meaning of the tattoos themselves are held captive by the captivity narratives, which either manipulate the truth or simply do not understand indigenous tattoos. Even though the white captives in the captivity narratives that I studied were to some extent a part of the indigenous groups with which they resided, they do not tell the truth, about the indigenous groups or their tattoos. They are products of and reassert the white imperial gaze, holding indigenous tattoos captive.

Finally, in the three captivity narratives I read, tattoos are queered, and cannibalism is used as a metaphor for queerness.<sup>13</sup> Discussing *Typee* Rod Edmond states; “tattooing is the third term of a cluster linking cannibalism and sexuality.”<sup>14</sup> I argue that this is also the case in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* and *Torrey’s Narrative*. This is summarised well by the image on the cover of this thesis, which shows a young man looking out from the shore to the sea. He presides over the shore scruff, calm waters and skies and a small cliff topped with foliage. Its artist, Wilhelm Gottlieb Tilesius von Tilenau, was a naturalist, and the setting emphasises that he considered his subject a part of nature (rather than civilization). The youth in the image seems unperturbed, looking out to the sea from which his colonizers will come. I can see this image as foreboding; the boy in this image is naked and unashamed, relaxed and free to be. His children will one day be forced to cover their tattoos, or even be punished for getting them.

In one hand the Nuku Hivan youth holds a long spear, and in the other a skull, strung through and hanging upside down like a handbag. It is unclear what kind of skull it could be. It is not a bird or a hog or a dog. It could be human; it is far smaller than the head of the youth, however the youth appears to have a huge cranium. This suggests that if it is a human skull it is a European human skull. However, the skull also has strange tusks, making this unclear.

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<sup>13</sup> I define queer as sexual relationships and genders which the nineteenth century imperial cishetropatriarchy considered gender deviant. I will mostly use the word ‘queered’ rather than ‘queer’ to draw attention to queerness as a process. I realize that the word was not used in the same way at the time, either by imperial white society nor by indigenous people who had a completely different understanding of sex and gender. I will discuss this fully in my methods.

<sup>14</sup> Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 91.



The image is entitled “A Young Nukahiwan Man not Completely Tattooed.” He is naked but extensively tattooed. The title of the illustration emphasizes how extensively Nuku Hivans did tattoo; even a youth not fully tattooed is very tattooed. There are intricate patterns on the forearm, hands, neck and lower back. Ovals and circles emphasize the Nuku Hivan’s muscles- there are ovals on his calves and encircling his shoulders and shoulder blades. Each perfectly round buttock is tattooed with varying rings; the tattoos appear to extend to near the anus and the tattoo artist would have needed to part the buttocks to reach inside. The picture is intimate and it is threatening. It is a sexual and violent image, queered and cannibal.

Overall, I argue that linking tattoos and cannibalism and queerness shows that tattoos must be read in context. These captivity narratives claim to be true, but my research showed me that it was unlikely that cannibalism really occurred, and that it was very likely that queered genders and sexualities did. Herman Melville, Olive Oatman, and William Torrey would probably have known trans or gender non-conforming indigenous people and at least viewed, if not participated, in queered sex. This means that the truth of gender and sexuality is held captive by colonialism and cishetropatriarchy. Tattoos represent the liberating experience of queerness for white captives; however, this same freedom is not given to indigenous peoples, particularly as Christian missionaries attempted to alter actions that they perceived as queer.

### **“The Cook Myth.”**

Captain James Cook set off on his first voyage to the South Seas in 1768, and returned with written accounts of his and his companion’s experiences in Hawaii and Tahiti. In these writings he appropriated, and was the first European to document, the word ‘tattoo,’ which came from ‘tatatau.’<sup>15</sup> ‘Ta’ meant to tap or strike, and referred to the traditional method of

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<sup>15</sup> Of course, others have documented images of tattoos for centauries. John White’s watercolours painted on Roanoke Island in the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century show tattooed bodies. However, White did not use the word “tattoo” which is of Polynesian origin. John White, *America 1585: The Complete Drawings of John White*, ed P. Paul Hope Hulton (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

using a mallet to tap a sharp ink-covered implement into the skin.<sup>16</sup> ‘Tattowing’ and ‘tattooing’ first appeared in English texts in 1771, in James Cook’s and Joseph Banks’s journals from the voyage.<sup>17</sup> Because the word ‘tattoo’ emerged at this time, it is at this time that the ‘tattoo’ entered into English literature. The ‘tattoo’ therefore has linguistic origins which have led people to presume it had Pacific origins and not look elsewhere for evidence; because of the Pacific, Cook-borne etymology of our modern word, ‘tattoo’, many make the mistake in assuming something originary about this particular time and place.<sup>18</sup>

Many academics assert that white people’s tattooing practices have Pacific origin. For example, Margo DeMello states; “[t]he history of North American tattooing begins with voyages of discovery, colonialism, and missionary activity in the islands of the Pacific in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”<sup>19</sup> Clinton R. Sanders states; “[t]he modern history of Western/European tattooing begins with the exploratory voyages of Captain James Cook and his encounters with tribal tattooing in the South Pacific.”<sup>20</sup> Even Juniper Ellis, whose work was very useful to me because of its focus on gender in the South Pacific states; “[m]odern tattoo begins in the Pacific.”<sup>21</sup> This is true inasmuch as tattooing in academic studies and tattooing as we now think of it begins in the Pacific, but tattooing in the nineteenth century did not. Anna Herlichy calls this “the Cook myth” and shows that tattooing took place among Europeans throughout history, and that Europeans experienced tattoos in other cultures before Cook’s voyages.<sup>22</sup>

This is a way in which a dominant gaze works; it accepts a truth, then reads for it. That the tattoo has Pacific origins and is therefore ‘Other’ to whiteness has been reiterated so many

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<sup>16</sup> Therese Mangos and John Utanga, *Patterns of the Past: Tattoo Revival in the Cook Islands* (Auckland: Punarua Productions, 2011), 41.

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Thomas, Anna Cole and Bronwen Douglas, *Tattoo: Bodies Art, and Exchange in the Pacific and the West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 7.

<sup>18</sup> Anna Felicity Friedman Herlichy, *Tattooed Transculturites: Western Expatriates Among Amerindian and Pacific Islander Societies 1500-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012), 17.

<sup>19</sup> Margo DeMello, *Bodies of Inscription: A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 45.

<sup>20</sup> Clinton R. Sanders, *Customizing the Body: The Art and Culture of Tattooing* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 14.

<sup>21</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 1.

<sup>22</sup> Anna Felicity Friedman Herlichy, *Tattooed Transculturites: Western Expatriates Among Amerindian and Pacific Islander Societies 1500-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 17

times that it has become a truth. The myth of the tattoo's Pacific origin 'Others' the tattoo, immediately considering it a sign of the foreign and savage. Annie Werner's, "Savage Skins: the Freakish Subject of Tattooed Beachcombers" and "The Skin of Modernity: Primitivism and Tattooing in Literature" by Matthew L. Oches do just this.<sup>23</sup> However, if I consider the tattoo as something more usual and less foreign, I can consider it a sign of belonging, a centre rather than a sign of ethnic separation or marginalization.

Anna Herlichy states:

Tattooing appears to have always been present on Europeans – both travellers and non-travellers – although it waxed and waned in popularity, as all cultural practises do, and was utilized for shifting reasons and by varying types of groups (national, religious, occupational, etc.) at different times."<sup>24</sup>

Herlichy asserts, as I do, that tattooing was a recognised and established practice both to and among Europeans and North Americans by the late eighteenth century. In the introduction to *Written on the Body: the Tattoo in European and American History* Jane Caplan affirms that tattooing was not learnt from islands in the Pacific; "it also seems clear that Europeans learned neither the technique nor the imagery of tattooing from Polynesian societies, but drew on local practices that existed well before the eighteenth century, whether these were indigenous or imported."<sup>25</sup> Tattooing already had a long history as a mark of captivity, criminality, and spirituality. Further, the link between tattooing, deviance, foreignness and criminality pre-dated Cook's voyages, as I will show in Chapter One. Tattooing in the English language is linked to Captain Cook's voyages in the South Pacific, but tattooing as an act was not just linked to the Pacific for the nineteenth century white gaze.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Annie Werner, "Savage Skins: the Freakish Subject of Tattooed Beachcombers," *Kunapipi* 27.1, (November 2005).

<sup>24</sup> Anna Felicity Friedman Herlichy, *Tattooed Transculturites: Western Expatriates Among Amerindian and Pacific Islander Societies 1500-1900*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012), 17.

<sup>25</sup> Jane Caplan, ed. *Written on the Body- The Tattoo in European and American History* (London: Reaktion, 2000), xx.

<sup>26</sup> Tattooing was witnessed by European colonizers in Mozambique in the late eighteenth century, Japan in the nineteenth century, and India in the late eighteenth century. Heidi Gengenbach, "Boundaries of Beauty: Tattooed Secrets of Women's History in Magde District, Southern Mozambique," *Journal of Women's History* 14, no. 4 (2003): 106-141. Clare Anderson, "Godna: Inscribing Indian Convicts in the Nineteenth Century," in *Written on the Body- The Tattoo in European and American History* edited by Jane Caplan (London: Reaktion, 2000), 102-117. Evan Lohmann, "Culture for Sale: The

My first text, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* is a captivity narrative of North America. Some North American indigenous groups have just as much of a rich history of tattooing as those in Polynesia, and the tattoos of such groups also had an impact on colonial consciousness. This is why I am first reading a captivity narrative that discusses indigenous American tattoos, to de-centre the Polynesian tattoo. Olive Oatman was the most obviously tattooed captive of the three about whom I am reading - she had fairly extensive facial tattoos, but she re-assimilated into white society fairly easily. Her tattoos were peculiar but they were not inhibiting. She was not considered savage or primitive, though this was largely because of the way in which her narrative manipulated the truth of her tattoos.

For example, French archivist and scholar, Pierre Margry, published memoirs and documents in several volumes between 1875 and 1876, taken from the years 1614-1754. In them he describes a man who lived among a Caddo group of indigenous North Americans, who resided near what is now the Oklahoma-Arkansas border. The man "was tattooed like them and marked on the face so that he differed from them little."<sup>27</sup> The word 'tattoo' must be a new addition or translation because the word tattoo was brought to the West by Cook in the late eighteenth century, added by Margry or his French/English translator, but nevertheless, tattoos on white people and tattoos as a sign of the indigenous North American precedes Captain Cook's contact with Polynesian tattooing in 1774.

Anna Herlichy states that "Europeans did not necessarily see non-Westerners as some sort of dangerous Other or noble savage, and, by extension, those who got tattoos were also not ineluctably deviant, atavistic, flawed, or abhorrent."<sup>28</sup> I agree that too much has been perhaps made of the grotesque or of difference. In many ways, for white captives, tattoos were signs of belonging with an indigenous group that did not prevent them from belonging

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Appropriation of Japanese Style Tattoos through Transculturation" (2016) 2446.  
<http://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/2446>.

<sup>27</sup> Pierre Margry, e.d, *Découvertes et établissements des Français dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique Septentrionale (1614-1754). Mémoires et documents originaux recueillis et publiés par Pierre Margry*. 6 vols. (Paris: 1875-1886). English-translation in Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan, vol 3. 353.

<sup>28</sup> Herlichy, *Tattooed Transculturites: Western Expatriates Among Ameridian and Pacific Islander Societies 1500-1900*.22.

to white society. Although towards the end of the nineteenth century with the rise of the freak show tattoos did become more freakish, and although some white and indigenous tattooed people were shown as curiosities from the end of the eighteenth century, this does not fully represent how normal tattooed people could be. They were peculiar, but not necessarily freaks, unless they wanted to be. This changed by the start of the twentieth century. Criminologist Cesare Lombroso considered tattoos signs of biological and hereditary criminality, and as criminality (and indeed sexuality) was medicalised, the deviant peculiarity of tattoos was affirmed.<sup>29</sup>

Further, for William Torrey and Herman Melville at least, the things that tattoos could signify were not necessarily “ineluctably deviant, atavistic, flawed, or abhorrent.”<sup>30</sup> Captivity narratives often link tattoos with queerness and with cannibalism, but these, again, can be peculiar rather than repulsive. Stratton claims that Oatman was horrified at sexual depravity and at the eating habits of indigenous people; Melville is curious and accepting of indigenous sexual relationships but eventually cannibalism horrifies him; and Torrey fairly welcomes it all. For Stratton, and to a lesser degree Melville, the tattoo can be read to signify the indigenous as peculiar, but I read each narrative, particularly Torrey’s, as drawing attention to the queerness of white people and society through tattoos. Tattoos in this case are expressions of freedom if queerness is freedom, which, as a queer person, I think it is.

### **Colonialism and Tattooing.**

Edward Said defined colonialism as the “implanting of settlements on a distant territory,” and imperialism as “the practise, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory.”<sup>31</sup> For him colonialism is the result of imperialism. Robert Young makes the distinction between imperialism and colonialism in order and disorder; imperialism is state sanctioned, ordered, and coherent, and colonialism is individualised and

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<sup>29</sup> Cesare Lombroso, and Guglielmo Ferrero, *The Criminal Woman, the Prostitute and the Normal Woman*, trans. Nicole Hahn Rafter and Mary Gibson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

<sup>30</sup> Herlichy, *Tattooed Transculturites: Western Expatriates Among Amerindian and Pacific Islander Societies 1500-1900*. 22.

<sup>31</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), 8.

without central control.<sup>32</sup> I, like Michael Dietler, see the two as flexible and interchangeable.<sup>33</sup> This is because the act of individualised settling in my captivity narratives existed in the context of imperialist white male supremacy. In fact I use them interchangeably precisely to draw attention to their hybridity. The subjects in my captivity narratives are individualised and somewhat chaotic. In particular, Melville and Torrey were renegade individuals who were regulated by the state (Torrey is put in the stocks for fighting and imprisoned and punished various times). The captives are individuals, and they are captive - they have not chosen to settle where they are settled in these texts, but the texts nonetheless reassert white male supremacy, which was state sanctioned. For example, in *Torrey's Narrative* William Torrey and his crew are given time on shore. They are given money by their captain and spend time among the "natives, giving little restraint to" their passions.<sup>34</sup> They run out of money and break into an old indigenous woman's hut when she refuses them entry. This group of white men spent the night drinking her liquor and singing and dancing in her home, asserting their power over her. Although they are taken to jail, it is "with as little ceremony" as they "walked into the hut," and their captain bails them out without them suffering any further consequences, and they consider it one of "the finest times imaginable." Their meagre punishment condones their behaviour, and therefore their patriarchal white violence against the woman. I consider my texts imperial as well as colonial, if there is a distinction to be made at all.

In "The Great Ephemeral Tattooed Skin," Patricia McCormack states, "theorizing or interpreting such a [tattooed] body risks colonizing the skin of ones self or another."<sup>35</sup> McCormack is not referring to tattoos on people of colour specifically, and as such this suggests that colonizing is an isolated act rather than a white supremacist system. In the context of this thesis colonialism is white supremacist, therefore indigenous tattooing cannot colonize white skin. This is because, in reality, colonization often took tattoos away from and regulated the tattoos of indigenous groups (as will be explored in chapter two). As

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<sup>32</sup> Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>33</sup> Michael Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism: Consumption, Entanglement, and Violence in Ancient Mediterranean France* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 16.

<sup>34</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative*, 41.

<sup>35</sup> Patricia McCormack, "The Great Ephemeral Tattooed Skin", *Body & Society* 12.2 (2006): 72.

D. Arnold states, colonialism uses the body as a “site for the construction of its own authority, legitimacy and control.”<sup>36</sup> Tattoos show this.

Several texts have particularly informed my study, the most important of which are those that directly discuss colonialism, literature and tattoos in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Firstly, Jennifer Putzi’s *Identifying Marks: Race, Gender, and the Marked Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (2012) contains a chapter that discusses both *Typee* and *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*. Putzi conceives that it is useful to compare the two as Melville and Stratton’s responses “play out according to cultural dictates of gender and race, with Melville’s masculine hero successfully resisting the mark and Stratton’s female victim being inscribed by the Mohaves.”<sup>37</sup> Torrey’s Narrative complicates this, though I would say he is no hero. Putzi’s work uses “the marked body to theorize the borderline between the biological and the cultural (even, perhaps, to question the existence of such extremes) in nineteenth-century America.”<sup>38</sup> This text is particularly useful as it examines the indigenous North American tattoos. Most other relevant secondary texts focus only on Pacific, particularly Polynesian, tattoos.

There are many good texts which examine Pacific tattoos in literature. Albert Wendt states in the 1996 essay “Tatauing the Colonial Body” that we can see:

...tatauing and its history and development as an analogue of post-colonial literature. The art of tatauing - or more correctly, the way-of-life that is tatauing - had to survive the onslaught of missionary condemnation and colonialism. The act of tatauing a tatau (a full male body tattoo) or a malu (a full female body tattoo) on the Post-Colonial Body gives it shape, form, identity, symmetry, puts it through the pain to be endured to prepare for life; and recognises its growing maturity and ability to serve the community.<sup>39</sup>

Wendt notes the role that Christianity played in an imperial ideology that worked against tattooing. Wendt also considers tattooing as something that survived colonialism; in this

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<sup>36</sup> D. Arnold, *Colonizing the body: State medicine and epidemic disease in nineteenth century India*, (California: University of California Press, 1993), 9.

<sup>37</sup> Jennifer Putzi, *Identifying Marks: Race, Gender, and the Marked Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 9.

<sup>38</sup> Jennifer Putzi, *Identifying Marks: Race, Gender, and the Marked Body in Nineteenth-Century America*, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Albert Wendt, “Tatauing the Post-Colonial Body,” *Span* 42-43 (April-October 1996): 15-29

respect it is an expression of freedom. William Cummings' 2003 essay "Orientalism's Corporeal Dimension" shows that the tattoos of both sailors and indigenous people shaped white cultural notions of 'Orient' and 'Occident,' or 'East' and 'West.' Cummings states; "the circulation of tattooed bodies of Europeans and Polynesians alive and dead was part of the necessary framework upon which Orientalist assertions and representations of others could be constructed."<sup>40</sup> For Cummings the tattoo helped construct the binary of 'East' and 'West.'

Juniper Ellis's, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print* (2008) is one of the most relevant to my work. Ellis wants to unearth indigenous Pacific perspectives on tattoos. Ellis focuses on gender, and discusses queerness and trans/genders. However Ellis's focus is Pacific perspectives, and mine is to deconstruct the white perspective. Nevertheless, I share many perspectives with Ellis, who considers the tattoo as *not* a form of writing. Ellis states:

...tattoo may not be assimilated into any language, whether pictographic, logographic, or script. Tattoo is an analogue to language and forms a vital means of signification; but it is not reducible to writing, and the patterns exceed any lexicon... in psychoanalytic theory, tattoo also inaugurates the subject: Lacan declares that tattoo is the first signifier, which makes the subject aware of herself or himself as separate from the line notched into skin in all of these works, tattoo is an analogue for language and transforms those who bear the signifier.<sup>41</sup>

Tattoos have been linked time and time again with writing and with language. For example, André Bleikasten's 1982 paper, "Writing on the Flesh: Tattoos and Taboos in 'Parker's Back,'" shows that tattoos are linked to the uncanny in this Flannery O'Connor's story.<sup>42</sup> Marc Blanchard's 1991 essay, "Post-Bourgeois Tattoo: Reflections on Skin Writing in Late Capitalist Societies" refers to tattoos as 'skin writing,' and shows that tattooing moved from the outskirts of society to the middle class.<sup>43</sup> The title of Jane Caplan's incredibly useful *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History* (2000) suggests that the history of tattoos are 'written on the body' rather than tattooed on the body. This work

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<sup>40</sup> William Cummings, "Orientalism's Corporeal Dimension: Tattooed Bodies and Eighteenth-Century Oceans," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 4, no. 2 (2003).

<sup>41</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print*, 12-14.

<sup>42</sup> Andre Bleikasten, "Writing on the Flesh: Tattoos and Taboos in 'Parker's Back,'" *The Southern Literary Journal* (1982) 14.

<sup>43</sup> M Blanchard, "Post-Bourgeois Tattoo: Reflections on Skin Writing in Late Capitalist Societies," *Visual Anthropology Review*, (1991) 7: 11-21



traces the history of tattooing in Europe and North America, from Ancient Greek and Roman tattooing, to Pictish tattooing, to tattooing in North American Freak shows.<sup>44</sup> These are just a few examples of academic works that link writing to tattoos.

Karin Beeler considers tattoos as narratives or stories.<sup>45</sup> This is a more useful way of considering them; though only so much as all bodies tell stories. I was initially inclined to agree with Ellis that although it is an easy link to make, tattoos should not be viewed as writing as this seems objectifying. However, Matthew L. Oches complicates this, and says in their PhD thesis titled “The Skin of Modernity: Primitivism and Tattooing in Literature,” that those who colonized the various parts of the Pacific actually did *not* consider indigenous tattooing a form of writing, but indigenous people did; “by not granting the dignity of writing to tattooing, Euro-Americans also (predictably) denied discursive terrain to the ‘savage’.”<sup>46</sup>

Whether or not tattoos are writing is even more complex in the context of this thesis because I am writing about writing about tattoos, rather than about tattoos themselves. The authors and tattoos mentioned in the narratives I am studying are long gone, and their tattoos only exist in/as texts. The tattoos that I am reading are to varying degrees fictional. Although Olive Oatman and William Torrey had tattoos, the stories surrounding them are, at least partially, fiction. Further, I am not even reading their real tattoos; I am reading books about them. I do not want to objectify indigenous tattooing by reading indigenous tattoos as if they are a text or a metaphor that I can decipher, but in the captivity narratives I am studying tattoos are employed as symbols. By ‘reading’ indigenous bodies and their tattoos and practices, I would reinforce the white gaze, and thus my intention is to read white bodies and white readings of tattoos rather than tattoos themselves.

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<sup>44</sup> Jane Caplan, ed. *Written on the Body- The Tattoo in European and American History*.

<sup>45</sup> Karin Beeler, *Tattoos, Desire and Violence: Marks of Resistance in Literature, Film and Television* (Jefferson: McFarland Press, 2005).

<sup>46</sup> ‘The Skin of Modernity: Primitivism and Tattooing in Literature’ by Matthew L. Oches A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (English Language and Literature) in the University of Michigan 2015, 15.

Tattoos invite a philosophy of writing that is important here, but I am certainly not asserting that tattoos, or bodies, are texts. A tattoo moves as a person does, and travels with a person through their ordinary and extraordinary experiences. A page will not wince with pain if it is prodded as the ink dries - a text does not feel touch but a tattooed person will. By saying that I do not consider tattoos as texts I hope I am not denying their discursive power, but rather saying that they are in many ways more powerful than writing on a page.

Annie Werner's "Savage Skins: The Freakish Subject of Tattooed Beachcombers" is useful in its subject matter. Werner claims; "For returned tattooed beachcombers, the transgression of their corporeal boundary by the Indigenous tattoo facilitated a suspension of identity. Marked and coloured by the Indigenous 'text' of the tattoo, these men were no longer fully 'white'."<sup>47</sup> Later Werner claims that tattooed beachcombers were often unable to return to their former lives.<sup>48</sup> However, the tattoos of the white people in my texts do not negate their whiteness, in fact their whiteness is confirmed by it. Torrey does not express any particular consequences for being tattooed. He gets married and works for the rail company in his hometown. Olive Oatman likewise gets married, settles down, and lives a fairly privileged life. I would say that too much is made of how tattoos create difference, and not enough about how tattoos create sameness.

I believe that all readings of texts are valuable and teach us something, and there as many readings as there are readers. This thesis is particularly valuable because my readings of captivity narratives are different from others; I am a queer, non-binary tattooed person and as such my understanding of captivity narratives and tattoos comes from this perspective. I pay a particular attention to gender variance in indigenous cultures that in my research only Juniper Ellis also acknowledged at any length. Ellis's concern is also not, specifically captivity narratives, and they focus only on the Pacific, whereas my study extends to North America. My subject matter is also original; Jennifer Putzi is the only other person who has read *Typee* and *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* alongside one another, and this is in one chapter. This thesis is a more extensive and in depth piece of work. Further, very few people have written

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<sup>47</sup> Annie Werner, "Savage Skins: the Freakish Subject of Tattooed Beachcombers" *Kunapipi*, 27(1), (2005): 16, 13

<sup>48</sup> Annie Werner, "Savage Skins: the Freakish Subject of Tattooed Beachcombers," 22-23.

about *Torrey's Narrative*; as far as I could gather, no one has done so in as much depth as I. Further, although Caleb Crain and Geoffrey Sanborne have linked cannibalism, queerness and tattoos, there has not been a work that has done so in such depth and across continents.<sup>49</sup>

### **Lovers of Human Flesh.**

Olive Oatman makes one poignant reference to cannibalism, Herman Melville uses it as a central plot device wherein it is murky, ominous, and only proven with a glance, whilst William Torrey kills and eats bodies of an enemy indigenous group. Cannibalism, like tattoos, disorders the binary of inside/outside in captivity narratives.

Captain James Cook brought back stories of indigenous cannibalism with stories of indigenous tattoos.<sup>50</sup> Just as with tattoos however, this was a confirmation rather than a new idea; "in Greek and Roman histories, in early modern accounts of the Orient and Africa, and in the narratives of the Americas, the margins of the world were very often represented as homes of humans who feasted on human flesh."<sup>51</sup> Cannibalism, like tattoos, was linked with foreignness in Ancient Greece, long before Cook.<sup>52</sup>

Cannibalism, like the tattoo, was not considered only Polynesian. Beth A. Conklin states; "from the earliest voyages of Christopher Columbus, reports that American Indians practised cannibalism provided the invaders with easy arguments to legitimize their conquest... Reports of people-eating were the linchpin in arguments that Indians were inferior, even sub-human, and thus in need of being brought under control by outsiders."<sup>53</sup> As Peter

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<sup>49</sup> Caleb Crain, "Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville's Novels" *American Literature* 66.1 (March 1994): 25–53. Geoffrey Sanborn, *Whipscars and Tattoos: the Last of the Mohicans, Moby Dick, and the Maori* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>50</sup> Gananath Obeyesekere, *Cannibal Talk: The Man-Eating Myth and Human Sacrifice in the South Seas* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2005), 25.

<sup>51</sup> Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal: Melville and the Making of a Postcolonial Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998) 24.

<sup>52</sup> Medical cannibalism was and is a practice in the West (for example parents consuming the placenta). I am not exploring this here as indigenous tattooing was not perceived as medical by the imperial gaze in the texts that I studied.

<sup>53</sup> Beth A. Conklin, "Consuming Images: Representations of Cannibalism on the Amazonian Frontier," *Anthropological Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (1997): 68–78, 68.

Hulme states; “cannibalism was supposedly the trait that characterised those parts of the world into which the torch of civilization had not yet shone.”<sup>54</sup> Narratives of cannibalism shine this torch of civilization on its ‘Other,’ the savage. Cannibalism gives the gaze a focus point.

Kelly L. Watson claims that before the nineteenth century stories of indigenous North and South American cannibal women horrified Europeans. However by the nineteenth century, with the firm establishment of European colonial power in North America and Polynesia, cannibalism was reserved for men and masculinity, as a way to prove white men to be “superior to Indigenous men. European imperial power in the Americas was maintained by the remaking of Indigenous ideas about gender and sexuality.”<sup>55</sup> I argue that cannibalism is perceived as a part of that sexuality.

Cannibalism, as with sodomy, was associated with sailors as well as indigenous people in the nineteenth century.<sup>56</sup> However, again like sodomy and in some cases like tattooing, cannibalism among white sailors was perceived as a necessity of circumstance rather than a cultural or spiritual practice, particularly after shipwrecks or disaster situations.

There were stories of cannibalism among the survivors of ships, including the *Nautilus* (1807), the *Essex* (1820), the *George* (1822), the *Francis Mary* (1826), the *Granicus* (1828), the *Dalusia* (1833), the *Lucy* (1834), the *Francis Spaight* (1835), the *Elizabeth Rashleigh* (1835), the *Brig Caledonia* (1836), the *Home* (1836), the *Hannah* (1836), and the *Earl Moira* (1838).<sup>57</sup> These stories were sensational but fairly normalized; “maritime survival cannibalism, preceded by the drawing of lots and killing, was a socially accepted practice among seamen until the end of the days of sail.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Margaret Iversen, *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 7.

<sup>55</sup> Kelly L. Watson, *Insatiable Appetites: Imperial Encounters with Cannibals* (New York: NYU Press, 2017), 181.

<sup>56</sup> Wayne R. Dynes, *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality* (London: Routledge, 2016), 1175.

<sup>57</sup> A. W. Brian Simpson, *Cannibalism and the Common Law: The Story of the Tragic Last Voyage of the Mignonette and the Strange Legal Proceedings to Which It Gave Rise* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 114-139.

<sup>58</sup> A. W. Brian Simpson, *Cannibalism and the Common Law: The Story of the Tragic Last Voyage of the Mignonette and the Strange Legal Proceedings to Which It Gave Rise*, 45.

In the 1979 book *Man Eating Myth*, William Arens claims that there is no substantial evidence that cannibalism has ever been culturally sanctioned anywhere in the world, at any time.<sup>59</sup> Arens' focus is, rather than whether or not people eat people, that very flimsy evidence has always been fully accepted. Though Arens' work and particularly his methods have been criticised, since its publication cannibal narratives have been more thoroughly scrutinized, particularly as imperialist racism.<sup>60</sup> For early clarity, I follow the thought of Gananath Obeyesekere who asserts; "cannibalism should properly be reserved for the fantasy found the world over, that the alien, the demon, the 'other' is going to eat us."<sup>61</sup> Cannibalism in captivity narratives is, for me, about a fantasy rather than a real practice, but why this fantasy exists is important in reading indigenous captivity narratives.

Jean Baptiste Cabri, an extensively tattooed Frenchman turned beachcomber was found in Nuku Hiva by Russian naturalist George H. von Langsdorff in 1804. Cabri denied partaking in cannibalism, though claimed that it did exist.<sup>62</sup> However, Landsdorff was "desperate for a witness" to cannibalism, and concluded that Nuku Hivans were definitely cannibals and Cabri did indeed eat humans. Other accounts of the time dispute the idea that Marquesan groups were cannibals. David Porter wrote of his time in the Marquesas between 1813 and 1814; "[Their] delicacy in concealing the wounded body of an enemy, and their caution in avoiding the touch of the blood or the dead carcasses, greatly staggered my belief of their being cannibals."<sup>63</sup> Writing cannibalism was a good way to sell books; the gaze seeks what it already sees.<sup>64</sup>

David Bergman claimed in his ground-breaking work *Gaity Transfigured* (1991) that queer sexuality, particularly homosexuality, and cannibalism have long been linked in literature; Epophanius and Thomas Aquinas link sodomy to cannibalism as early as the early Medieval

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<sup>59</sup> William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>60</sup> Thomas Krabacher, Review of *The Man-Eating Myth*, " *Human Ecology* 8 (4). (1980), 407–409.

<sup>61</sup> Gananath Obeyesekere 'Narratives of the Self; Chevalier Peter Dillon's Fijian Cannibal Adventures,' in *Body Trade: Captivity, Cannibalism and Colonialism in the Pacific*, edited by Barbara Creed and Jeanette Hoorn (London: Routledge, 2013), 69.

<sup>62</sup> Lee Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2003), 77.

<sup>63</sup> David Porter, *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean by Captain David Porter in the United States Frigate Essex in the Years 1812, 1813, and 1814* (New York: Wiley and Halsted, 1822; rpt., Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: The Gregg Press, 1970), II: 45.

<sup>64</sup> Andrew Delbanco, *Melville: His World and Work* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2006), 84.

period.<sup>65</sup> He claims that although there is no natural link between the two, it has been constructed in literature, first by heterosexual philosophers who sought to further stigmatize queerness, then by writers who used it to talk about homosexuality and love when they could not be explicit about it. Indeed cannibalism is characterised by lust; In 1829 James Oliver wrote that he shuddered to think of the ‘cannibal orgies’ that took place in New Zealand.<sup>66</sup> This is also not limited to Polynesia; Robert Viking O’Brien also states that accounts of “Native American cannibalism themselves link cannibalism with lust.”<sup>67</sup>

Bergman states that in queer cannibal texts “their protagonists seek out cannibals as in Melville’s *Typee*.”<sup>68</sup> The *Typees* themselves are defined by queered cannibalism. Melville states; “ ‘Typee’ in the Marquesan dialect signifies a lover of human flesh.”<sup>69</sup> This can be read in two ways- that the *Typees* love to eat human flesh and that they are sexually lovers of human flesh. The latter indicates a sexuality that is not specific to a kind of body- all bodies are human flesh. In fact ‘human flesh’ is a way of describing the body that is void of gender.

Caleb Cain states in “Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville’s Novels” (1994) that in the mid nineteenth century although cannibalism existed in language and homosexuality did not, “in the nineteenth century, cannibalism and homosexuality shared a rhetorical form. Both were represented as ‘the unspeakable’.”<sup>70</sup> Crain continues;

By the time Melville sat down to write *Typee* — and probably much earlier, probably even before he embarked on his cruise to the Pacific — he was aware that the savages of the Marquesas were famous for two secret practices outrageous to Victorian civilization. The public already associated the South Seas with cannibalism and a peculiar voluptuousness. Melville was free to play with these associations.

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<sup>65</sup> David Bergman, *Gaiety Transfigured* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 142.

<sup>66</sup> James Oliver, *Wreck of the Glide, with Recollections of the Fijis, and of Wallis Island*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1848), 22.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Viking O’Brien, “Cannibalism in Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* Ireland, and the Americas,” in *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity*, ed. Kristen Guest (New York: SUNY Press, 2014), 35-56, 48.

<sup>68</sup> David Bergman, *Gaiety Transfigured*, 142.

<sup>69</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1860), 20.

<sup>70</sup> Caleb Crain, “Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville’s Novels” *American Literature* 66.1 (March 1994): 25–53.

Among his innovations was to associate this cannibalism and voluptuousness with each other.<sup>71</sup>

It is noteworthy that Crain uses the word “peculiar” to describe deviant sexuality and cannibalism. Crain shows that peculiarity can be used as a supplement to or in place of the language of queerness.

Caleb Crain links cannibalism to sexuality, whilst others link cannibalism to tattooing.



Fig. 2. Lt James Burney with the Hand of Thomas Hill, *Journal of the Resolution's Voyage*, 1775, reprint (New York: DaCapo Press, 1967).

Geoffrey Sanborn's *The Sign of the Cannibal: Melville and the Making of a Postcolonial Reader*, links tattooing to cannibalism in his introduction. He describes his opening image, a picture from the journal of Captain Cook's voyage on the *Resolution* in 1775. A group of white men are on shore, one of them holding up a severed hand. On the hand are the initials T.H. The image is described as "Lt James Burney with the hand of Thomas Hill." In this surprising turn of events, rather than the tattoo on the indigenous person indicating cannibalism, it is the tattoo on the white man that proves cannibalism. Sanborn describes

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<sup>71</sup> Caleb Crain, "Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville's Novels."

the image as “the sign of the most outrageous act of savagery imaginable.”<sup>72</sup> Annie Werner also links cannibalism to tattooing:

For readers of the time, cannibalism and tattooing were tantamount horrors, and I would suggest that this is a result of the corporeal transgression that each represent — the physical crossing of the boundary between the savage and civilised body.<sup>73</sup>

The imperial gaze considered it horrifying that tattooing and cannibalism could deconstruct the boundary of savage and civilised, and/or inside and outside. Other academics state that the link between tattooing and cannibalism, or cannibalism and homosexuality, is because of the body boundary crossing of each. Jeff Berglund asserts that cannibalism “erases difference through the collapse of boundaries.”<sup>74</sup> Birgit Brander Rasmussen considers bodily incorporation to connect cannibalism and tattooing. “Cannibalism and tattoos function as tropes of savagery in the narrative...with cannibalism corresponding to incorporation, and tattoos corresponding to writing.”<sup>75</sup>

Incorporation is both the objective and the anxiety of colonialism. The foreign countries and their resources are to be incorporated into empires, and indigenous or foreign ‘other’ should be incorporated into this empire system. However, imperial structures do not want to truly incorporate the foreign ‘Other.’ White supremacy upholds colonialism and imperialism. That the white person could become like and be incorporated into the indigenous ‘Other’ is a threat. This kind of boundary crossing, this moving from the centre to the margins threatens to dissolve hierarchical systems of white cishetropatriarchy.

Matthew L. Oches says, the tattoo “exists within the body while nevertheless remaining always visible for other subjects. It is neither an inner representation pulled out to the

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<sup>72</sup> Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal: Melville and the Making of a Postcolonial Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998) 4.

<sup>73</sup> Annie Werner, “Savage Skins: the Freakish Subject of Tattooed Beachcombers” *Kunapipi*, 27(1), 2005, 18.

<sup>74</sup> Jeff Berglund, *Cannibal Fictions: American Explorations of Colonialism, Race, Gender, and Sexuality* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>75</sup> Birgit Brander Rasmussen, *Queequeg’s Coffin: Indigenous Literacies and Early American Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 181



surface nor an external sign that is projected onto the body.”<sup>76</sup> Maggie Kilgour states that incorporation “depends on and enforces an absolute division between inside and outside; but in the act itself that opposition disappears, dissolving the structure it appears to produce.”<sup>77</sup> Kilgour also writes;

The figure of the cannibal dramatizes the danger of drawing boundaries too absolutely. But perhaps it equally reveals the peril of not drawing them at all, as the act of cannibalism is the place where self and other, love and aggression meet, where the body becomes symbolic, and at the same time, the human is reduced to mere matter.<sup>78</sup>

For Kilgour cannibalism draws attention to the deconstructive nature of dichotomies, but also to the importance of boundaries. For me, deconstructing the imperial gaze should not claim that boundaries should not exist, for this might incorporate indigenosity into whiteness, and difference is as important as similarity.

Caleb Crain states; “Cannibalism and homosexuality violate the distinctions between identity and desire; between self and other; between what we want, what we want to be, and what we are.”<sup>79</sup> Just as Judith Butler claims that queerness disrupts the gender binary, and gender acts can disrupt heteronormativity, I claim that cannibalism disrupts the division between inside and outside.<sup>80</sup> This is because the boundary of the separate self is crossed; a person is taken into another person. I also argue that tattoos also disrupt the division of inside and outside. They are visible on the surface of the skin, yet they are inside it; they are inside the body rather than on it. Tattoo needles penetrate through the outer layer of skin and insert ink into the dermis, the second layer of skin. Personalities, identities or experiences can be thought of as internal things, but tattoos can visually externalise them. Tattoos also disrupt

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<sup>76</sup> ‘The Skin of Modernity: Primitivism and Tattooing in Literature’ by Matthew L. Oches A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (English Language and Literature) in the University of Michigan 2015.16.

<sup>77</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), 4.

<sup>78</sup> Maggie Kilgour, “Foreward” to *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity*, ed. Kristen Guest (New York: SUNY Press, 2014) Vii.

<sup>79</sup> Caleb Crain, “Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville’s Novels” *American Literature* 66.1 (March 1994).

<sup>80</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York: Routledge, 1990), 171–90.

the gender binary; tattoos are non-binary. Just as there is nothing necessarily male or female about hair or about ankles or about breasts, there is nothing male or female about tattoos, until their meaning is constructed.

### **Gender/Sexuality.**

My thesis will use context to show that my texts queer tattoos. When scholars examine gender and tattoos amongst indigenous groups, they tend to neglect to interrogate or discuss trans/genders and gender variance, and often queered sexualities. The European gender binary of man/woman or straight/queer did not apply to indigenous groups wherein trans gender or gender variance was fairly open, as were relationships or sexual relationships that the white gaze would now consider queer. Olive Oatman spent four of her formative years living with the Mohave, who compared with nineteenth century Mormon settlers, had relaxed attitudes to sex, and to trans/genders.<sup>81</sup> William Torrey and Herman Melville spent time in the Marquesas, and whilst Herman Melville more openly discusses indigenous queered relationships in the first edition of *Typee*, he does not discuss non-binary or trans genders, and Torrey discusses neither. Furthermore, Herman Melville and William Torrey were sailors, who would have been rather used to sex acts that we would now consider queer. Context is therefore everything when discussing gender and sexuality in these captivity narratives.

There is a tension in the way that the white gaze reads and writes indigenous gender and sexuality. In one way white colonial writing queers and gender queers people who did not necessarily see themselves or their fellows as deviant, or even peculiar. In another way white readings and writings often erased and ignored variant sexualities and gender variance. Lee Wallace states; “the governing paradigm of Pacific discovery is heterosexualized, both in the original archive and in its critical readings.”<sup>82</sup> I argue that even wherein indigenous people are queered (actively queered and homosexualized by the

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<sup>81</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 75.

<sup>82</sup> Lee Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 57.

imperial gaze's understanding of sexuality), original sources and critical work also usually cis-gender indigenous people.

For example, in early colonial Mexico the council of Veracruz wrote to Charles V in 1519, claiming "we have learned and have been informed that they are doubtless all sodomites and engage in that abominable sin."<sup>83</sup> Richard C. Trexler claims that at first sodomy was read and used by the Spanish as evidence of indigenous male femininity, but as indigenous people began to resist invasion, it was linked to masculinity, deviance, and violence.<sup>84</sup> This idea of masculinity and femininity in indigenous North America would not have applied and does not apply to indigenous North Americans. Rodger M. Carpenter states; "most of Trexler's analysis employs European rather than indigenous conceptions of gender identity."<sup>85</sup> Colonists may well have encountered trans genders and gender variance, and read those people as sodomites; that they committed deviant actions rather than simply had different identities.

Alfred Gell, in *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia*, states; "the sight of the tattoo evokes imagery of sexual subjugation, piercing, and flux, which are equally resonant seen from the perspective of either sex; these resonances arise from the manner in which tattoos are made."<sup>86</sup> Gell links submissiveness with queerness, penetration with sex, and tattooing with both. Juniper Ellis states; "...penetration is not necessarily (or merely) sexual, and sexuality need not be penetrative."<sup>87</sup> This idea, of the penetration of the tattoo needle as a queered act, can become binary-centric. Juniper Ellis states; "none of the societies that create Pacific tattoo, on the other hand, treat the designs as aberrant, much less pathological; instead the patterns designate maturity, which includes but does not fetishize gender and sexuality."<sup>88</sup> Ellis continues; "a general aspect of Pacific tattoo: body art designates a mature adult sexuality, and Pacific conceptions of gender and sexuality revise

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<sup>83</sup> The council of Veracruz, quoted by Richard C. Trexler in *Sex and Conquest- Gendered Violence, Political Order, and European Conquest of the Americas* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>84</sup> Richard C. Trexler, *Sex and Conquest- Gendered Violence, Political Order, and European Conquest of the Americas*, 4.

<sup>85</sup> Roger M. Carpenter, "Womanish Men and Manlike Women: The Native American Two-Spirit as Warrior," in 146- 164, 147.

<sup>86</sup> Alfred Gell, *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 36.

<sup>87</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print*, 164.

<sup>88</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print*, 28.

the strict axis of homosexuality and heterosexuality.”<sup>89</sup> Tattoos were not necessarily seen as sexual or primarily sexual by Pacific islanders, but they often were by whites, including Melville, Stratton and Torrey.

Annie Werner describes a tattooing scene that sums up the queering of South Sea cannibalism and tattoos by the white gaze.

John Rutherford was resident in New Zealand from 1816, and his narrative was published as a substantial section of George Lillie Craik’s book, *The New Zealanders*. In his account, Rutherford suggests that he was the unwilling recipient of his tattoos, and maintains that he was a passive victim in the process. “The whole of the natives then seated themselves on the ground in a ring, we were brought into the middle, and, being stripped of our clothes, and laid on our backs, we were each of us held down by five or six men, while two others commenced the operation of tattooing us.” Given the previous mentions of cannibalism within the text, where Rutherford and his companion wondered if the Maori ‘were examining us to see if we were fat enough for eating’ it may be argued that Rutherford’s depiction of the scene is calculated for suspense. Surrounded by ‘all’ of the natives, ‘stripped’ of their clothes, and ‘held down by five or six men’ the process is obviously not something the men submitted themselves to willingly.<sup>90</sup>

Werner reads the men naked and held down as a threat of being eaten, but I read it as the threat of rape. This links indigenous male/male sexual acts with rape, thus making queered acts violent and threatening.

## **Methods.**

This thesis began as a project on tattooing in English Literature because I am a tattooed English literary scholar, therefore my methods are perhaps more of a confession than a pragmatic description of process. My attention to and readings of gender came from my own identity as non-binary and transgender. I am also tattooed, however, my focus quickly became tattoos that are completely outside of my experience. I am not a person indigenous to the Marquesas or North America. My methods are therefore both auto ethnographic, and the opposite of that. This thesis involves aspects of myself, and people I am dissimilar to. My

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<sup>89</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print*, 162.

<sup>90</sup> Annie Werner, “Savage Skins: the Freakish Subject of Tattooed Beachcombers” *Kunapipi*, 27(1), (2005): 16.

methods therefore must consider my own position as a researcher and the ethics of my gaze.

For example, I use various images in this thesis that were mostly produced around the time that my captivity narratives were published. I considered whether I was reproducing the imperial gaze by showing these pictures; I looked at them with the calm objectivity of someone who is a looker and therefore not on display. However, these images are as much a part of my readings as the texts were. They are important in understanding the context of what was seen and what the imperial gaze produced.

I have some empirical knowledge of being trans and of being tattooed, and this informed both my focus and perspective. Carolyn Ellis defines auto ethnography as; “research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political.”<sup>91</sup> The story element of this is particularly key in the practicalities and writing style of my work. Simply, a research piece tells a story and I prefer writing in first person. Ellis also states;

Researchers look with an “eye” that stands apart, and an “I” that not only looks but is looked back at, acts and is acted back upon, feels and is felt about, examines inward as well as outward, and always is interacting with an other.<sup>92</sup>

My reading is different and personal, as is every reading. I tried to be open when reading the captivity narratives I chose to study, I tried to be open to the things I found peculiar, to the themes that I read, and to my own interpretations, whilst also being aware of the politics of my reading. By writing in first person I can draw attention to my own gaze, perspective, eye, I, and examine inwards as well as out.

Although living as part of my focus gives me some empirical experience that has been useful, it is at the same time difficult to be an expert on yourself. Tony E. Adams considers writing

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<sup>91</sup> Caroline Ellis, *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), xii.

<sup>92</sup> Caroline Ellis, *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), xii.

about sexuality auto-ethnographically as a gay person; he compares it to “coming out of the closet,” which I am doing here as well as constantly in my life.<sup>93</sup> Trans-ness is always present (at least in my life). To study sexuality and gender without acknowledging my own queerness and gender would deny a richness and honesty that could be useful. I hope to acknowledge the uncertainty and emotion involved in auto ethnographical academic authenticity.

It is important to note that the language I am using to describe gender and sexuality is personal. I sometimes use the word queer though it was not formally recognised as a definition or even a slur until later in the nineteenth century. ‘Trans’ would not have applied in the same way in the mid nineteenth century, nor does it always currently apply to indigenous genders or sexualities. Simply, my language is the language that I use. As Heike Bauer states; “sexual classification, then, forms one of the nodes that connect individual experience to discourse by process of identification or resistance.”<sup>94</sup> By classifying genders and sexualities I can link nineteenth century discourses on sexuality and gender in captivity narratives.

I find the language of ‘queered’ or ‘queering’ to be useful as it connects the situations and ideologies in captivity narratives. I use the stem word ‘queer’ in several ways. I use the word ‘queer’ to describe both peculiarity and strangeness; this is what it meant in the mid nineteenth century, but I also use ‘queer’ to describe gender and sexualities that are defined against a ‘normal.’ I particularly use the terms ‘queered’ or ‘queering’ to draw attention to ‘Othering’ as a process in captivity narratives. Indigenous genders and sexualities, queered sexualities and trans or gender variant genders were not necessarily ‘Other’ or queered/peculiar until they were read and written by the imperial gaze. They are therefore queered by whiteness and not before.

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<sup>93</sup> Tony Adams, *Narrating the closet: An autoethnography of same-sex attraction* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc, 2011).

<sup>94</sup> Heike Bauer *English Literary Sexology, Translations of Inversion, 1860-1930* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 5.

Lisa Kahaleole, Chang Hall and J Kehaulani Kauanui state in "Same Sex Sexuality in Pacific Literature," that in many Pacific indigenous cultures "sexuality is an integral force of life - indeed the cause of the life of the universe - and not a separable category of behavior and existence. The discrete analytical categories of 'homosexuality' and more fundamentally 'sexuality' itself, are a colonial imposition."<sup>95</sup> Sexuality was more likely to be linked to gender and gender roles, and more of an identity to indigenous groups than it was to nineteenth century sailors for whom queered acts could be circumstantial rather than peculiar to a character.

I speak English, read in English, and write in English. I therefore want this to be a study and deconstruction of imperialism rather than of indigenous identities whose languages I do not speak and whose experiences I do not experience. I hope by using the language I have I am not imposing Western sexualities or genders onto indigenous peoples, but destabilizing white understandings of gender and sexuality. Further, I hope to heed Ramón A. Gutiérrez's warning against romanticizing third and/or fourth genders.<sup>96</sup> By using my language and understanding I aim to avoid exoticising and making 'Other' of trans/genders.

Caleb Crain states;

A discussion of parallels between the nineteenth-century ideas of cannibalism and homosexuality should begin by establishing an important difference between the two. There was a word for cannibalism, and a word for those who practiced it. In contrast, the word "homosexuality" did not appear in English until 1892. Until then, the only terms available were "friendship" and "sodomy," and to a more limited extent, the psychological diagnosis of "inversion" and the phrenological category of "adhesiveness." There is an enormous gulf of meaning between "friendship" and "sodomy."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Lisa Kahaleole, Chang Hall and J Kehaulani Kauanui, "Same Sex Sexuality in Pacific Literature," in *Asian American Sexualities: Dimensions of the Gay and Lesbian Experience*, ed Russell Leong (New York: Routledge, 1996), 144.

<sup>96</sup> Qwo-Lr Driskill, "Stolen From Our Bodies: First Nations Two-Spirits/Queers and the Journey to a Sovereign Erotic," *Studies in American Indian Literatures*. 16, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 50-51.

<sup>97</sup> Caleb Crain, "Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville's Novels" *American Literature* 66.1 (March 1994): 25-53.

In this way cannibalism is easier to write about than queered sexuality, for both the authors of the captivity narratives I studied, and for myself.

Juniper Ellis states that Pacific genders and sexualities should not be equated with or excluded from European definitions.<sup>98</sup> “Pacific *tatau*, like Pacific conceptions of gender and sexuality, do not occur ‘outside’ these new, normative understandings of sexuality and psyche. But these new definitions proceed alongside and do not displace long-standing Pacific ones.”<sup>99</sup> My understanding does not need to colonize or usurp indigenous understanding or experience. Because I am me, my language and understanding of queerness can exist alongside Pacific Island and Indigenous American ones without displacing them.<sup>100</sup>

The language that I am using is auto-ethnographic because it is personal, and the language that the authors of my primary texts use is similar. The notable parallel between auto-ethnography and captivity narratives is that auto-ethnography is empirical, and the captivity narratives themselves profess to be empirical. The preface to *Typee* claims; “he has stated such matters as they occurred.”<sup>101</sup> The preface to the first edition of *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* states; “the facts and incidents have been received from the brother and sister, now living.”<sup>102</sup> The preface to *Torrey’s Narrative* claims; “the author claims one merit, if nothing else, and that is the truth.”<sup>103</sup> All narratives assert that the importance of their work is their truthfulness, which is linked to the fact that they are true experiences. The tattoos of Olive Oatman and William Torrey are evidence of these experiences.

Empiricism once depended on the belief that there are no innate ideas - that we are blank and experience marks us. Aristotle stated, “what the mind (*nous*) thinks must be in it in the

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<sup>98</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print*, 166.

<sup>99</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print*, 165.

<sup>100</sup> Although I admire Ellis’s work, I feel uncomfortable with Ellis’s language that considers trans/gender variant people as having male or female anatomy. If a person is not male or female they do not have male or female anatomy. If they are a woman with a penis the penis is female anatomy.

<sup>101</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* (New York: J. Murray, 1846), x.

<sup>102</sup> Royal B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls: being an Interesting Narrative of Life among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 6.

<sup>103</sup> <sup>103</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative: or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 1.



same sense as letters are on a tablet (*grammateion*) which bears no actual writing (*grammenon*); this is just what happens in the case of the mind.”<sup>104</sup> This shows that philosophy has long thought the mind as ‘knowing’ only what it experiences, what the world inscribes on it. Tattoos therefore are empirical - they are physical manifestations of experience.

In the Renaissance period this was furthered, and direct evidential experience became even more valued. Leonardo Da Vinci claimed; “if you find from your own experience that something is a fact and it contradicts what some authority has written down, then you must abandon the authority and base your reasoning on your own findings.”<sup>105</sup> John Locke claimed that true knowledge could be gained *only* by direct experience.<sup>106</sup> A generation after Locke, David Hume divided knowledge into two categories, ‘relations of ideas’ and ‘matters of fact.’<sup>107</sup> Mathematical equations and logic are types of the former as they are logical, not directly tangible. That the cloudless sky appears blue an example of the latter. A tattoo is an idea and a matter of fact, gender, sexuality and race are both ideas and matters of fact.

However, as I shall explore throughout this thesis, the apparently empirical writing of the captivity narratives I studied are at least to some extent fictional. The truth of the experiences of the captives is itself captive. The experience and the knowledge that I have contradict the apparently empirical authority of Melville, Oatman and Torrey. As a queer and trans person who has researched the relevant queered and trans history, I can destabilize their authority, using both my experiences and my research/knowledge. This is not to remove the texts or the tattoos discussed within them from their context, but to share contexts.

## **Ethics and My Gaze**

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<sup>104</sup> Aristotle, *Aristotle's On the Soul and On Memory and Recollection*, trans. Joe Sachs (Santa Fe: Green Lion Press, 2001).

<sup>105</sup> Camillia Matuk, “Seeing the Body: The Divergence of Ancient Chinese and Western Medical Illustration,” *Journal of Biocommunication* 32 1 (2006): 1-8.

<sup>106</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Inc, 1996).

<sup>107</sup> David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1902).

My methods interrogate my own role in this thesis, both as a queer/non-binary tattooed person, and as a white scholar. The tattoo is not a binary; indeed there is nothing binary about a tattoo that is technically genderless and raceless until it is viewed. . Although I have some personal authority on non-binary genders and on tattoos, I do not have personal authority on indigenous tattooing. This is not to dismiss colonialism and its role in both the perception of tattoos and in tattoo studies.

By showing that the white gaze deconstructs itself, I hopefully do not centre whiteness but make it an object of study and of the gaze itself, denaturalising whiteness. As a white person, it is my responsibility to address racism rather than avoid it, whilst recognizing that it I should take no moral credit for doing so. I should tackle my own privileges, and my own lack of understanding. As Audre Lorde states;

Women of today are still being called upon to stretch across the gap of male ignorance, and to educate men as to our existence and our needs. This is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns. Now we hear that it is the task of black and third world women to educate white women, in the face of tremendous resistance, as to our existence, our differences, our relative roles in our joint survival.<sup>108</sup>

Following Lorde's thought I hope that in reading colonialism and the imperial gaze I am taking some responsibility for my privilege. I do not occupy an outsider status to that which I am reading. Some of my family is white British, and white colonialism is my focus. Trinh T. Minh-ha, commenting on Lorde's passage, states; "the understanding of difference is a shared responsibility, which requires a minimum willingness to reach out to the unknown."<sup>109</sup> I hope that by turning my focus to whiteness rather than to indigenous bodies I can educate myself whilst not claiming responsibility for liberating indigenous subjects or credit for reading colonialism.

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<sup>108</sup> Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." 1984. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Ed. (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1984). 110- 114. 2007. P

<sup>109</sup> Thi Minh-Ha Trinh, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1989), 85.

Therese Mangos and John Utanga recognise that “what we know about the practise and particularly patterns used in tātatau has largely been provided by early explorers and visitors, the missionaries, colonial officials and anthropologists.”<sup>110</sup> Lee Wallace shows that in the journals of Cook’s voyages and in other such primary source material in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the focus is on the indigenous body. The white body is naturalized as the blank standard; the centre to the ‘Other’. Only when “the male European becomes himself available to sexual visualization, then he simultaneously becomes imbricated in circuits of desire which are more promiscuous in their effects and which give the lie to imperial omnipotence and abstraction.”<sup>111</sup>

Olive Oatman’s narrative describes her as chaste, but the accompanying engravings sexualized Olive and her sister Mary Anne. Beachcombers like Melville and Torrey already usually occupied a rogue status that meant they were sexualized. Beachcombers could be seen as “available for sexual as well as cultural translation.”<sup>112</sup> The whiteness, queerness and peculiarity of the people in the captivity narratives that I read make whiteness visible.

In "Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric" Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek claim that “there is no 'true essence' to 'whiteness': there are only historically contingent constructions of that social location.”<sup>113</sup> They claim that whiteness should be de-naturalized and named, so that it is not longer viewed as blankness and therefore centre. In the introduction to a special issue of the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, Sara Trechter and Mary Bucholtz state;

...whiteness works much like a linguistic sign, taking its meaning from those surrounding categories to which it is structurally opposed, such as blackness, indigenouness, and foreignness. As an element in each of these binaries, however, whiteness is not opposite and equal, but opposite and unequal. It is in its unmarked status that the power of whiteness lies. Ideologically, whiteness is usually absence, not presence: the absence of culture and color. Yet as numerous articles in this issue

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<sup>110</sup> Therese Mangos and John Utanga, *Patterns of the Past: Tattoo Revival in the Cook Islands* (Aukland: Punarua Productions, 2011), 43.

<sup>111</sup> Lee Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2003), 67.

<sup>112</sup> Lee Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities*, 68.

<sup>113</sup> Nakayama, Thomas K Nakayama, Ro Krizek, Bert L. Ro, "Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Carl R Burgchard (Philadelphia: Strata Publishing, 2010).

argue, in particular ethnographic contexts, whiteness can become unmoored from its unmarked position and float into seeing (and hearing) range...to capture the variability from language to language, context to context, universal constraints are ranked differently to obtain the structures of an individual language... Likewise the strategies of whiteness are often local, temporary, and self contradictory."<sup>114</sup>

Tattoos can make whiteness visible and show that white bodies are peculiar; the whiteness of the narrators in my texts is local, temporary and self-contradictory. Olive Oatman and William Torrey are blank to the indigenous groups they live with, they are without spirituality or belonging. Olive cannot go to heaven without her tattoo, and Torrey cannot fight as a part of the Teheda without his. To white people they can always be white (even if they are deviant whites); however, to indigenous people their whiteness can be negated by tattoos, which in essence make the skin less white. This shows that whiteness is contextual and visible; indigenous people see Melville's, Oatman's and Torrey's whiteness and outsider status and can help them rectify it, yet indigenous people see whiteness as less consequential or permanent than the way that white people viewed indigenousness.

Chapter one of this thesis concerns context, and outlines some of the information that I think is relevant to reading the captivity narratives I studied. Chapter two is theory-based, and in it I discuss the work of Jacques Derrida. These two Chapters are not stand-alone, and both are necessary to my readings of captivity narratives. Context informed my theory, and theory informed my understanding of context.

Jacques Derrida has influenced my thought, as I am interested in unsettling and de-centring some of the oppressive ideas attached to tattoos such as racism, classism, cis/heterocentrism. Derrida was interested in subverting binaries and showing that although one part of a binary is privileged or centred in European writing, it should not necessarily be. Using his thoughts the binaries of inside/outside, white/indigenous, freedom/captivity and man/woman can be destabilized. Derrida was not in favour of creating a particular methodology; this would create another "truth," and his intention was to destabilize knowledge rather than create another system of it. I hope that my thesis can disrupt some

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<sup>114</sup> Trechter, Sara, and Mary Bucholtz. "Introduction: White Noise: Bringing Language into Whiteness Studies." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (2001): 3-21, 5.

dominant truths, but also consider methodology important because of my position as a white researcher studying colonial texts.

Chapter four is about *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* by Royal B. Stratton, Chapter five concerns *Typee* and *Moby Dick* both by Herman Melville, and Chapter six studies *Torrey's Narrative* by William Torrey. Each of these chapters will give a short critical synopsis of the narrative that is its focus, alongside any research that supports or destabilizes the information given by the authors. I will then discuss tattooing in the text, and then discuss the texts thematically using what I have learnt from tattoos. Some of these themes were common between texts, such as tattooing, writing style, freedom, home, cannibalism, and sexuality/gender. Some were particular to the text I was reading, for example, Torrey's use of others' work was peculiar to his text. I will discuss how tattoos are written and/or linked to each of these themes, whilst returning to my guiding question; are tattoos expressions of freedom? I will conclude by discussing the medicalization of tattoos at the end of the nineteenth century, hoping to provide some answers and pose some questions.

I chose these narratives in particular for several reasons. Firstly, they were written within eleven years of each other and therefore capture a fairly specific moment of history. Secondly, they are all from the same genre; captivity narratives. Thirdly, they represent people who were the same but different. Olive Oatman's story shows tattooing on a female captive in North America, William Torrey and Herman Melville show masculine tattooing in captivity narratives in the South Pacific. Although I do not think that tattoos in the South Pacific was a true origin of modern tattooing, "moments in the past, historical trajectories and even 'origins' can be identified and celebrated for diverse reasons."<sup>115</sup> European contact with the South Pacific in the late eighteenth century is a key moment in tattoo studies, and should be identified and discussed, though probably not celebrated.

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<sup>115</sup> Nicholas Thomas, Anna Cole and Bronwen Douglas, *Tattoo: Bodies Art, and Exchange in the Pacific and the West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 12.

## Chapter One- Literature Survey and Context.



Fig. 3. Tattooed Thracian Woman, 450-440 B.C. Erich Lessing/ Art Resource, New York.

The picture opening this chapter shows a vase made between 440-450 B.C, on which is painted a tattooed Thracian Maenad. She is about to kill the musician Orpheus for abandoning Dionysus, god of wine, theatre, ritual madness and fertility.<sup>116</sup> The Maenad has thick muscular arms, along which are forty-five degree angle arrow marks, pointing towards her hands. Her head is tilted slightly down, her eyes looking up through her brow. Her left arm reaches forward and her right hand clutches a small sword. She has dark curly hair, and loose robes hiding her body shape- to me she looks very non-binary. Maenads were mythologized mad women - the servants of Dionysus, they performed frenzied, dancing rituals.<sup>117</sup> This painting appears to link tattoos to foreignness, mythology, violence, and unruly gender.

### **Tattooing, a Captivity Narrative.**

Tattooing has existed among different groups of people in different places for different reasons for thousands of years. The earliest evidence of tattooing in Europe is in the form of humanoid figurines that are decorated with stripes and dots; these are around 40,000 years old.<sup>118</sup> The Ancient Egyptians practised tattooing four thousand years ago.<sup>119</sup> There are texts describing Chinese tattooing from around two and a half thousand years ago.<sup>120</sup> Tattooing has long been a widespread human action, and so why has it for so long been considered peculiar, or even deviant? I read the story of tattooing and captivity as beginning in Ancient Greece.

Europeans have tattooed prisoners for identification and as punishment since at least Ancient Greece, linking it to the foreign 'Other' whilst utilising it to subjugate prisoners. The link between tattoos and foreign people, renegades or criminals has existed in Europe for

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<sup>116</sup> N. Wilson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*, (London: Routledge, 2013), 702.

<sup>117</sup> Ernest L. Abel, *Intoxication in Mythology: A Worldwide Dictionary of Gods, Rites, Intoxicants, and Place* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2006).

<sup>118</sup> "Der Löwenmensch," The Ulm Museum, accessed 22 December 2015.

<sup>119</sup> Tassie, Geoffrey J Tassie, "Identifying the practice of tattooing in ancient Egypt and Nubia," *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 14, (2003): 85–101

<sup>120</sup> Steve Gilbert, *Tattoo history: A source book* (New York: Juno Books, 2000).

millennia. The link between sailors and tattoos is relatively recent; prison and disciplinary tattooing far predates it. People who are forcibly tattooed do not have a choice, but can choose to carry on getting tattooed, perhaps in doing so reclaiming their bodies from their captors. These chosen tattoos can, however, be used by punitive institutions to identify and constrain 'deviant' bodies further.

Some of the papers in *Written on the Body- The Tattoo in European and American History* edited by Jane Caplan are very useful in tracing the history of punitive tattooing. C.P. Jones convincingly argues that 'stigmata' amongst the Ancient Greeks and Romans "are almost always tattoos-and not brand marks."<sup>121</sup> The Greeks and Romans adopted the practice and its primary use as punishment from Persia.<sup>122</sup> It was not necessarily white Europeans who first utilised tattooing for discipline.

Jones claims that although the Greeks associated tattoos with Scottish tribes and the Israelites, they "associated this practice above all with the Thracians, the 'barbarian' people living in what is now southern Bulgaria and European Turkey."<sup>123</sup> This linked tattoos to the foreign 'Other'. C.P. Jones discusses vase paintings, including that which opens this chapter, that depict tattooed Thracian women, who are portrayed as 'mad women' or 'Maenads.' The Ancient Greeks linked the tattoo with mysticism and gendered and foreign deviance.

The Greeks themselves mostly used tattooing as a punitive measure for runaway slaves, who were usually tattooed on the forehead to mark their crime or their master. Tattoos also had a religious importance, particularly due to their relationship with subjugation. Jones states; "Herodotus regards the tattoos voluntarily adopted by runaway slaves at Canopus as a mark of self-devotion to the local god. Such slaves were now transferred from their human owner to a divine one, and thus became inviolable."<sup>124</sup> In this case these bodies and their tattoos are both freed and not, depending on whether you consider being owned by the divine a

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<sup>121</sup> C.P Jones, "Stigma and Tattoo," in *Written on the Body- The Tattoo in European and American History*, ed. Jane Caplan (London: Reaktion, 2000), 2.

<sup>122</sup> C.P Jones, "Stigma and Tattoo," 7.

<sup>123</sup> C.P Jones, "Stigma and Tattoo," 6.

<sup>124</sup> C.P Jones, "Stigma and Tattoo," 6.



freedom. If freedom is doing what you want to do, then these tattoos are an expression of freedom. Freedom of religious expression can be a freedom.

Nevertheless, the English language inherited from Greece is the language of infamy rather than redemption. The word stigma, “passed into our own language with the sense of ‘mark of infamy’, ‘moral blot.’”<sup>125</sup> Ancient Greece, its philosophies, its politics, and its ideas are thought to have nurtured modern ‘Western’ culture.<sup>126</sup> Tattoos were therefore nurtured to be signs of immorality.

Mark Gustafson supports Jones’s discussion, augmenting it with the history of tattooing in the Roman Empire. The Romans also almost exclusively used tattooing punitively and sometimes religiously, to mark out Christians, slaves, or crimes (none of these things being mutually exclusive). Subjugation and devotion linked tattooing to religion, and as Christianity developed, so did tattooing practices. Although tattooing in the mid nineteenth century was linked to indigenous heathenism, in Europe it was once a deviant Christian spiritual practice.

Gustafson states; “The *Theodosian Code* (a collection of imperial legislation published in 438) preserves an edict of the emperor Constantine from the year 316.”<sup>127</sup> In this Constantine forbids the facial tattooing of those “condemned to a gladiatorial school or to the mines/quarries...his face, which has been fashioned in the likeness of the divine beauty, may not be disgraced.”<sup>128</sup> Gustafson continues;

The face is, without a doubt, the worst place to receive a tattoo against one’s wishes. Not only does it defy most attempts at concealment, but the face is also commonly viewed as the reflection of one’s person, of the self, of the soul.<sup>129</sup>

Facial tattooing was particularly stigmatized in Europe and its colonies as it was both a punitive measure against criminals, and ideologically disparate within Christianity, which

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<sup>125</sup> C.P Jones, “Stigma and Tattoo,” 1.

<sup>126</sup> Maura Ellyn and Maura McGinnis, *Greece: A Primary Source Cultural Guide* (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2004), 8.

<sup>127</sup> Mark Gustafson, “The Tattoo in the Later Roman Empire and Beyond,” in *Written on the Body- The Tattoo in European and American History* edited by Jane Caplan (London: Reaktion, 2000), 21.

<sup>128</sup> Mark Gustafson, “The Tattoo in the Later Roman Empire and Beyond,” 21.

<sup>129</sup> Mark Gustafson, “The Tattoo in the Later Roman Empire and Beyond,” 25.

would become the dominant European religion. In Ancient Greece and the later Roman Empire punitive and forced tattooing was almost always facial.

Olive Oatman was Christian and the person who wrote her narrative was a minister of religion. As such the marks on her face carried particular disgrace. It was entirely necessary for her to claim the tattoos were forced and a mark of captivity and slavery for her to assimilate with Christian society, and this was believable because it has always been a use of tattooing. Facial tattooing as to mark slaves has a history in Europe, and not among the Mohave, therefore her fiction was easily accepted. Likewise, Melville's Tom is particularly terrified of having his face tattooed.

However, religious tattooing, in particular Christian religious tattooing, also began to increase in the later Roman Empire. In the early seventh century "apparently, some Christians had once advised the eastern Scythians who were victimized by the plague to tattoo their children on the forehead with the sign of the cross."<sup>130</sup> The same placing of a tattoo on the forehead that signified condemnation thus signified healing. Therefore towards the latter end of the Roman Empire some religious groups reclaimed facial tattooing.

There was a lull in the forced tattooing of criminals in and by Europeans for a time. Then European colonies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries utilised tattooing and more commonly branding for punitive and identifying purposes, particularly in Australia and in India under British rule.<sup>131</sup> It is important to note that most of this research has been carried out by white Anglo/American critics. Like myself, they write as the colonial insider rather than the colonised insider. Clare Anderson writes on tattooing in India:

Tattooing and branding were established cultural practices in pre-colonial India. The use of tattooing as a punishment at that time was bound up with other sanctions of shame and humiliation. Given that bodily marking was also a familiar punishment in

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<sup>130</sup> Mark Gustafson, "The Tattoo in the Later Roman Empire and Beyond," 29.

<sup>131</sup> Simon Bernard, *Convict Tattoos: Marked Men and Women of Australia*, (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2016).

Europe, it is unsurprising that the East India Company used it in their own penal codes.<sup>132</sup>

Indian people tattooed in various ways and for various reasons, both before and during British Imperial Rule. For example, tattoos were used by various groups for communicating status, roles, gender roles, and as a healing tool.<sup>133</sup> In the nineteenth century some Hindus would tattoo decoratively, but purely decorative tattoos were prohibited for Muslims.<sup>134</sup> Facial tattooing amongst some Hindus was linked to religious ritual, and Indian Christians also tattooed to show religious devotion. Anderson states; “both Roman Catholics and the Syrian Christian Community of Kerala had birds tattooed on the arms and thighs as symbols of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>135</sup>

Indian people also gendered tattooing differently than it was and is in Europe. Women were more tattooed and more likely to be tattooed, and tattooing was linked “to chastity and fidelity”.<sup>136</sup> This contrasts entirely with how tattooing has been read by nineteenth century Europe. Alfred Gell, writing on tattooing in Polynesia, claims; “the sight of the tattoo evokes imagery of sexual subjugation.”<sup>137</sup> It would not necessarily have for Indian people. This sexualizing of tattoos is an effect of the white gaze, which misread Indian tattooing in various ways.

Tattoos were therefore used in two different ways by British Imperial forces. They tried to record and read the tattoos that were made consensually by Indian people, though often Indian people would simply change or enlarge the tattoos that were recorded criminal.<sup>138</sup> The British also forced tattooing in a similar way to the Greeks and Romans. Imperial forces could use and misread existing tattoos to impose deviance upon Indian people.

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<sup>132</sup> Clare Anderson, “*Godna: Inscribing Indian Convicts in the Nineteenth Century*,” in *Written on the Body- The Tattoo in European and American History* edited by Jane Caplan (London: Reaktion, 2000), 102-117, 116.

<sup>133</sup> Clare Anderson, “*Godna: Inscribing Indian Convicts in the Nineteenth Century*,” 103.

<sup>134</sup> Clare Anderson, “*Godna: Inscribing Indian Convicts in the Nineteenth Century*,” 104.

<sup>135</sup> Clare Anderson, “*Godna: Inscribing Indian Convicts in the Nineteenth Century*,” 104.

<sup>136</sup> Clare Anderson, “*Godna: Inscribing Indian Convicts in the Nineteenth Century*,” 104.

<sup>137</sup> Alfred Gell, *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 36.

<sup>138</sup> Clare Anderson, “*Godna: Inscribing Indian Convicts in the Nineteenth Century*,” 116.

This utilization of tattoos in colonizing bodies both pre and post dates the captivity narratives I have studied, and Captain Cook's voyages. The tattoo has a long and established history as a mark of captivity in Europe - it also has an established history as a Christian practice. In some cases, as with the Thracians and Turks in ancient Greece, it was linked with foreignness, but its links to indigenous 'tribal' cultures and to sailors is far more recent.

### **Tattoo Texts.**

Albert Parry (1901-1992) was an ex-sailor and professor of Russian language and history at Colgate University, New York. His 1933 text *Tattoo: Secrets of a Strange Art*. *Tattoo: Secrets* is a piecemeal and fantastical work. Its focus is on tattooing in North America and its influences broadly, but it shifts around in its themes and focus. Its contents page's chapter headings and sub headings include:

...primitive dreams...tattoo as a substitute for woman...prostitutes and perversion...sacrificial pain...auto-eroticism through tattoos...Sailors as homosexuals...low herd- High society...Narcissism...tattooers in America...The first tattooed men in the American Sideshow...Herman Melville...Identification...True reasons for such "identification"- tattoos: sadism sodomy, incest...Magic and disease...Totemic tattoos of the American Indians...Italians and Jews- Priests, pastors and monks, and their tattoos...Reasons for removal.<sup>139</sup>

He is uncritical of his evidence and broad and sweeping in his assertions but the subject matter, which reads like a word association, is nevertheless revealing. In the early twentieth century tattoos were linked to spirituality, sexual perversion, sailors, queers, indigenous Americans and Herman Melville. In some ways this thesis is also about spirituality, sexual perversion, sailors, queers, and Herman Melville. Parry quotes some interesting documentation amongst various random opinions of his colleagues. For example, he claims:

A Methodist minister of Auckland, New Zealand, Mr Rawei came to the United States some twenty-odd years ago. He delivered a talk before a meeting of the Cook County Teachers' Association on *From Cannibalism to Culture*, urging the husbands of Cook County to tattoo their wives. "I think this is a magnificent custom..."<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Albert Parry, *Tattoo: Secrets of a Strange Art* (New York: Dover Publications Inc, 1933).

<sup>140</sup> Quoted by Albert Parry in *Tattoo: Secrets of a Strange Art* (New York: Dover Publications Inc, 1933), 5.

Parry shows that tattooing has been linked to the possession of women and to cannibalism. Although tattoos of a lover's names are popular now, as they were in the nineteenth century, Mr Rawei's suggestion seems similar ideologically to captive tattooing. Further, Mr Rawei's talk was titled 'from cannibalism to culture', suggesting that tattooing to mark possession can be an act of culture, but only if it enforces a Christian cishetropatriarchy. Although it is a peculiar book, in fact, Parry's work is no more unreliable than Melville's, Torrey's or Stratton's.

Most available in-print information about indigenous tattooing has been produced and recorded by "early explorers and visitors, the missionaries, colonial officials and anthropologists."<sup>141</sup> Such sources produce the white gaze, wherein the indigenous tattoo is stared at and reproduced to be more widely looked at. In 1922 Willowdean Chatterson Handy published an illustrated text on tattooing in the Marquesas during her time on the Islands. There are some descriptions, but the text mostly consists of annotated photographs or drawings. Handy critiques Herman Melville's *Typee* at various points. Handy claims; "all present-day information denies Melville's statement that there were an order of tattooing artists."<sup>142</sup> Melville claimed that tattoos were a sign of a warrior, but Handy found that un-tattooed people could also be warriors. However, by the 1930s tattooing had vastly reduced across Polynesia.

Handy's drawings also include some of the hand tattoos of the women and men of Tahuata, the kind that William Torrey received. A woman's hand tattoo apparently shows the motif for Kava - this would suggest that women on Tahuata could participate in Kava, which Torrey claimed was taboo and therefore not allowed. Handy also includes several pictures of tattoos on the legs of women on Tahuata- Torrey only mentions that the Teheda tattoo their hands. Handy does not specify which group on Tahuata these tattoos come from, so it would be speculative to assume that the Teheda tattooed more than Torrey suggests, though Handy raises the possibility. Because the hands are always visible, perhaps these are the

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<sup>141</sup> Therese Mangos and John Utanga, *Patterns of the Past: Tattoo Revival in the Cook Islands* (Auckland: Punarua Productions, 2011), 43.

<sup>142</sup> Willowdean Chatterson Handy, *Tattooing in the Marquesas*, (New York: Courier Corporation, 2012), 9.

tattoos that Torrey discusses. It is certainly possible he was tattooed more comprehensively. Marquesan tattooing was the most extensive of that in all of Polynesia, and usually “almost the entire body was tattooed.”<sup>143</sup> Juniper Ellis supports this, stating; “Marquesan men had historically been tattooed on almost every available surface from head to toe.”<sup>144</sup>

More contemporary ‘Tattoo source books’ tend to consist of photographs with annotations. Tattoo source books can include an array of ‘sources’ such as legal documents, letters, photographs of tattoo equipment both modern and ancient, and paintings and photographs of tattoos themselves. Good examples are Steve Gilbert’s *Tattoo History, a Source Book*<sup>145</sup> and *The World of Tattoo- an Illustrated History* by Maarten Hesselt van Dinter.<sup>146</sup> Margot Miffin’s *Bodies of Subversion: a Secret History of Woman and Tattoo* is a source book that focuses on women, particularly white women.<sup>147</sup> Although created with a mass-market appeal, these are helpful and well-researched texts.

Various of Margo DeMello’s books have influenced academic tattoo studies - *Bodies of Inscription: A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community* (2000) outlines some histories of tattoo, claiming that the modern tattoo community attempts to distance itself from its working class and deviant past.<sup>148</sup> DeMello’s *Encyclopaedia of Body Adornment* (2007) does not just focus on tattoos, but provides some basic context on tattooing both in Western and Indigenous cultures.<sup>149</sup> The text states; “Native American tattooing, however, probably had very little impact on the development of tattooing among Euro-Americans.”<sup>150</sup> DeMello retracts this in *Inked: Tattoos and Body Art around the World [2 volumes]* (2014),

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<sup>143</sup> Adrienne L. Kaeppler, *The Pacific Arts of Polynesia & Micronesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 114.

<sup>144</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 24.

<sup>145</sup> Steve Gilbert, *Tattoo History, a Source Book* (USA: Juno Books, 2000).

<sup>146</sup> Maarten Hesselt Van Dinter, *The World of Tattoo- an Illustrated History* (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2005), 20.

<sup>147</sup> Margot Miffin, *Bodies of Subversion: a Secret History of Woman and Tattoo* (New York: Juno Books, 1997).

<sup>148</sup> Margo DeMello, *Bodies of Inscription: A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

<sup>149</sup> Margo DeMello *Encyclopedia of Body Adornment* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2007).

<sup>150</sup> Margo DeMello *Encyclopedia of Body Adornment*, 4.

which claims that some Europeans did get tattooed in indigenous American fashion in the nineteenth century.<sup>151</sup> *Inked* is intended to be another encyclopaedia; the blurb reads:

The encyclopaedia covers all-important aspects of the topic of tattooing: the major types of tattooing, the cultural groups associated with tattooing, the regions of the world where tattooing has been performed, the origins of modern tattooing in prehistory, and the meaning of each society's use of tattoos.<sup>152</sup>

Tattoo encyclopaedias are fairly abundant. Anna Felicity Friedman, who wrote about “the Cook Myth”, published *The World Atlas of Tattoo* in 2015, perhaps to de-centre the Polynesian tattoos. It is touted as a “...lavishly illustrated global exploration of the vast array of styles and most significant practitioners of tattoo from ancient times to today.”<sup>153</sup> *The Tattoo Encyclopaedia* by Terisa Green (2012) claims to be a guide to choosing your tattoo; “THE TATTOO ENCYCLOPEDIA provides a comprehensive and informative exploration of the colourful world of tattoos. It presents precise descriptions of both common and unusual symbols and sheds light on their historic, religious and cultural significance.”<sup>154</sup> Henk Schiffmacher’s *Encyclopedia for the Art and History of Tattooing* (2010) claims to be:

...the magnum opus by one of the world's best known tattoo artists, Henk Schiffmacher, also known as Hanky Panky. Following the massive success of the Dutch edition in the fall of 2008, we now set out to publish the English edition. The Tattoo Encyclopedia is a big, full-colour illustrated history of tattooing, filled with unique pictures of tattoos, artifacts and drawings that Schiffmacher has collected during his travels. These illustrations are accompanied by anecdotes and information on key historical events and figures in tattooing. This phenomenal from A to Z-encyclopaedia will ensure that tattooing is finally accepted as a serious art form.<sup>155</sup>

The blurb emphasises the empirical/autoethnographic nature of the text. Schiffmacher is an expert because he is a tattoo artist; he is not an observer but an active participant. His encyclopaedia is better than others because it is to some extent empirical. Schiffmacher, like others, wants tattooing to be taken seriously as an art form.

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<sup>151</sup> Margo DeMello, *Inked: Tattoos and Body Art Around the World, Volume I* (Santa Barbara: ABC- Clio, 2014), 306.

<sup>152</sup> Margo DeMello, *Inked: Tattoos and Body Art Around the World, Volume I*.

<sup>153</sup> Anna Felicity Friedman, *The World Atlas of Tattoo* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

<sup>154</sup> Terisa Green, *The Tattoo Encyclopedia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012).

<sup>155</sup> Henk Schiffmacher, *Encyclopedia for the Art and History of Tattooing* (Lakeport: Carrera, 2010).

Robert Arp's 2012 edited collection of essays called *I Ink, Therefore I am*, is part of the 'philosophy for everyone' series. Subjects have included cycling, wine, yoga, blues, Christmas, porn and gardening. In it Nicholas Michaud's contribution asks, "Are Tattoos Art?" Michaud discusses 'art world theory,' formalism, and expressionism. Michaud states that, to the 'art world,' tattoos are not art; formalists may say that some tattoos are art, and expressionists that tattoos are art.<sup>156</sup> It seems important for tattoo artists and academics alike that tattoos be taken seriously. Other chapters in Arp's collection are on tattoos and freedom and will be useful in my theory chapter.

There are a variety of historical works on tattooing around the world. Histories on Japanese, Chinese and Indian tattoos have been written.<sup>157</sup> Due to its perceived role as reintroducing tattooing to the West, Polynesian tattooing has received much historical and anthropological attention. There are works on Polynesian tattooing in general, both traditional and modern.<sup>158</sup> There are works on Samoan tattooing, Tahitian tattooing, Hawaiian tattooing and tattooing in the Cook Islands.<sup>159</sup> These forms of book are picture heavy, and some are older, more detailed, or more academic than others. These picture heavy books show that the tattoo is still a focal point for a gaze, that tattooing and tattoos are still sometimes considered peculiar and foreign. Pictures of and some details about Olive Oatman appear in several of these encyclopaedias. They also sometimes use information provided by Herman Melville, though I could find no reference to William Torrey. At least two of the captivity narratives I have studied have influenced how tattoos have been written and viewed.

### **Captivity Narratives.**

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<sup>156</sup> Nicholas Michaud, "Are Tattoos Art?" in *Tattoos- Philosophy for Everyone: I Ink Therefore I Am*, ed Robert Arp (London: John Wiley and Sons, 2012).

<sup>157</sup> Mark Poysden and Marco Bratt, *A History of Japanese Body Suit Tattooing* (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2006); Carrie E. Reed, "Tattoo in Early China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120 (2000): 360-376; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (USA: Kessinger, 2003).

<sup>158</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Print & Skin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Tricia Allen, *The Polynesian Tattoo Today* (Hawaii: Booklines Hawaii Limited, 2010).

<sup>159</sup> Gian Paolo Barbieri, *Tahiti Tattoo* (London: Taschen Books, 1998); Mark Adams, *Tatau: Samoan Tattoo, New Zealand Art, Global Culture* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2010); Tricia Allen, *Tattoo Traditions of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishers, 2006); Therese Mangos and John Utanga, *Patterns of the Past: Tattoo Revival in the Cook Islands* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2011).



*The Captivity of the Oatman Girls, Typee, and Torrey's Narrative* were conceived in a long tradition, from a well-established genre. Indigenous captivity narratives show the complicated relationship between freedom and captivity; as an individual the captive is, at least at the time of capture, denied autonomy and freedom. But indigenous captivity narratives are also colonial texts; the indigenous people in them are or will be denied freedom in a spacial/geographic, ideological, cultural, and violent way. Nineteenth century colonialism attempted to control how and where indigenous people existed as a whole as well as in terms of being individuals.

As a genre, captivity narratives first found success in colonial North America; Mary Rowlandson's *A Narrative and Restoration of Mrs Mary Rowlandson* (1682) was the first North American best seller.<sup>160</sup> Captivity narratives in other places in the world are less studied, but certainly exist. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries white Europeans were sometimes enslaved in North Africa- Charles Hansford Adams states that there are over forty such narratives published.<sup>161</sup> Paul Baepler states that:

Barbary captivity became a common tale that involved hundreds of men and women, invoked public subscriptions for ransom funds, forced the government to pay humiliating tribute in cash and military arms to African rulers, stimulated the drive to create the U.S. navy, and brought about the first post revolutionary war.<sup>162</sup>

In North America captives were taken for a number of reasons:

...to prevent expansion onto Indian Lands. This was a direct threat to settler families and frontier fortresses. Prisoners were held in exchange for the purchase of weapons and goods and to replace lost relatives. Decimation by disease and intense warfare [and genocide] left woodland Indians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries fearing extinction, and, as mentioned, traditional practise encouraged the

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<sup>160</sup> Teresa A. Toulouse, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 21.

<sup>161</sup> Charles Hansford Adams, *The Narrative of Robert Adams: A Barbary Captive* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), xlv–xlvi.

<sup>162</sup> Paul Baepler, ed. *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 2.

replacement of a dead brother, sister, or spouse by another person of either sex by ritual adoption.<sup>163</sup>

Some colonial governments factored ransoms into their budgets, with good reason.<sup>164</sup> Many people were taken captive, and many wrote about it; “nearly two thousand [captivity narratives] were published by 1880.”<sup>165</sup>

The indigenous/American captivity narrative that began the genre was *The True History of the Captivity & Restoration of Mrs Mary Rowlandson*, which was published in 1682. It was published four times in the year of its release.<sup>166</sup> Middle class puritan and minister’s wife Mary Rowlandson was captured along with her three children in a raid on Massachusetts Bay Colony, and was ransomed three months later.<sup>167</sup> She set the tone that would define the genre; it was a moralizing story about the strength of a good Christian woman in the face of heretical savagery. It also included cannibalism; Rowlandson is told of her baby son that an indigenous person “roasted him, and that himself did eat a piece of him, as big as his two fingers, and that he was very good meat.”<sup>168</sup> Cannibalism is the defining evil of the indigenous ‘Other.’

This captivity narrative was published along with a sermon written by Rowlandson’s husband, and quoted scripture in the body of the text. The style and form of the text and thus the genre itself came from these religious origins. Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W Clark explain:

Puritan authors wove the captivity narrative from several existing literary strands. One strand was spiritual autobiography.. [another was] the sermon... [and thirdly] ‘jeremiads’- those peculiar laments by Puritan clergymen (and, again, sometimes by

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<sup>163</sup> June Naimas, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993) 8.

<sup>164</sup> Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Post Modern Images of Indian Captivity* (Charlottesville: University of West Virginia Press, 1995), 3.

<sup>165</sup> (Charlottesville: University of West Virginia Press, 1995), 3.

Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman*, 147.

<sup>166</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman*, 148.

<sup>167</sup> Mrs Mary Rowlandson, *Narratives of the Sufferings and Removes of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson who was taken prisoner by the Indians at the Destruction of Lancaster in 1675* (Ballard & Byner, 1853).

<sup>168</sup> Mrs Mary Rowlandson, *Narratives of the Sufferings and Removes of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson who was taken prisoner by the Indians at the Destruction of Lancaster in 1675* (Ballard & Byner, 1853).

ladmen) that accused New England of backsliding from the high ideals and noble achievements of the founders.”<sup>169</sup>

Most if not all North American indigenous captivity narratives employed religious iconography, if not written with specific religious political motives. I.C. Campbell states; “Ministers quickly became mediators for returned captives who wanted to tell their stories, presented as parables of moral, religious, and, for women, feminine correctness as early as the seventeenth century.”<sup>170</sup> Although she admits to simplifying it, Kathryn Xabelle Derounian-Stodola explains that men’s narratives emphasised captives’ physical strength and intelligence, whilst women’s their faith and patience.<sup>171</sup> This is certainly not the case in all stories. Melville’s captive character Tom is wounded and older, and this means that he has to passively accept his fate. Although Olive’s account itself emphasises some passivity and piety, in action she survived, planted and grew crops, and journeyed huge distances on foot, far surpassing Melville’s leisurely captivity of swimming and reclining.

The marked and most striking difference between North American and Pacific Island captivity narratives is the gendered nature of freedoms. Most North American captives were settlers with their families; those who lived among Pacific Island groups tended to be adventurers. And their texts may be read as such. Beachcomber captivity narratives are full of excitement, adventure, violence and sex, whereas North American (women’s) narratives are about abstinence and piety.

A notable and very different North American narrative to this type is *The Captivity of Hannah Duston*, a story likely first told, then written, by puritan minister Cotton Mather. Duston was taken captive by the Abernaki group in what is now New Hampshire in 1697.<sup>172</sup> The text claims that when Duston was captured, an Abernaki person smashed her six-day-old baby’s head against a tree, killing them.<sup>173</sup> Duston, aided by other captives, killed and

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<sup>169</sup> Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W Clark, *Puritans Among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption, 1676-1724* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 2009) 4.

<sup>170</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 147.

<sup>171</sup> Kathryn Xabelle Derounian-Stodola, e.d, *Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1998), Xi.

<sup>172</sup> Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*. Vol 7, Ed. Rev. Thomas Robbins. Hartford, 1853.

<sup>173</sup> Howard Peckham, *The Colonial Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 51–52.

scalped their twelve captors. It was a violent and shocking story, and Duston certainly subverted women's expected roles. However Sarah Humphries states; "her story was [still] ostensibly intended to teach lessons concerning humiliation and deliverance."<sup>174</sup> Despite the violent and subversive nature of the story, the narrative attests that it is a Christian woman's proper duty to oppose indigenous peoples' culture of violence, in whatever way necessary. Humphries also argues that Duston's story came at a turning point; group identity in white North America was linking religious identity to national identity.<sup>175</sup> Spatial occupation was a Christian right or duty that linked white people and wrote them against indigenous people. Duston's narrative also shows, Humphries claims, a particular trend; it was often ministers, reverends, or preachers with religious motives who wrote women's stories. Cotton Mather is now infamous for influencing and supporting the Salem witch trials.<sup>176</sup> Normalizing and sanctioning violence against non-Christians would have reasserted this ideology.

John Williams's *Redeemed Captive, Returning to Zion* established masculinity in the captivity narrative genre. Williams was a puritan minister who was captured in 1702 along with around a hundred others in a large raid in what is now New England by the French government, aided by the Mohawk and Abernaki groups. Williams was taken to what is now Canada.<sup>177</sup> Two of his children were killed in the raid, and his wife was killed in transit. He was the comfortable captive of the French Canadians for two years. He returned to New England in 1706 without his daughter Eunice who had been adopted by a Mohawk family, and became a pastor again. The book was a great success; it sold over one hundred thousand copies "and was reissued under various titles until its twentieth edition in 1918."<sup>178</sup> He was married to the cousin of Cotton Mather, and the text had a similar puritan tone to that of Duston's; however it emphasised masculine stoicism rather than emotional revenge.

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<sup>174</sup> Sara Humphreys. "The Mass Marketing of the Colonial Captive Hannah Duston." *Canadian Review of American Studies* 41, no. 2 (2011): 149-178, 150.

<sup>175</sup> Sara Humphreys. "The Mass Marketing of the Colonial Captive Hannah Duston." 150.

<sup>176</sup> Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596–1728* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>177</sup> John Williams, *The Redeemed Captive*, ed. Edward W. Clark. (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1976.) (Note: First published in 1707.)

<sup>178</sup> June Naimas, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 9.

North American indigenous captivity narratives sometimes challenged white male supremacy by showing women as violent and strong, and indigenous people as kind and welcoming, though mostly they did the opposite.<sup>179</sup> This is a simplification (though not an over-simplification). Christopher Castiglia claims that the idea of the captivity narrative only asserting racism and misogyny is simplistic. These narratives were very varied, and their racisms and misogynies depended on the experiences of their subject or narrator.

A Kahnawake Mohawk family adopted Williams' ten-year-old daughter Eunice, and when her father attempted to reclaim her she refused to return. She converted to Catholicism, took a Kahnawake name and married and had three children with a Kahnawake man.<sup>180</sup> Steven Mintz states that the Mohawk way of life was probably appealing when compared with Puritan life; gender systems were not so rigid, women were held in higher regard, and children were doted on.<sup>181</sup> Freedom could be found for whites within the indigenous groups with whom the captive had lived. James Axtell states that some white captives "simply disappeared into their adopted society... because they found [indigenous] life to possess a strong sense of community, abundant love, and uncommon integrity."<sup>182</sup> Mintz goes on to tell the story of James McCullough, a youth who had to be tied to a horse to be returned to his white family, and nevertheless escaped back to his indigenous one.<sup>183</sup> Eunice, renamed Kanenstenhawi, and James McCullough were far from the only people who remained with their captors.

William R. Swagerty states that the number of people who did this were small and difficult to quantify, though it certainly happened sporadically.<sup>184</sup> He claims it was difficult for captives to readjust to white society that had stricter rules. Particularly those who were taken captive as children, as Olive was, found the values of the white world difficult to adapt to. They thought differently, dressed differently, and even "carried their bodies

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<sup>179</sup> Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Post Modern Images of Indian Captivity*, 1.

<sup>180</sup> Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 7.

<sup>181</sup> Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, 7.

<sup>182</sup> James Axtell, *"White Indians,"* (Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1991), 38.

<sup>183</sup> Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, 8.

<sup>184</sup> William R. Swagerty, *The Indianization of Lewis and Clark* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012) 30.

differently.”<sup>185</sup> Some white captives returned to their indigenous friends and family when they were not accepted in white society, some worked as intermediary people - guides, translators and assistants - and some remained on the margins of society.<sup>186</sup>

There are fewer indigenous captivity narratives about or by captives who remained with their adopted societies. James E. Seaver’s *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (1824) is one of the most famous captivity narratives in which the captive chose to remain with their indigenous group.<sup>187</sup> Mary Jemison was captured in 1755 by the Shawnee indigenous group in what is now Pennsylvania. Like Olive, most of her family were killed, and she was given or sold to another group, the Seneca. She chose to remain among the Seneca, and married twice (her first husband died). Jemison became what Erwin Heinz Ackerknecht called in 1944, a “white Indian.”<sup>188</sup>

Towards the end of her life she told her story to Reverend James E. Seaver. He wrote it in the third person and it reads unemotionally, neither overtly chastising Jemison nor praising her. Seaver begins explaining that Jemison adopted the mannerisms, posture, religion and habits, of indigenous people, but most of all he focuses on her dress, which, he tells the reader, she wears by choice.<sup>189</sup> He describes her dress as being “like a mans without a collar,” masculinizing both Jemison and her situation.<sup>190</sup> He thinks that she purposely withholds her indigenous families’ vices and emphasises their virtues. Either way, she apparently happily lived her life, married (emphasized by the “Mrs.” in the title), had children, and died among the Seneca.

Polynesian captivity narratives are far less written about. I.C. Campbell’s *“Gone Native” in Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences in the South Pacific* is particularly useful. His work asserts that those who chose to remain among indigenous groups in Polynesia were

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<sup>185</sup> Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Post Modern Images of Indian Captivity*, 5.

<sup>186</sup> Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Post Modern Images of Indian Captivity*, 5.

<sup>187</sup> James E. Seaver, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* with an introduction by June Naimas, (Oklahoma: Univerity of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 56.

<sup>188</sup> Erwin Heinz Ackerknecht, *“White Indians”* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1944).

<sup>189</sup> James E. Seaver, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* with an introduction by June Naimas, (Oklahoma: Univerity of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 56.

<sup>190</sup> James E. Seaver, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* with an introduction by June Naimas, 56.

more of a threat to white ideas of civilization than those people who were held captive in North America. Campbell considers the differences between North American and Polynesian captivity narratives; "It was different with pioneers who went to the fringes of ordered life. The frontiersman who took civilization with him and never let it go."<sup>191</sup> Beachcombers could lose their civilization; they were thought of as rogues who had chosen their path. This was called "going native" at the time.

To have "gone native" was the mark of degeneration, an act of a man who turned his back on progress, enlightenment, civilization, order, law, and morality and preferred a life of savagery, immorality, paganism, and lawlessness. This was not only personal decadence; it was an affront and a challenge to the ethos of Western society.<sup>192</sup>

The fact that beachcombers are sometimes captives in their narratives is often neglected and certainly was not recognized by their contemporaries - perhaps because their contemporaries recognized that indigenous Polynesian people, as a general rule, did not take captives. For most sailors "island residence was intended to be a temporary sojourn-undertaken for reasons of survival."<sup>193</sup> This was unlike in North America wherein captives were taken in times of crisis and war.

There are fewer Polynesian indigenous captivity narratives than there are indigenous North American captivity narratives. Importantly they do not tend to be written by ministers or other such religious folk:

A tiny minority [of beachcombers] wrote their memoirs or had them ghost-written by an interested patron. Some of these were published at the time to feed the market for sensational and exotic literature, but several of them lay unpublished for decades...the motives of the beachcomber-authors varied, but mostly they wrote in the hope of drawing attention to their misfortunes and turning an income directly or indirectly from the publication of their stories.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> I. C. Campbell, *"Gone Native" in Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 4.

<sup>192</sup> I. C. Campbell, *"Gone Native" in Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 4.

<sup>193</sup> I. C. Campbell, *"Gone Native" in Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 27.

<sup>194</sup> I. C. Campbell, *"Gone Native" in Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 27.

The motivation in publishing captivity narratives was therefore rather different in Polynesia than in North America wherein captivity narratives were religious and instructional. This is evidenced by my primary texts; Olive Oatman's narrative is more religious than Melville's and Torrey's. Because of this, the boundary between white and indigenous was more porous in Polynesian captivity narratives, and sameness could be emphasized as well as difference.

In 1947 Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz first used the term "transculturation" to consider the reciprocal and cyclical nature of cultural exchange and contact.<sup>195</sup> This is not to say that this exchange works in an equal or fair way; dominant colonial cultural ideologies assert themselves onto the cultures that are colonized, whilst those who are colonized often lose some or most of their cultural practices. Nevertheless, 'transculturites' is often used to refer to white people who assimilated into indigenous groups.<sup>196</sup>

In 1963 A. Irving Hallowell used the word "Indianization" to describe the process whereby non-indigenous people assimilated into indigenous cultures. He describes Indianization as a static process wherein a white person moves from being one thing to being another. Structurally, indigenous culture did not transfer to white North America, but individual white people could assimilate to indigenous societies. Hallowell considers transculturation in this way:

In transculturalization, at one polar extreme are individuals who become permanently identified with the second culture. In such cases there is more than a cultural readaptation- typically, there is a psychosocial transformation. At the other extreme, readjustment may be relatively superficial and have little psychological depth. Manners and speech may be affected, but not basic attitudes and values. In between, we have cases where historical circumstances combined with unusual personality characteristics have motivated some individuals to play a dual role effectively.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (London: Random House, 2012).

<sup>196</sup> Because of my focus on gender, in particular 'trans'/genders, the term 'trans'culturation is worth consideration. The OED considers the prefix "trans" to mean "across, through, over, beyond, surpassing (transcending)." However, as I shall show throughout this thesis, the tattooed captives show the important differences between the trans/cultural (or transracial) and trans genders. "trans-, prefix". OED Online. January 2018. Oxford University Press.

<sup>197</sup> A. Irving Hallowell, "Papers in Honor of Melville J. Herskovits: American Indians, White and Black: The Phenomenon of Transculturalization," *Current Anthropology* 4, no. 5 (Dec., 1963): 519-531.523.



In 1964 H. E. Maude claimed that beachcombers and castaways played a similar role to Hallowell's "white Indians."<sup>198</sup> Herman Melville would likely be identified as adjusting superficially; he persuades his captors to change their moral and spiritual practices for his own superficial enjoyment, and ultimately considers it an adventure that he wants to escape. Olive Oatman managed to tread the line between her first and second cultures. Torrey fully crosses the line in his actions, and with his tattoos. However, he still left Tahuata and married a white woman and had a white family. Transculturization suggests some kind of parity or fluidity, a way of truly moving across, wherein the boundaries of white supremacy were certainly more rigid than fluid.

Exchange and assimilation in indigenous captivity narratives can only be understood in terms of colonizer/colonized relationships. Olive's skin was not colonized by tattoos because her white society made itself a home in North America while indigenous peoples lost theirs. Her skin was not colonized because colonization was white supremacy, and she was white. Further, she used her tattoos - the evidence of her Mohave identity - as proof of indigenous cruelty. As I will show in Chapter Three, perhaps she may have felt that she had no free will. If she wanted to return to white culture it would be easier to use her tattoos to condemn indigenous culture. Nevertheless, she helped her tattoos become a sign of deviance rather than belonging.

In 1995 Gary L. Ebersole considered captivity narratives and religion. He claimed that captivity narratives were "primarily a vehicle of moral improvement or spiritual instruction."<sup>199</sup> Pain, horror and bodily suffering were at the heart of such narratives. Ebersole states that many kinds of bodies were written:

...the religious afflicted body; the tortured body, used to prove the savage and hard-hearted nature of the Indian; the sentimental female body as virtue-in-distress; the hermetically sealed body of the male hero or patriot; the sexual body; the asocial body of the recuse, a symbol of perfect Christian resignation; and the body of the innocent, pious child.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> H. E. Maude, "Beachcombers and Castaways," *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 73 (1964): 254-293.

<sup>199</sup> Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Post Modern Images of Indian Captivity*, 9.

<sup>200</sup> Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Post Modern Images of Indian Captivity*, 144.

Olive Oatman's tattooed body was used to 'prove the savage and hard hearted nature' of indigenous people. She was 'virtue in distress,' and, mostly an 'innocent, pious child.' Neither Melville nor Torrey are particular patriots, and Torrey is no hero. These body-stories in captivity narratives reminded the reader of both the fragility and strength of imperialism. Ebersole states:

Captivity thus gives symbolic form to the culturally unnameable: confinement within the home, enforced economic dependence, rape, compulsory heterosexuality, prescribed plots...the captivity narrative also offers a story of female strength, endurance, and even prosperity...captivity narratives persistently explore generic and cultural changes, divisions, and differences occasioned by the captives' cultural crossings.<sup>201</sup>

In 1993 June Naimas stated that captivity narratives and their success were evidence of North American anxiety, fascination and insecurity towards indigenous people, particularly in their relationship to gender.<sup>202</sup> In 1998 Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola wrote a text on women's captivity narratives, noting; "the Indian captivity narrative is arguably the first American literary form dominated by women's experiences as captives, story-tellers, writers, and readers."<sup>203</sup>

Newer works on captivity narratives tend to be more theory based and focus on power relationships. Teresa A. Toulouse's 2007 text, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England* states; "when pared down to its essence, the genre is all about power and powerlessness."<sup>204</sup> She thinks differently from Derounian-Stodola, and claims that women's captivity narratives "helped dominant male colonials to address and negotiate profound transformations in their own sense of personal and cultural identity."<sup>205</sup> Women's captivity narratives formed North American male

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<sup>201</sup> Christopher Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Pater Hearst*, 4.

<sup>202</sup> June Naimas, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993) 11.

<sup>203</sup> Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, ed., *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1998), xi.

<sup>204</sup> Teresa A. Toulouse, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), xi.

<sup>205</sup> Teresa A. Toulouse, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England*, 2.

identity, rather than women's. Since a significant portion of these narratives, including Olive Oatman's narrative, were written by men in some position of power, or seeking power, I sympathise.

Also published in 2007, Lorraine Carroll's *Rhetorical Drag: Gender Impersonation, Captivity, and the Writing of History* uses Judith Butler's theory of performativity and drag to discuss discursive writing practices in captivity narratives; "authorial gender impersonation, [is] an act of imposture that begins with the male writer assuming the female captive's voice."<sup>206</sup> Carroll's argument is similar to Tolouse's. Women's captivity narratives written by men shape what it means to be a woman, what it means to be white. Captivity narratives were particularly popular among white women because they sympathised with the captive.<sup>207</sup> In this way white men shaped how white women thought of themselves and of indigenous people and their tattoos. They made tattoos peculiar.

### **Tattoo Contexts- The Marquesas.**

Both *Torrey's Narrative* and *Typee* take place in the Marquesas, on islands that are just over a hundred miles apart. *Typee* is set on what Melville refers to as "Nuku-heva" (now Nuku Hiva), and *Torrey's Narrative* is probably set in Tahuata. Until the early nineteenth century, much like the indigenous groups of North America, Marquesan groups considered themselves mostly distinct and separate islands and peoples, though they shared and share some customs. Tattooing was a custom throughout the Marquesas in the mid nineteenth century, though the specifics of style, placement, meaning and uses of tattoos differed from Island to Island and group to group.

The Marquesan Islands were so named and 'discovered' by Álvaro de Mendaña de Neira in 1595.<sup>208</sup> He and his crew first alighted at Fatu Hiva, then Tahuata, then the Solomon Islands.

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<sup>206</sup> Lorraine Carroll, *Rhetorical Drag: Gender Impersonation, Captivity, and the Writing of History* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2007), 1.

<sup>207</sup> Christopher Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patter Hearst* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>208</sup> M Estensen, *Terra Australis Incognita; The Spanish Quest for the Mysterious Great South Land* (Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2006.)

On Fatu Hiva indigenous islanders found the Spanish curious, and stole some items from them. The Spanish retaliated with cannon fire and gunshots. In Tahuata the Spanish were received in a friendly way, but, misunderstanding tabu, and misreading upset as threat, there was conflict and the Spanish killed many indigenous Islanders. By the time Álvaro de Mendaña de Neira and his men left Polynesia they had killed over two hundred indigenous people.<sup>209</sup> This was the precursor for what European contact would mean for Pacific Islanders.

Captain Cook landed in Tahuata in 1774. Margo DeMello claims; “Cook’s own crewmen started getting tattooed by the native people [of Tahiti, Hawaii, and subsequent Polynesian places] and thus played a major part in bringing the tattoo to Europe.”<sup>210</sup> Many academics, such as DeMello, and John Dececco and Michael Williams, ascribe a resurgence of tattooing in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century Europe to Cook’s voyages.<sup>211</sup> As I have explained, this was not entirely the case.

Cook’s Journals are nonetheless an interesting resource, particularly in considering how the imperial gaze gendered indigenous people. Harriet Guest states that in Cook’s journals indigenous men are seen to be able to absorb and imitate civilized culture whilst women cannot. Women are similar everywhere because there is a “national and masculine character which excludes femininity because it is universal, unmarked, and as it were, extra-national.”<sup>212</sup> For example, Cook claims that women in the South Pacific tattooed as a show of vanity or for beauty, whilst men tattooed as a show of aggression. This is a very patriarchal view of gender roles.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Greg Denning, *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land Marquesas 1774-1880* (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1980), 9.

<sup>210</sup> Margo DeMello, *Bodies of Inscription: A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 46.

<sup>211</sup> John Dececco and Michael Williams, *Bad Boys and Tough Tattoos: A Social History of the Tattoo With Gangs, Sailors, and Street-Corner Punks 1950-1965*, (London: Routledge, 2013). Margo DeMello, *Encyclopedia of Body Adornment* (Santa Barbara: ABC CLIO, 2007), 78.

<sup>212</sup> Harriet Guest, “Curiously Marked: Tattooing and Gender Difference in Eighteenth- Century British Perceptions of the South Pacific,” in *Written on the Body: Tattooing in European and American History* ed Jane Caplan (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 100

<sup>213</sup> Captain James Cook and Robert Welsch, *Voyages of Discovery* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2005), 40.

However, Cook sometimes reads men and women as the same; when arriving in ‘adventure bay’ and meeting the indigenous people, he describes the women as “in all other respects as naked as the men, and as black, and their bodies tattooed in the same manner.”<sup>214</sup> He states;

Both sexes paint their Bodys, Tattow...the women generally have this figure Z simply on every joint of their fingers and Toes; the men have it likewise, and both have other different figures, such as Circles, Crescents, etc..in short, they are so various in the application of these figures that both the quantity and Situation of them seem to depend entirely upon the humour of each individual.<sup>215</sup>

There may well have been a pattern of meaning of the tattoos that Cook could not read, nevertheless, he recognises that tattooing is a shared signifier and particular to the person who is tattooed. In Cook’s journals however, the process of tattooing is sometimes gendered feminine. Harriet Guest states;

European accounts of the tattooing operation in the late eighteenth century feminize those undergoing the process with varying degrees of explicitness. In the large oil paintings produced by the artists who travelled with Cook, it is exclusively feminine bodies that are inscribed with tattoos or scarification.<sup>216</sup>

Omai, a heavily tattooed Raiatean man was brought to England in 1774 on one of Cook’s fleet – Tobias Furneaux’s *HMS Adventure*.<sup>217</sup> Omai took England ‘by storm,’ and became the epitome of the image of the noble savage.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Captain James Cook and Robert Welsch, 253.

<sup>215</sup> Captain James Cook and Robert Welsch, *Voyages of Discovery*, 158.

<sup>216</sup> Harriet Guest, “Curiously Marked: Tattooing and Gender Difference in Eighteenth- Century British Perceptions of the South Pacific,” 98

<sup>217</sup> Richard Connaughton, *Omai: The Prince who Never was* (London: Timewell Press, 2005), 1.

<sup>218</sup> Harriet Guest, “Curiously Marked: Tattooing and Gender Difference in Eighteenth- Century British Perceptions of the South Pacific,” 2.



Fig. 4. "Omai" by Joshua Reynolds, 1776, currently at Tate Britain.

Harriet Guest claims that Joshua Reynolds' 1776 full-length portrait of Omai feminizes him.

Guest states;

The blankness which made it so difficult to assess or judge Omai may however be exceeded or punctured in Reynold's representation by the implications of those tattoos. They may mark his figure with the signs of a specifically colonialist curiosity that perceives the islander in terms that resist generalization, and that exoticise his image. Exoticism, I suggest, inscribes its object with an acultural illegibility, isolated from any coherence of origin.<sup>219</sup>

The gaze can focus on Omai's tattoos but not read them. His exoticism means his tattoos are denied meaning; he is objectified because he is feminised.

This is an example of white people's fascination with "the romance of discovery as well as the reports of sexual licence encountered by [Cook's] crew in Tahiti and other Polynesian

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<sup>219</sup> Harriet Guest, "Curiously Marked: Tattooing and Gender Difference in Eighteenth- Century British Perceptions of the South Pacific," 84.

islands.”<sup>220</sup> This sexual licence consisted of “consensual encounters as well as prostitution and rape.”<sup>221</sup> Europeans brought and spread venereal diseases, as well as “wave after wave of [other] epidemic diseases” to the South Pacific.<sup>222</sup> In *Typee*, Herman Melville acknowledges this, and states that Nukuheva ‘s inhabitants “have become somewhat corrupted, owing to their recent commerce with Europeans.”

Although estimations are retrospective, it is estimated that Marquesan populations decreased from 45,000 at the end of the eighteenth century, to 2000 in its lowest point in 1931.<sup>223</sup> This was mainly due to indigenous populations’ lack of immunity to European diseases such as cholera and smallpox. Willowdean Chatterton Handy’s text on tattoos in the Marquesas was published in 1933; her information should be read in the context of this huge decimation of the population. This is a way in which context is important in reading a text and considering its power to tell or destabilise the truth.

Convict colonies in Eastern Australia meant that there were nearby settlements to benefit from trade with Polynesia. By the 1800’s “unfulfilled demand for meat led to the importation of pork from Tahiti,” and by 1830 there was fairly regular trade between Australia, Tahiti, Tonga, and Fiji.<sup>224</sup> Missionaries and traders assisted each other - missionaries made it safer for traders, and traders brought many of the diseases that created “extreme social distress that gave the missionary messages added appeal.”<sup>225</sup>

During the mid nineteenth century when *Torrey’s Narrative* and *Typee* were written, Polynesia as a whole was to varying degrees affected by large trade and Christian missionaries, though the Marquesas were less affected, and Nuku Hiva had significantly

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<sup>220</sup> Robert Welch, ed., *Voyages of Discovery* by Captain James Cook, (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2005), i.

<sup>221</sup> David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (New York: OUP USA, 2013), 95.

<sup>222</sup> Alan Bewell, *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2003) 10. Robert Welch, ed., *Voyages of Discovery* by Captain James Cook, ix.

<sup>223</sup> Mosche Rapaport, *The Pacific Islands: Environment & Society* (Honolulu: Bess Press, 1999), 258.

<sup>224</sup> I. C. Campbell, “Gone Native” in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 12.

<sup>225</sup> I. C. Campbell, “Gone Native” in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 11.

more contact with Europeans than di Tahuata.<sup>226</sup> Although The London Missionary Society built missions in Tahiti and Nuku Hiva by 1797, they did not succeed in converting the islanders. The indigenous peoples in *Torrey's Narrative* and *Typee* seem to have no interest in Christianity. However, "in the short period of about thirty years - roughly from 1810-1840 - all of the populous parts of Polynesia had become exposed systematically to Christian teaching."<sup>227</sup> Between 1810 and 1840, in more densely populated areas of Polynesia at least, "the bulk of the population had turned to Christianity."<sup>228</sup> This did not necessarily apply in the Marquesas or in Nuku Hiva, as the terrain was difficult, and indigenous groups were more hostile to one another, making it less safe for missionaries to set up missions.<sup>229</sup>

In Torrey's narrative there is an attempt by some missionaries to convert the Teheda, but they are unsuccessful. There is no such instance in Melville's text. Nevertheless, the Marquesas were slightly behind the rest of Polynesia, and at the time that Melville and Torrey were apparently there, Christianity had not yet overwhelmed Marquesan indigenous peoples.

Melville and Torrey were not missionaries, or even traders as such - they both worked on trading or whale ships, but were fairly low in the pecking order. Both of them became beachcombers, a term first used in this context by Herman Melville in *Typee's* sequel, *Omoo*.<sup>230</sup> The term referred to sailors who absconded from ships and spent time living on various islands in the South Pacific, amongst the indigenous peoples. They were considered renegades, criminals and outcasts. In Polynesia "...respectable contemporaries were of the opinion that anyone who went to live among savages must be degraded, and it was therefore assumed that most beachcombers in Polynesia were escaped convicts...many certainly were."<sup>231</sup> H. E. Maude estimates that 20% of beachcombers were Australian convicts who had escaped convict transportation.<sup>232</sup> This meant that the link between the

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<sup>226</sup> Bill Pearson, *Rifled Sanctuaries: Some views of the Pacific Islands in Western Literature* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1984), 47.

<sup>227</sup> I. C. Campbell, "Gone Native" in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 11.

<sup>228</sup> I. C. Campbell, "Gone Native" in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 11.

<sup>229</sup> I. C. Campbell, "Gone Native" in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 19.

<sup>230</sup> H.E. Maude, *Of Islands and Men* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 135.

<sup>231</sup> I. C. Campbell, "Gone Native" in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 83.

<sup>232</sup> H. E. Maude, "Beachcombers and Castaways," *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 73: 3 (1964) 254-293



beachcomber and the criminal was to some degree well founded. By 1850 there were around 2,000 beachcombers in the South Pacific.<sup>233</sup>

“Free” sailors (as opposed to convicts) were also not very free - they had usually entered a contract of agreement with the captain of whichever ship they arrived on, and if they were to desert their ship they could be arrested, flogged, made to work for less than their original contract or without pay altogether.<sup>234</sup> As Rod Edmund states, the contrast between

... European constraints and Polynesian freedoms must actually have been experienced by the sailors who went ashore at Tahiti. Every aspect of life on board was measured and rationed and almost every move involved some ritual of boundary maintenance.<sup>235</sup>

Similarly to the people who found North American indigenous life freer than white North American Christian life, some beachcombers chose to live permanently in Pacific Island communities.<sup>236</sup> Indigenous life was a freedom for sailors.

Indigenous peoples, for a payment, sometimes ransomed white people back to their ships, but they also took in beachcombers. They sometimes held beachcombers in contempt, and often kept them around “for their amusement or to distinguish themselves in much the same way as a millionaire might like to have a rare bird or dog.”<sup>237</sup> Beachcombers were also sometimes considered ambiguously supernatural, as Tom is in *Typee*. They could also make themselves useful in wars with neighbouring indigenous groups, and gain belonging and status in this way, as Torrey does. The white beachcomber was peculiar, curious in a similar way that an Omai was a curious; the difference being that white supremacy was more powerful and destructive than indigenous curiosity.

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<sup>233</sup> K.R.Howe, *Where the Waves Fall: A New South Sea Islands History from First Settlement to Colonial Ruler* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1984), 103.

<sup>234</sup> ABC Whipple, *Yankee Whalers in the South Seas* (New York, Doubleday, 1954), 150.

<sup>235</sup> Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 66.

<sup>236</sup> Susanne Williams Milcairns, *Native Strangers: Beachcombers, Renegades and Castaways in the South Seas*, (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2006).

<sup>237</sup> I. C. Campbell, “Gone Native” in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 112.

Although European sailors got tattooed in the South Pacific and appropriated South sea tattooing, European colonisers and missionaries eventually attempted to destroy native tattooing on the islands. By 1847 in the Cook Islands and Tahiti, 'The Blue Laws,' a legal code enforced by missionaries on islanders, were established. Under them, tattooing someone or being tattooed by someone was punishable by labour, and tattooing the name of a member of the opposite sex was punished with a fine of four dollars.<sup>238</sup> This shows the cisheterosexual gaze of the missionaries, and how they attempted to control indigenous expressions of love and sex. Both the church and imperial forces (not being mutually exclusive) worked to eradicate tattooing in Polynesia.

Missionaries, who made a link between cannibalism and queered genders/sexualities, considered tattooing morally reprehensible. Mrs. Favell L. B. Mortimer wrote initially anonymously for the American Tract Society to honour the fortieth anniversary of the Tahitian mission in 1836. She noted that missionaries disapproved of tattooing because it was associated with "many other of their old heathen habits," including cannibalism, idol worship, and sexual deviance.<sup>239</sup>

In the early nineteenth century in Hawaii indigenous people were made to wear European-style clothing, covering their bodies; "nudity was not seen as primarily sexual" by native Hawai'ian people, but it was by the Europeans that colonised them.<sup>240</sup> The Polynesian tattoo is "nothing secretive...it ostentatiously covers a scantily dressed body. It is there to be seen. It is the opposite of stigmatizing."<sup>241</sup> Nakedness was seen as sexual by Europeans who were worried about queerness and sexual deviance, and because of this tattoos were sexualised, and covered. European clothing covered any tattoos that were already inscribed.<sup>242</sup> In the bible Adam and Eve are clothed after their fall from Eden; in Christian theology clothing can represent atonement for sin.

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<sup>238</sup> K.R.Howe, *Where the Waves Fall: A New South Sea Islands History from First Settlement to Colonial Ruler*, 59.

<sup>239</sup> Quoted in *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print* by Juniper Ellis (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 23.

<sup>240</sup> Milton Diamond, 'Sexual Behavior in Pre Contact Hawai'i: A Sexological Ethnography' *Revista Española del Pacífico*. 2004. 16: 37-58. <http://www.hawaii.edu/PCSS/biblio/articles/2000to2004/2004-sexual-behavior-in-pre-contact-hawaii.html> [Accessed 13/02/17]

<sup>241</sup> Gian Paolo Barbieneri, *Tahiti Tattoos* (London: Taschen, 1998), 3.

<sup>242</sup> Milton Diamond, "Sexual Behavior in Pre Contact Hawai'i: A Sexological Ethnography," 44.

This attempt at eradicating tattooing was done on spiritual grounds. Juniper Ellis notes; "...in many places across the Pacific, Christian Missionaries attempted to work against tattoo...In Samoa where the practise continued unabated through missionary times...Christian churches historically may have disapproved of the practise but did not usually attempt to ban it..."<sup>243</sup> Ellis claims that tattooing did not actually go away in Polynesia; it went underground and under clothes rather than stopping altogether.<sup>244</sup> This did not stop missionaries from trying their best to destroy tattoos. Tahitians continued to tattoo, but on some occasions missionaries supported the "flaying or removal of tattooed skin."<sup>245</sup> Certainly and perhaps ironically considering the tattoos religious history as a mark of Christian faith, it was mainly Christian spirituality that attempted to hold the tattoo captive. Ellis tells the story of

Moa-e-tahi who lived in Nuki Hiva at the turn of the twentieth century, wore a script tattoo that declared, in Marquesan letter that adorned his arm, "Kahau hee atua loava! li kehu, ahi veu; vave te etua!" in English the tattoo declares, "You are invited to follow the god Jehovah! [His] anger is ash, the flames are wet! Hurry to the gods!"<sup>246</sup>

This tattooed Nuku Hivan person openly mocked the missionaries and their messages, subverting missionary attempts at control. Moa-e-tahi's tattoos are an expression of captivity because they are evidence of missionary conversion, yet they are an expression of freedom as they laugh at it.

### **Sexuality and Gender in Polynesia.**

As in North America, when colonists encountered Polynesian trans/genders they interpreted them as queered sexualities. Serena Nanda states that; "Europeans who first encountered

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<sup>243</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 23.

<sup>244</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 24.

<sup>245</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 24

<sup>246</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 25.

Polynesia immediately noticed the presence of gender diversity and associated it with their own concept of homosexual sodomy.”<sup>247</sup>

The London Missionary Society stated in 1766 that Tahiti was “the filthy Sodom of the South Seas: In these islands all persons seem to think of scarcely anything but adultery and fornication...Children with children, often boys with boys.”<sup>248</sup> In the late eighteenth century, French missionaries encountered trans people, who they viewed as men occupying women’s styles and roles. Deborah A. Elliston has shown that this was not the case, and that trans people, *mahu*, could have any kind of body.<sup>249</sup>

As Joan Roughgarden states;

The missionaries were particularly bent out of shape by what the British Captain William Bligh described as “a class of people called Mahoo: These people... are particularly selected when Boys and kept with the Women solely for the caresses of the men...The Women treat him as one of their Sex, and he observed every restriction that they do, and is equally respected and esteemed.” Captain Bligh had encountered the Tahitian version of two-spirited people, called *mahu*.<sup>250</sup>

In Polynesia trans people were known generally as *Mahu/Rae Rae*, in Samoa they were known as *Fa’afafine*, in Tonga as *Fakaletai*.<sup>251</sup> *Mahu* and their variants may have been considered as their binary gender in Polynesia, but generally were considered somewhere in the middle of man and woman or as men to colonists. *Mahu* status was/is also gender fluid, and a *Mahu* “may leave this status and become a man by marrying and fathering a child.”<sup>252</sup>

Melville and Torrey would probably have known about, met, or lived among *mahu*. There were and are *mahu* in Nuku Hiva; Robert Carl Suggs states in his 1962 text *The Hidden*

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<sup>247</sup> Serena Nanda, *Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations, Second Edition* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2014) 60.

<sup>248</sup> The London Missionary Society, quoted by Joan Roughgarden in *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*, 337.

<sup>249</sup> She very problematically considers *Mahu* as either male or female bodied. I do not consider them that way. Deborah A. Elliston, “Negotiating Transnational Sexual Economies” in *Female Desires*, ed Evelyn Blackwood and Saskia E. Wieringa (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) 232-250, 234.

<sup>250</sup> Joan Roughgarden, *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*, 337.

<sup>251</sup> G. G. Bolich, *Transgender History & Geography: Crossdressing in Context*, (North Carolina: Lulu, 2007). 289.

<sup>252</sup> Joan Roughgarden, *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*, 338.

*Worlds of Polynesia: The Chronicle of an Archaeological Expedition to Nuku Hiva in the Marquesas Islands* that he met mahu on a journey across the island. He states that they are deviants and “habitual homosexuals known as *mahu*. These are relatively rare. These men are often transvestites...”<sup>253</sup>

Often mahu have been assumed to be men living as women, but this is and was not necessarily the case. D. Elliston claims: “Mahu, that can be a man or woman because that’s what it means, someone who’s both...a sexuality unmoored from gender difference, is not a culturally intelligible concept in the Society Islands.”<sup>254</sup> Joan Roughgarden states that gender identity was more important for *mahu* than sexuality, and they sometimes had both men and women for lovers.<sup>255</sup> In contrast to my and probably our experience, western conceptions of the gender binary are reliant on heteronormativity. Perceptions of queerness threaten this heteronormativity.

Most texts on gender diversity in the region state that work or occupation is the way in which people were trans/gender.<sup>256</sup> Elliston claims that Polynesian people consider a person’s gender as a combination of masculinity and femininity, with most people falling much more on one side or the other. Gender was considered through behaviour and presentation rather than by body.<sup>257</sup> Mahu did not necessarily dress as women, but spent time with women and took on their roles.<sup>258</sup> In *Transgender History & Geography: Crossdressing in Context* G. G. Bolich states; “Polynesians conceive gender in terms of social role rather than as a stable, inner trait, the expression of atypical gender in Polynesian culture is reflected in the adoption of feminine dress and roles.”<sup>259</sup> Gender is therefore entirely performative; it is in actions rather than bodies. Serena Nanda supports this,

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<sup>253</sup> Robert Carl Suggs, *The Hidden Worlds of Polynesia: The Chronicle of an Archaeological Expedition to Nuku Hiva in the Marquesas Islands* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1962), 123.

<sup>254</sup> D. Elliston, “Negotiating transnational sexual economies: Female mahu and same-sex sexuality in “Tahiti and Her Islands,” in *Female Desires, Same Sex Relations and Transgender Practises across Cultures*, e.d Evelyn Blackwood and Saskia Wieringa, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 232-52.

<sup>255</sup> Joan Roughgarden, *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People* 338.

<sup>256</sup> Serena Nanda, *Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations, Second Edition* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2014) 60.

<sup>257</sup> D. Elliston, “Negotiating transnational sexual economies: Female mahu and same-sex sexuality in “Tahiti and Her Islands,” 239.

<sup>258</sup> Joan Roughgarden, *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*, 338

<sup>259</sup> G. G. Bolich, *Transgender History & Geography: Crossdressing in Context*, (North Carolina: Lulu, 2007), 61.

claiming that “Polynesian gender distinctions of dress may seem small to Westerners but are important gender markers.”<sup>260</sup> Clothes and by extension tattoos (which are also body-visual markers) are particularly important in gender expression for Polynesian peoples.

### **Tattoos Contexts- North America.**

The Oatman family were a different kind of colonist from beachcombers such as Melville and Torrey. The Marquesas were small and more difficult to get to; they were not colonized then inhabited on the same scale as Mexico and the United States. The Oatmans were a family unit and part of a religious sect rather than individual men. Their avowed intention was to establish a white society on indigenous land and to claim it for their own. The beachcomber did not usually intend to settle and build a life on indigenous land; they usually integrated, their intention being to ‘go native.’ They mostly did not intend to settle within indigenous groups, but to pass through; they were transient. They had no intention of changing indigenous practices including tattooing.

Although the British, Spanish and Russians established missions and docks on the West coast of what is now the USA as early as 1519, California was more broadly settled, expanded and governed by the Spanish in 1697.<sup>261</sup> The Mexican state won the Mexican war of independence in 1821. California was under Mexican control until 1846, when the British declared war for its possession; the British won in 1848 when the peace treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed.<sup>262</sup> This treaty meant that what is now California, most of Arizona, Utah and Nevada, around half of New Mexico and parts of Wyoming and Colorado were under Anglo-American control.<sup>263</sup> However, the Yapavai/Apache and Mohave territory where Olive and Mary Ann Oatman lived was not yet US territory in 1856 when Olive was rescued.

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<sup>260</sup> Serena Nanda *Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations, Second Edition* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2014), 61.

<sup>261</sup> Stephen Garrison Hyslop, *Contest for California: From Spanish Colonization to the American Conquest*, (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2012).

<sup>262</sup> "Avalon Project – Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; February 2, 1848," accessed May 13<sup>th</sup> 2017 Avalon.law.yale.edu.

<sup>263</sup> "Avalon Project – Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; February 2, 1848."

Fort Yuma Commander Samuel P. Heintzelman gave this as his reason to refuse to send troops to find the girls.<sup>264</sup> To do so would be a violation of the Treaty.

Olive and her family journeyed through these new states to find a home. The journey that the Oatmans attempted was as a result of this change of ownership. Initially, like many settlers, Royce Oatman migrated with a Christian sect (the Brewsterites) with the intention of finding utopia, though this may have changed.<sup>265</sup> The California Gold rush inspired mass migration to California in 1848; by 1854 around three hundred thousand people had migrated, by land or sea, to California.<sup>266</sup> Royce gave up his quest for paradise, and was set on mining gold in California.<sup>267</sup> Initial settler colonialism then migration like this had a devastating effect on the people indigenous to what is now the United States.

Russell Thornton analyses several censuses and reports, both old and new, and concludes that “the aboriginal population of the conterminous United States area was probably 5+ million when Columbus arrived in the Western Hemisphere in 1492.”<sup>268</sup> By the nineteenth century indigenous populations have been estimated to be around five hundred thousand, though some have said it to be as low as two hundred and fifty thousand by 1900.<sup>269</sup> The indigenous population in California may have become as low as 16,000 by 1900.<sup>270</sup> This decimation of the population was mainly due to disease; smallpox epidemics demolished whole communities.<sup>271</sup> But it was also due to open extermination.

William Coffer’s 1977 essay, “Genocide of the California Indians, with a comparative study of other minorities,” was the first scholarly work to call the violence against indigenous

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<sup>264</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 62.

<sup>265</sup> The Brewsterites were a Mormon sect started by James C. Brewster and Hazen Aldrich in 1848. Their goal was to settle in utopia, which Brewster named “Bashan,” in what is now Rio Grande Valley, Southern Texas. The Oatmans began their journey as a part of this passage

<sup>266</sup> Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>267</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 43.

<sup>268</sup> Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492*, 32

<sup>269</sup> Mary B. Davis, *Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 462; Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492*, 17.

<sup>270</sup> Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846–1873* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2016).

<sup>271</sup> Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492*, 78.

Americans genocide.<sup>272</sup> The 1948 'United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide' defined genocide by the "specific intent" to "destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group."<sup>273</sup> In *An American Genocide; the United States and Indian Catastrophe 1846-1873* Benjamin Madley considers "specific intent," to be the most important part of this definition, whether the genocide be "territorial, economic, ideological, political, or military."<sup>274</sup> Madley states; "many whites articulated genocidal intent" in North America:

...conspicuously by killing thousands of California Indians, often by surrounding and massacring whole villages. As in some other genocides, war provided the context and the smokescreen for intentional mass murder...although California Indians resisted, they also suffered genocide.<sup>275</sup>

Judge Serranus C. Hastings was one of many to openly and legally call for the genocide of indigenous Americans in California. Hastings and his fellows, "in the name of freedom and democracy...made freedom, happiness and property holding for California Indian peoples nearly an impossibility."<sup>276</sup> This system of "naturalized atrocity against Indian peoples led to their near eradication by 1900."<sup>277</sup> Polynesian populations were also reduced by colonialism, however, in the Marquesas where two of the captivity narratives I studied are set, there was not the same state sanctioned call to genocide that characterized North American colonization. This is likely because they were not settled to the same scale that North America was. The Marquesas were small islands. They were difficult to navigate and get to, and did not have the resources to support a large migration.

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<sup>272</sup> William Coffner, "Genocide of the California Indians, with a comparative study of other minorities" *Indian Hist.* 1977;10(2):3-7.

<sup>273</sup> Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, [http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1\\_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf) [Accessed 19/10/17].

<sup>274</sup> Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846–1873*, 5.

<sup>275</sup> Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 178.

<sup>276</sup> Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873*, 3.

<sup>277</sup> Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873*, 3



Whilst independent groups of vigilantes also killed indigenous peoples, government sanctioned militias would range with weapons with the intention of killing. Madley states:

Ranger militia operations provided a widely publicized state endorsement of Indian Killing, communicating an unofficial grant of legal impunity for Indian killing, and eroding cultural and moral barriers to the homicide and mass murder of Indians.<sup>278</sup>

Cultural artefacts like captivity narratives eroded the moral barriers to genocide by showing the indigenous people were threatening. This may well be why indigenous North American tattooing was less adopted by colonists, and there is less written about it. Colonialism in the United States was less about conversion (missionaries), trade routes (traders), and adventure (beachcombers). North American colonization was characterized by genocide. Beachcombers had no interest in destroying indigenous communities, nor did they have interest in converting them, even if they thought conversion was a good thing.

Nevertheless, there were some attempts to assimilate and convert indigenous North Americans, though missions and missionaries never had the same power in North America as they had in Polynesia, since, as Carol Higham notes, indigenous North American groups;

...often already possessed economic ties to the colonial structure, sometimes through previous contact with Catholic missionaries. Those that did not have a relationship with the colonial structure had rejected the opportunity in favour of remaining independent. Western Indian groups within North America remained mobile and could simply move to avoid the missionaries. One of the great weaknesses of most Protestant missionary societies in North America lay in their inability to provide an inroad into colonial power structures.<sup>279</sup>

The Spanish who arrived at the beginning of the 1500's thought that the "Indians" they discovered should be protected and converted, rather than eliminated. John Gilmary Shea states; "the discovery of America, like every other event in the history of the world, had, in

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<sup>278</sup> Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846–1873*, 175.

<sup>279</sup> Carol L. Higham, "Christian Missions to American Indians," *Oxford Research Encyclopaedias: American History* <http://americanhistory.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-323#acrefore-9780199329175-e-323-note-22> [accessed 03/01/2018].

the designs of God, the great object of the salvation of mankind.”<sup>280</sup> Some of the Spanish thought that indigenous people were lost Israelites, or at least lost souls in need of guidance.<sup>281</sup> In 1723 a group of Apaches claimed that they would convert and accept the missions if the Spanish supported them in their conflict against the Comanche group.<sup>282</sup> Carol L. Higham suggests we should not assert victimhood on indigenous Americans; “even though conversion rates remained low, this fact does not mean Indians were not garnering benefits from missionary work.”<sup>283</sup>

There are fewer primary sources and academic writings on North American indigenous tattooing than Polynesian tattooing, though that which there is, is helpful in reading *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*.

William Jean Bernard Bossu (1720-1792) was a French Explorer who was tattooed by the Quapaw group as a part of an initiation ritual. “Because he did his best to ignore the pain and remain stoic, the people of the tribe felt that he was a real man.”<sup>284</sup> Tattooing did not just establish his membership within the group, but how he experienced the process confirmed his masculinity. This also shows one of two things; that enduring pain was masculine to the Quapaw group, or that Bossu claimed that this was the case to make himself appear masculine to the white gaze.

J. W Powell, Director of the Bureau of Ethnology first published in 1889 “Picture-Writing of the American Indians.” Tattoos are referred to throughout the text, and a sub-section of the chapter, “Totems, Titles and Names”, collects writing and pictures of the tattoos of tens of North American indigenous groups including the Hurons, Neuter Nation, Bayougoulas, Iroquois, Osages, Chikasas, Omahas, Ojibwa, Kaiowa, Haida and Mohave. He states; “Blue

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<sup>280</sup> John Gilmary Shea, *History of the Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1529–1854* (New York: Edward Dunigan & Brother, 1855), 19.

<sup>281</sup> Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 3–10.

<sup>282</sup> Pekka Hamalainen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 35

<sup>283</sup> Carol L. Higham, “Christian Missions to American Indians.”

<sup>284</sup> Anna Felicity Friedman, *The World Atlas of Tattoo* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

marks tattooed upon a Mohave woman's chin denote that she is married."<sup>285</sup> This would therefore suggest that Olive Oatman was married, though Margot Mifflin in her very useful biography of Oatman claims that the tattoos were made to help Mohave women to pass over to the afterlife.<sup>286</sup> Perhaps they were both, and if this was the case her tattoos juxtaposed her initial upbringing as a Brewsterite and her later life as a Baptist.<sup>287</sup> Interestingly, Royal B. Stratton who wrote her captivity narrative was a Methodist minister and the narrative was written with the intention to promote Methodist ideology; it seems she changed spiritual persuasion many times throughout her life.<sup>288</sup>

Aaron Deter-Wolf and Carol Diaz-Granados' collection of essays, *Drawing with Great Needles: Ancient Tattoo Traditions of North America*, begins by claiming, "there is no single 'place of origin' for the phenomenon of tattooing the human body. It is present on all continents and in most cultures."<sup>289</sup> Despite this, and likely because of the "Cook myth," there have been substantially more works on Polynesian tattooing. Deter-Wolf and Diaz-Granados go on; "for thousands of years prior to acculturation, Native American groups throughout the Eastern Woodlands and Great Plains used the physical act and visual language of tattooing to construct and reinforce the identity of individuals and their place within society and the cosmos."<sup>290</sup> Antoinette Wallace's essay in the same collection shows that indigenous groups in the early southeast tattooed until the early twentieth century, before adapting to European dress and mostly losing the practice.<sup>291</sup>

Margo DeMello also claims that indigenous North American tattooing was somewhat lost to colonialism;

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<sup>285</sup> J. W. Powell, e.d "Picture-Writing of the American Indians" (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), 406.

<sup>286</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

<sup>287</sup> Brian McGinty, *The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival* (Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 181.

<sup>288</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman*, 148

<sup>289</sup> Aaron Deter-Wolf and Carl Diaz-Granados, *Drawing with Great Needles: Ancient Tattoo Traditions of North America* (Austin: University of Texas Press), xi.

<sup>290</sup> Aaron Deter-Wolf and Carol Diaz-Granados, e.d, *Drawing with Great Needles: Ancient Tattoo Traditions of North America*, xii.

<sup>291</sup> Antoinette B. Wallace, "Native American Tattooing in the Protohistoric Southeast," in *Drawing with Great Needles: Ancient Tattoo Traditions of North America*, e.d Aaron Deter-Wolf and Carol Diaz-Granados, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013).

Among most Native American groups, tattoo traditions started to disappear in the nineteenth century or even before, thanks to the influence of missionary activity, forced relocations onto reservations, and the mandatory boarding schools that many native children were subjected to....At the same time, there may have been some diffusion of Native tattoo traditions into non-native culture, with some European settlers and travellers getting tattooed in native fashion.”<sup>292</sup>

I would argue that the decline of indigenous tattoos or the hiding of tattoos, both in Polynesia and North America, are signs of captivity.

### **Sexuality and Gender in Indigenous North America.**

Like in Polynesia, the colonization of North America was physical, violent, and ideological. The first Iberian settlers and colonists recorded what they perceived to be sodomitical practices between indigenous people. Colonization “robbed” indigenous groups of their varied gender identities, sexualities and traditions, through forced assimilation and population decimation.”<sup>293</sup>

European versions of gender and sexuality were read in and imposed on indigenous people from the early colonial period, until now. The council of Veracruz wrote to Charles V in 1519, claiming “we have learned and have been informed that they are doubtless all sodomites and engage in that abominable sin.”<sup>294</sup> The Spanish did not just witness and record queer and variant genders - they punished them. In 1530 “Nuño de Guzman said that the last person he captured in a battle who ‘fought most courageously, was a man in the habit of a woman, for which I caused him to be burned’.”<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Margo DeMello, *Inked: Tattoos and Body Art Around the World, Volume I* (Santa Barbara: ABC- Clio, 2014), 306.

<sup>293</sup> Michelle Cameron, “Two-spirited Aboriginal people: Continuing cultural appropriation by non-Aboriginal society,” *Canadian Women Studies*, 24 (2/3), (2005), 123–127.

<sup>294</sup> The council of Veracruz, quoted by Richard C. Trexler in *Sex and Conquest- Gendered Violence, Political Order, and European Conquest of the Americas* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>295</sup> Quoted by Joan Roughgarden in *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2004), 335.

Richard C. Trexler claims that at first sodomy was read and used by the Spanish as evidence of indigenous male femininity, but as indigenous people began to resist invasion, it was linked to a threatening masculinity, deviance, and violence.<sup>296</sup> Rodger M. Carpenter criticizes Trexler's analysis, stating; "most of Trexler's analysis employs European rather than indigenous conceptions of gender identity."<sup>297</sup> Many academic writings about "two spirit" people eventually fall into the language-traps that I aim to confront.

Will Roscoe notes in *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (1998) that in 1833, Edwin T. Denig described the genders of the Crow indigenous group. Denig stated; "most civilized communities recognize but two genders, the masculine and the feminine. But strange to say, these people have a neuter... Strange country this, where males assume the dress and perform the duties of females, while women turn men and mate with their own sex!"<sup>298</sup> Roscoe states that since Europeans first landed in what is now North America, they met peoples whose genders did not match their expected binary; "they reacted much as Denig did: with amazement, dismay, disgust, and occasionally, when they weren't dependent on the natives' goodwill, with violence."<sup>299</sup> Roscoe claims that gender variance in indigenous North America challenges the imperial gaze, and shows up "...old medical models of sexual and gender difference as pathological maladjustments..."<sup>300</sup>

In the 1930's anthropologist George Devereux studied Mohave people, popularizing the term 'berdache,' to describe trans Mohaves, a term which is now considered out-dated and offensive.<sup>301</sup> His writings were invasive and rough; he described Alyha sexual practices in detail, and wrote about Alyha 'mock' pregnancies and births in an 'Othering' way.<sup>302</sup> Importantly he did not gather his findings from actual Alyha (transfemme) or Hwame

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<sup>296</sup> Richard C. Trexler, *Sex and Conquest- Gendered Violence, Political Order, and European Conquest of the Americas*, 4.

<sup>297</sup> Roger M. Carpenter, "Womanish Men and Manlike Women: The Native American Two-Spirit as Warrior," in *Gender and Sexuality in Indigenous North America 1400-1850*, 146- 164, 147.

<sup>298</sup> Edwin T. Denig, quoted by Will Roscoe in *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 3.

<sup>299</sup> Will Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 4.

<sup>300</sup> Will Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America*, 5.

<sup>301</sup> Devereux, George. 1937. "Institutionalized Homosexuality of the Mohave Indian," *Human Biology* 9:498-527.

<sup>302</sup> Devereux, George. 1937. "Institutionalized Homosexuality of the Mohave Indians".

(transmasc) people, but from indigenous people who knew or knew of them. Gilbert Herdt explains that Devereux's understanding was guided by ideas of sexual inversion, popularized by sexologists in the late nineteenth century.<sup>303</sup>

Furthermore, the language that academics often use to discuss trans people is ciscentric and binary. Richard C. Trexler refers to "two spirit" people as transvestites.<sup>304</sup> Will Roscoe claims that some two spirit people had relationships with people of the same anatomy, making them homosexual, and some with those of different anatomies, making them heterosexual.<sup>305</sup> Julia Serano states; "Roscoe is determined to demonstrate that Native American gender variant people represent "third genders"" even though Alyha mostly wanted to take women's roles, be called a women's names."<sup>306</sup> Serano also claims that the strict dichotomy that Roscoe makes "between 'third gender' and trans people who 'cross' from one gender to another seems rather dubious."<sup>307</sup>

Transgender people of all kinds are a binary of/within/out a single gender. People who refer to trans women as men or as non-binary in some way misunderstand gender. This enforces both a binary idea of sexuality as well as gender. It is a clumsy, out-dated and offensive way of discussing people. Even Rodger M. Carpenter's essay, "Womanish Men and Manlike Women: The Native American Two-Spirit as Warrior," which criticizes Trexler's language, refers to two spirit people as "male berdaches" and "female berdaches." He states; "as male berdaches shifted their shapes, traversing the gendered line from male to female and back, frequently altering their appearance and mannerisms as they did so, they confounded Europeans."<sup>308</sup> Joan Roughgarden notes that anthropologists often use "prejudicial

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<sup>303</sup> Gilbert Herdt, "Representations of Homosexuality: An Essay on Cultural Ontology and Historical Comparison Part I." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, no. 3 (1991): 481-504. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704312>

<sup>304</sup> Richard C. Trexler, *Sex and Conquest- Gendered Violence, Political Order, and European Conquest of the Americas*, 2.

<sup>305</sup> Will Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* 66.

<sup>306</sup> Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity* (London: Hachette, 2016).

<sup>307</sup> Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*.

<sup>308</sup> Roger M. Carpenter, "Womanish Men and Manlike Women: The Native American Two-Spirit as Warrior," 149.

language,” misgendering transgender indigenous people.<sup>309</sup> This erases the writings (both scholarly and not) of indigenous peoples.

*Two Spirit People* edited by Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang is a particularly useful scholarly work. It contains work written by indigenous peoples, and interrogates language, meaning, and how indigenous/European relationships affect language. For example, the introduction states that “two spirit” is not meant to apply or be translated into indigenous languages; the Apache could interpret it/translate it as “such a person possesses both a living and a dead spirit.”<sup>310</sup>

I will emphasise from my own perspective; a person, who is neither only a man nor only a woman, has neither the body of a man nor a woman (or both, or either). A transgender binary person who is a woman is a woman, a transgender binary person who is a man is a man. There is no type of body that is a man - a man’s body is particular to themselves, a woman’s body is particular to themselves. A body is whatever gender it is, and this is can be temporal and temporary.

Mary Annette Pember quotes an indigenous American elder;

Christian leaders, stand on our soil and claim: “gay marriage” has never occurred here. Over 130 tribes in every region of North America performed millions of same-sex marriages for hundreds of years. Their statements are both hateful and ignorant. Your “homosexual,” was our Two Spirit people... and we consider them sacred.<sup>311</sup>

Pember goes on to explain that just as she would not define as ‘native American’, but as Ojibwe of the Red Cliff band of Wisconsin, the term ‘two spirit’ is a broad and sweeping brush with which to paint the gender identities of hundreds of distinct groups.

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<sup>309</sup> Joan Roughgarden in *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*, 335.

<sup>310</sup> Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, *Two Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1997) 3.

<sup>311</sup> Mary Annette Pember ‘Two Spirit’ Tradition Far From Ubiquitous Among Tribes in *Review*, <https://rewire.news/article/2016/10/13/two-spirit-tradition-far-ubiquitous-among-tribes/> 13/10/16, [accessed 25/10/17].

When discussing *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, I will use the Mohave or Yavapai/Apache group specific terms. The Mohave used the terms Alyha (feminine) and Hwame (masculine), and the Apache “wahameh.” This is so that I am specific about the people I write about rather than homogenising them. Trans and gender variant people are different in different groups.

Generally Mohave sexual attitudes and practices were more laissez faire than those of nineteenth century Christian settlers such as Olive. Relationships were more fluid; there was no wedding ceremony, people would simply live together and separate if they wanted.<sup>312</sup> Children were raised in a communal way. “The Mohaves considered sex natural, fun, and emotionally inconsequential. Children witnessed it at a young age...Many lost their virginity by the time they reached puberty.”<sup>313</sup> And it was not just what colonists perceived as straight relationships that were relaxed. James Neill states that queer sexual practises were open and common, “from adolescence until adulthood” in the community.<sup>314</sup> This statement is problematic; if indigenous people did not have the same boundaries of gender then the boundaries of sexuality may not have applied either. Sex across different and the same genders was not necessarily peculiar (queer).

In the mid nineteenth century, when Olive Oatman lived among and grew up Mohave, she would have probably lived in a community accepting of and used to queer, trans, and gender variant people. Further, tattoos showed gender. “Mohave hwame [transmasculine people] were tattooed like men instead of women.”<sup>315</sup> Olive’s tattoos are a sign therefore of her non-transness.

### **Sailors, Gender and Sexuality.**

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<sup>312</sup> Mary Annette Pember claimed that over 130 groups had some form of queered marriage, though does not specify whether the Mohave were one of those groups. Further, her notion of marriage may be different to nineteenth century Mohave notions of marriage. Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 75.

<sup>313</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 72.

<sup>314</sup> James Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2011), 35.

<sup>315</sup> Serena Nanda, *Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations, Second Edition* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2014), 20.



Queer acts and trans genders would likely not have been huge surprises or novelties to beachcombers; sex between sailors was fairly common; “In the all-male world of the merchant fleets and navies of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century European sodomy, not surprisingly, was a common feature of the lives of the fleets’ officers and seamen...in the fleets up until the end of the nineteenth century sodomy at sea was the norm.”<sup>316</sup> Paul Gilje states; “We know that the British Navy severely punished buggery during this period. But because it was a frequently punished act, we know that it must have occurred with regularity.”<sup>317</sup> Sodomy would not necessarily have been seen as a sexuality. The word “homosexuality” used to describe sexuality was only first used in the late nineteenth century, and the captivity narratives that I studied were written in the mid nineteenth century. Sailors could be circumstantial sodomites who preferred the sexual company of women. Nevertheless, acts we now consider queer were commonplace among sailors.

Cross dressing and “transvestism” also happened on ships. Although cross-dressing and trans/genders are not the same thing, as we re-assess sexuality and gender binaries expressions that might subvert hetero/gender normativity can also be reassessed. Further, trans/gender people were often linked with and read as cross dressers. As Heike Bauer states; by the late nineteenth century cross-dressing was equated with transvestism and the transvestite became a medicalised category of person.<sup>318</sup> Just as homosexual became a medicalised category, so did the transvestite and the ‘invert.’ Adding to this evidence, from at least the eighteenth century “Women” (mostly referred to as transvestites in academic texts) occasionally disguised themselves as men or lived as men so that they could take their places on board ships.<sup>319</sup> Modern understandings of trans/genders cannot be applied to such people, but they were people who were assigned to be women who lived as male sailors. The folk song, “A Female Sailor Bold”, tells the story of Jane Thornton from Gloucester who disguised herself so as to accompany her lover to sea.

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<sup>316</sup> James Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2011), 408.

<sup>317</sup> Paul A. Gilje, *To Swear like a Sailor: Maritime Culture in America, 1750–1850*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 31.

<sup>318</sup> Heike Bauer (ed.), *Women and Cross-Dressing 1800-1939 Volume 1*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. xiii- xxxiv

<sup>319</sup> Dianne Dugaw, “Female Sailors Bold: Transvestite Heronies and the Markers of Gender and Class” in *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* (), 35.

She dressed herself in sailor's clothes, and overcome with joy,  
And with the Captain did engage to serve as cabin boy.<sup>320</sup>

In the song her lover dies, but she continues to disguise herself as a sailor and works for years aboard ships before being found out, to her dismay. Such people were not abhorred and were actually considered heroic aside from the fact that it was bad luck to have a woman on board.

There is considerably less written about men cross dressing on ships, though by the early twentieth century drag shows aboard ships were normalised. Cross dressing happened in three ways. At "public events such as shows and parties; secondly, semi-public flauntings in working areas such as showers; third, private behaviour in cabins, a situation that could exclude heterosexuals."<sup>321</sup> Christopher McKee writes about the early twentieth century;

Though it is little mentioned in letters, diaries, questionnaires, or interviews, the surviving photographic record shows that young, attractive sailors, dressed and made up as women, were a staple of shipboard concert parties.<sup>322</sup>

It might be because sodomy was illegal, 'women' aboard ships were thought unlucky and cross-dressing was taboo, beachcomber captivity narratives avoid discussing white queerness.

However, beachcombers could observe and discuss queerness among indigenous people due to their in-between/outsider status whilst suggesting that they were a part of it. Beachcombers were "available for sexual as well as cultural translation."<sup>323</sup> This was by indigenous people as well as by white people. Peter Heywood, a naval officer, was on board the ship the *Bounty* during its infamous mutiny in Tahiti in 1789. Heywood was among those

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<sup>320</sup> Kaye Pottie, Vernon Ellis and Kathy Kaulbach, *Folksongs of the Maritimes: From the Collections of Helen Creighton and Other Distinguished Maritime Folklorists* (Nova Scotia: Formac Publishing Company, 1992), 24.

<sup>321</sup> Jo Stanley and Paul Baker, *Hello Sailor! The hidden history of gay life at sea: Gay Life for Seamen* (London: Routeledge, 2003), 122.

<sup>322</sup> Christopher McKee, *Sober Men and True: Sailor Lives in the Royal Navy, 1900-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 203.

<sup>323</sup> Lee Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 68.

loyal to the captain who were set adrift on the sea, and settled in Tahiti for under a year. He was tattooed in Tahiti and claimed that “I was tattooed, not to gratify my own desire, but theirs; for it was my constant endeavour to acquiesce in any little custom which I thought would be agreeable to them.”<sup>324</sup> Being tattooed was to gratify indigenous desire and Heywood obliged to “any little custom.” Those customs may well have been queered. Beachcombers were considered more depraved than indigenous people. Reverend Robert Thompson stated in 1841: “They are tattooed as much as the natives - run as naked - live as loose, and are more openly insultingly vile in our presence than even the natives.”<sup>325</sup>

George H. von Langsdorff sketched and wrote about tattoos in his journals published in 1778. Langsdorff’s journals are particularly interesting as he discusses cannibalism along with tattoos. Further, we can read a queered subtext in his writings. His crew, curious about the tattoos of Nuki Hivans; “were very desirous of stroking our hands over the heads of some of the handsomest men; on which they betrayed symptoms of great uneasiness and distress.”<sup>326</sup> It is the white sailor here who desires the indigenous person because of their tattoos.

The queering of sailors tattoos is an idea that endured. Doctor Walter Bromberg, an assistant psychiatrist in 1934 stated in his observations:

In the days when being a sailor was a profession, self tattooing by shipmate was quite common. The whole atmosphere of the ship is conducive to bringing to the fore the homosexual drives that are unexpressed or sublimated in many persons. The very freedom the varied sexual experiences, the absence of binding home and sex ties attracts the types that have predominating homosexual components.”<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Peter Heywood quoted by Barrow *A Description of Pitcairn’s Island and Its Inhabitants with an Authentic Account of the Mutiny of the Ship Bounty and of the Subsequent Fortunes of the Mutineers* (New York: A. L. Fowle, 1900: repr. Of 1831 edn originally titled *The Eventful History of the Mutiny and Piratical Seizure of H.M.S Bounty: Its Cause and Consequences*) 131.

<sup>325</sup> Reverend Robert Thompson, *The Marquesas Islands: Their Description and Early History* (Hawaii: Institute for Polynesian Studies, reprint of 1841 edition, 1980), 57-58.

<sup>326</sup> George H. von Langsdorff, *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World, during the Years 1803...1807*, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1778), I: 134-135.

<sup>327</sup> Quoted by Albert Parry in *Tattoo: Secrets of a Strange Art* (New York: Dover Publications Inc, 1933).

Bromberg considers varied sexual experiences as freedoms, and therefore sailor tattoos as expressions of sexual freedom. Albert Parry's *Tattooing, Secrets of a Strange Art* queers tattoos:

...the sense of guilt is intensified in some by reason of the onomastic or homosexual character of tattooing....I see more than a mere coincidence in the fact that the old time American sailors, the most womenless group of all, were as assiduous tattoo-devotees ....It is said of certain American tattooers that they betray their homosexual cravings by the way they hold the young boys' arms and legs while tattooing them-not by the double finger pressure customary in tattooing but by the more intimate full grasp of their hands. While tattooing young boys they delay far longer than the operation calls for"<sup>328</sup>

It is not only indigenous societies, but the American frontier that is considered queer in this legacy. Queerness and tattooing is problematically linked to paedophilia. Later I will argue that William Torrey also links queerness and tattooing to paedophilia.

Ideas such as these are pervasive in the captivity narratives that I read, but only because I know the context through which they were written. Context is key in reading *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, *Typee*, *Moby Dick*, and *Torrey's Narrative*, firstly in establishing the link between tattoos in captivity, then in showing how tattoos are queered. The narratives were constructed for and by the imperial gaze, yet through understanding context they can tell a different story.

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<sup>328</sup> Albert Parry, *Tattoo: Secrets of a Strange Art* (New York: Dover Publications Inc, 1933), 22-36.



## Chapter Two- Theory- Truth, Freedom and Tattoos.



Fig. 5. "Tattoos of prostitutes- erotic torsos," in Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, *The Criminal Woman, the Prostitute and the Normal Woman*, trans. Nicole Hahn Rafter and Mary Gibson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

The image opening this chapter shows the torsos of three women, from just above the knee to just above the breasts. The person on the left has a tattoo on her thigh that reads excelsior (or 'onward and upward'), with an arrow pointing towards her genitalia. The middle has a large number of penises tattooed from her waist to the top of her thighs, like patterned shorts, and the person on the right has a large penis tattooed on her thigh, wrapping around it, with the head pointing up at her genitalia. The text reads "always inside."

These are images in the work *The Criminal Woman, the Prostitute, and the Normal Woman* by Cesare Lombroso, first published in Italian in 1893. In it he claimed that tattoos were signs of sexual and moral depravity on women. He links tattoos to gender/sex inversion, and states; "De Albertis, too, observed that among prostitutes, those who tattoo themselves are the most depraved."<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, *The Criminal Woman, the Prostitute and the Normal Woman*, trans. Nicole Hahn Rafter and Mary Gibson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 152.

The relationship between freedom, truth and captivity is key to discussing tattoos in literature. In this respect I find Jacques Derrida's thoughts particularly useful. He was interested in showing how truths could undo themselves, as am I. Firstly, however, I shall outline what others have thought about tattoos and freedom. The writers of my primary texts were North American, and as such the idea of freedom and tattoos is very much tied into the United States discourse on freedom of speech; the pledge of allegiance claims that North America is united under 'liberty and justice for all'.

A good example of such a perspective is that shown in tattoo artist Dennis E. Dwyer's autobiography, *God, Country and Tattoos: a Cry for Freedom*, which was published by a Christian publisher in 2011. Dwyer states that his book shows his "passions and quest to be free, with the liberty to follow [his] dreams" by becoming a tattoo artist.<sup>330</sup> Tattoos have been so much linked to deviance that there have been state legislative bans on tattooing - the last state to legalise tattooing was Oklahoma in 2006.<sup>331</sup> Tattooing here is very much a part of the anti-establishment Christian rebel. In Ancient Rome whilst tattoos were used punitively, Christians tattooed for spiritual reasons.<sup>332</sup> Perhaps tattoos have come full circle and can once again be linked to rogue Christians rather than the foreign 'Other'.

In 2011 Alice Pittman stated that tattoos should be protected as "free speech" under the First Amendment of the United States constitution, and George B. Palermo considers tattoos as a freedom of speech.<sup>333</sup> It is interesting that they use the descriptor 'freedom of speech' rather than 'freedom of expression'. This means that tattooing is a kind of language, a communicator rather than a form of dress. I will return to this idea later.

In "Freedom of Dress: State and Private Regulation of Clothing, Hairstyle, Jewelry, Makeup, Tattoos, and Piercing," (2006) Gowri Ramachandran claims that tattoos should be included

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<sup>330</sup> Dennis E. Dwyer, *God, Country and Tattoos: a Cry for Freedom* (Salem: Xulon Press, 2011), xii.

<sup>331</sup> Patricia L. Dooley, *Freedom of Speech: Reflections in Art and Popular Culture* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2017), 122.

<sup>332</sup> Mark Gustafson, "The Tattoo in the Later Roman Empire and Beyond," in *Written on the Body- The Tattoo in European and American History* edited by Jane Caplan (London: Reaktion, 2000), 21.

<sup>333</sup> Alicen Pittman, "Tattoos and Tattooing: Now Fully Protected as Speech under the First Amendment," *Western State University Law Review* 38, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 193-208.

George B. Palermo, "Tattooing and Tattooed Criminals," *Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice* 4(1):1-25 · April 2004.

in a discourse on freedom which crosses the boundaries of the personal and political. Ramachandran considers freedom of expression rather than freedom of speech, but like Palermo and Pittman, Ramachandran thinks that the law should protect tattooed people from discrimination.<sup>334</sup>

On the contrary, contemporary criminological discourse on prison tattooing considers tattooing a trap rather than an expression of freedom; "Tattooing in Prisons- Not Such a Pretty Picture," "Jaggers in the Pokey: Understanding Tattooing in Prisons and Reacting Rationally to it," and "Prison Gang Members' Tattoos as Identity Work: The Visual Communication of Moral Careers," are examples of these.<sup>335</sup> They tend to consider prison tattooing as captivity because they are a sign of deviance and the logical conclusion of deviance is that it is something a person should escape. For example, Robert J Howell's 1971 essay, "Differences Among Behavioural Variables, Personal Characteristics, and Personality Scores of Tattooed and Nontattooed Prison Inmates", claimed that tattooed inmates were less educated, unhappier, and more deviant than nontattooed inmates.<sup>336</sup> More recent studies such as "Prison Tattoos as a Reflection of the Criminal Lifestyle," (2011) concur with this.<sup>337</sup> Most claim that tattooed prisoners, particularly those who were tattooed in prison, are more likely to reoffend and as such are captive in their own behaviour.

Psychological works on tattoos have considered tattooing in the same vein, however this has changed. Knowledge is contextual and because more people are being tattooed and it is less linked with the working class and deviance, it is less pathologised.<sup>338</sup> I read this change occurring in around 2011/2012. Before this point, and I would argue since Cesare Lombroso

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<sup>334</sup> Gowri Ramachandran, "Freedom of Dress: State and Private Regulation of Clothing, Hairstyle, Jewelry, Makeup, Tattoos, and Piercing," *Maryland Law Review* 66, no. 1 (2006): 11-93

<sup>335</sup> J. S. Hocking "Tattooing in Prisons—Not Such a Pretty Picture." *AIRBORNE TRANSMISSION* (2007), 477. Niyi Awofeso, "Jaggers in the Pokey: Understanding Tattooing in Prisons and Reacting Rationally To It," *Australian Health Review* 25.2 (2002), 162-169. Michael P. Phelan and Scott A. Hunt. "Prison Gang Members' Tattoos as Identity Work: The Visual Communication of Moral Careers," *Symbolic Interaction* 21.3 (1998), 277-298.

<sup>336</sup> Robert J. Howell, I. Reed Payne, and Allan V. Roe. "Differences among Behavioural Variables, Personal Characteristics, and Personality Scores of Tattooed and Nontattooed Prison Inmates" *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 8.1 (1971), 32-37.

<sup>337</sup> Alicia T. Rozycki, et al. "Prison tattoos as a reflection of the criminal lifestyle," *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 55.4 (2011): 509-529.

<sup>338</sup> Margo DeMello, *Bodies of Inscription: A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).



considered tattoos signs of biological criminality in the late nineteenth century, tattoos were considered signs of deviance. After this point tattoos are often read as signs of positive expression. This has been done in a very gendered way; tattooed women have been the focus of study in particular, with much sociological and psychological research linking tattoos on women with risky sexual behaviours, experiences of sexual abuse, and self-harm. In men tattooing is linked with violence towards others.

Terry D Burger and Deborah Finkel's 2002 study of tattooed teenagers states; "in spite of the fact that body modifications have become more common and more accepted in recent years, the present study suggests that they are still a reliable predictor of risky behaviour."<sup>339</sup> Another 2002 study of adolescents supported this, though this time risky behaviour included eating disorders, violence towards others, taking sexual risks and suicide. Suicide was more significantly linked to women, violence to others to men.<sup>340</sup> In 2005 Jonathan W Roberti and Eric A Storch advised that adults should be vigilant around tattooed and pierced students as they were more likely to be anxious/depressed.<sup>341</sup> This link between tattooing and deviance in psychological and sociological studies, particularly in youths, did not change over the 2000s and into the next millennium. In 2011 youths with tattoos were found by George Farkas et al to be less likely to go to college, and in 2012 adults with tattoos were found by Nicolas Guéguen to drink more.<sup>342</sup> Kimberly Jacob Arriola et al. made a link between body modification and drugs/alcohol in a 2001 study that attempted to gauge whether body modification was a HIV risk behaviour.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Terry D Burger and Deborah Finkel. "Relationships Between Body Modifications And Very High-Risk Behaviors In A College Population," *College Student Journal* 36.2 (2002): 203-213, 213.

<sup>340</sup> Sean Carroll et al., "Tattoos And Body Piercings As Indicators Of Adolescent Risk-Taking Behaviors," *Pediatrics* 109.6 (2002): 1021.

<sup>341</sup> Jonathan W Roberti and Eric A Storch, "Psychosocial Adjustment Of College Students With Tattoos And Piercings," *Journal Of College Counselling* 8.1 (2005): 14-19.

<sup>342</sup> George Farkas et al., "Bodily Signs Of Academic Success: An Empirical Examination Of Tattoos And Grooming," *Social Problems* 58.4 (2011): 538-564; Nicolas Guéguen, "Tattoos, Piercings, And Alcohol Consumption," *Alcoholism: Clinical And Experimental Research* 36.7 (2012): 1253-1256.

<sup>343</sup> Kimberly Jacob Arriola et al., "Tattooing And Body Piercing Among Adolescent Detainees: Relationship To Alcohol And Other Drug Use," *Journal Of Substance Abuse* 13.1-2 (2001): 5-16.

Various reports claimed tattooed people were likely to be sexually active younger, such as Koch et al (2005)<sup>344</sup> and Gueguen (2012).<sup>345</sup> Victoria Skrzypulec-Plinta et al. found in 2012 that despite this trend towards earlier sexual activity there were no statistically significant differences in sexual preferences or orientations, likelihood of participating in risky sexual behaviours, level of masturbation and history of sexual abuse among tattooed and un-tattooed subjects.<sup>346</sup> She concludes that those with tattoos were likely to be sexually liberal, but not sexually 'deviant', perhaps because they are more comfortable with or aware of their own body and its desires. This shows the tattoo as an expression of freedom; it is linked to sexual freedom.

Yet tattooing has also been read as a sign of sexual abuse. In 1993 Huws and Inch interviewed four female psychiatric patients who had experienced sexual abuse and also had tattoos. They suggested that the relationship between sexual abuse and tattooing worked in two ways: tattoos represent physical strength and psychological aggressiveness (the women may have gotten tattoos to rebel against their experiences), and tattoos were a manifestation of violence and negativity towards the self.<sup>347</sup> A 1998 study stated that the tattooed women questioned were much more likely to have experienced childhood sexual abuse, and show signs of psychopathology than the national average.<sup>348</sup> In a large study (4700 subjects found through a body modification site) Lester and Liu found in 2012 that abuse (physical, mental, sexual and emotional) was significantly associated with a range of piercings, tattoos and scarifications.<sup>349</sup>

In 2011 Andreas Hinz et al. performed a more general study into the motivations of the tattooed, and found that those who had a history of abuse and those with a large number of

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<sup>344</sup> J. R. Koch, A. E. Roberts, M. L. Armstrong, and, D. C. Owen, "College students, tattoos, and sexual activity," *Psychological Reports* 97.3 (2005): 887-890.

<sup>345</sup> Nicholas Gueguen, "Tattoos, Piercings, And Sexual Activity," *Social Behaviour & Personality: An International Journal* 40.9 (2012): 1543-1547.

<sup>346</sup> Violetta Skrzypulec-Plinta et al., "Tattoos, Piercing, And Sexual Behaviors In Young Adults," *Journal Of Sexual Medicine* 9.9 (2012): 2307-2314.

<sup>347</sup> Heather Inch and Rhodri Huws. "Tattooed Female Psychiatric Patients," *The British Journal Of Psychiatry* 162 (1993): 128-129.

<sup>348</sup> K. Harrison et al., "Tattoos, Childhood Sexual Abuse and Adult Psychiatric Disorder In Women," *Archives Of Women's Mental Health* 1.3 (1998): 137-141.

<sup>349</sup> Charles M Liu and David Lester, "Body Modification Sites And Abuse History," *Journal Of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* 21.1 (2012): 19-30.

piercings/tattoos (defined as over ten) differed in motivation from other subjects. Those with a large number of tattoos portrayed feelings of addiction, and those who had experienced sexual abuse claimed that they felt they wanted to overcome events in their lives. Tattooing was a positive experience for them.<sup>350</sup> In 2012 Jung Mee Mun, Kristy A. Janigo, and Kim K. P. Johnson's study, "Tattoo And The Self," found that 82% of women interviewed got tattoos to express some aspect of the self, and found tattooing an affirming experience.<sup>351</sup> This represents the turning point in how tattoos have been considered; rather than the symptom of deviance they are a positive affirmation of the self.

In 2002 Kathleen O'Malley Reyntjens found that women's motivations for getting tattooed included: the need to represent past experiences, ornamental/decorative tattooing, and tattoos for self expression/individuality. Tattooed women were not significantly different from the control group on measures of psychological distress (self-harm, self-esteem). In fact, women with a lot of tattoos had higher self-esteem than non-tattooed women and women with fewer tattoos (the more tattoos the higher the self-esteem).<sup>352</sup> Women with a history of abuse had significantly less self-esteem, higher levels of self-harm and more psychological problems than women without; survivors of abuse with many tattoos had the same body related self-esteem than women who had not been abused. From this evidence we can see clearly how research surrounding tattoos is changing. One report examined the benefits of body modification. It stated that tattooing was once associated with deviance but is now a positive and pro-social rather than anti-social activity.<sup>353</sup> In these instances tattoos are shown to be expressions of freedom from the body-captivity of abuse. Tattooing is a cultural phenomenon and its meanings are not static, as is shown by the changing perspectives of these apparently scientific and objective studies.

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<sup>350</sup> Andreas Hinz et al., "Motivations For Body Piercings And Tattoos—The Role Of Sexual Abuse And The Frequency Of Body Modifications," *Psychiatry Research* 190.2-3 (2011): 359-363.

<sup>351</sup> Jung Mee Mun, Kristy A. Janigo, and Kim K. P. Johnson. "Tattoo And The Self," *Clothing & Textiles Research Journal* 30.2 (2012): 134-148.

<sup>352</sup> Kathleen O'Malley Reyntjens, "Psychological variables and personal meanings for women who are tattooed," *Dissertation Abstracts International* 62 (2002).

<sup>353</sup> David Paul Strohecker, "Towards a Pro-Social Conception of Contemporary Tattooing: the Psychological Benefits of Body Modification," *Rutgers Journal of Sociology* 1 (2011): 10-16.

In *Tattoos- I Ink Therefore I am* edited by Robert Arp, Jonathan Heaps states that the problem with freedom and tattoos is “the conflict between freedom and determinism.”<sup>354</sup> Heaps concludes that a tattoo signifies freedom because tattooing is an individual decision; “if you’ve got a tattoo, next time you catch a glimpse of it in the mirror, remember that it is evidence that you, in your body, are really, truly free.”<sup>355</sup> Yet this (perhaps deliberately) excludes forced and penal tattooing, which motivated much of the negative research undertaken into tattooing with which this section began. Nor does Heaps’ comment consider the tattoo in any other way than positively.

Felipe Carvalho considers the potential to regret a tattoo because of its permanence. Once tattooed a person is no longer free to be untattooed. He states:

The problem, as I see it, can be put in terms of the relationship between freedom over one’s own body and the permanent effects of a particular change effected in the body...How should permanence constrain our actions, and what role does freedom over one’s body play in it?<sup>356</sup>

For Carvalho, the hedonist would claim; “what counts as freedom towards one’s own body has to do with one’s capacity to make free choices that will bring one pleasure and fulfillment.”<sup>357</sup> Prison, ship and captivity settings offer limited free choices, pleasure and fulfillment, and tattoos can perhaps fulfill this by showing agency. Ships have until recently been homosocial environments, both limiting sexuality and opening different doors to different pleasures and fulfillments. Like sailors, my narrators might be defined as captives, so apparently do not have free choices and experience significant displeasure, as captives and in being tattooed. Importantly none of my narrators are given a choice as to be tattooed, and as such their tattoos are not expressions of freedom.

John Stuart Mill was concerned with promises that bind a person, even if they change their mind. Carvalho links this to tattooing; “although permanently getting one’s skin marked with

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<sup>354</sup> Jonathan Heaps, “Bearing the Marks: How Tattoos Reveal Our Embodied Freedom,” in *Tattoos- I Ink Therefore I am*, ed Rocky Rakovic (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 135- 139, 136.

<sup>355</sup> Jonathan Heaps, “Bearing the Marks: How Tattoos Reveal Our Embodied Freedom,” 146.

<sup>356</sup> Felipe Carvalho, “Tattoos are Forever” 121-134.

<sup>357</sup> Felipe Carvalho, “Tattoos are Forever,” 126.

tattoo ink may be a free choice, in doing so one is no longer free regarding what to do with one's skin."<sup>358</sup> In this thought, tattoos can never represent freedom. Tattooing in penal, prison and captive environments can show that a person has agency of their body, but it can also entrap them into being read as deviant. For example, 'Fresh Start Tattoo Removal Programme inc.' is a charity which offers free laser tattoo removal to people who have gang tattoos on the hands, face and/or neck.<sup>359</sup> Although the programme offers a way out for a few people, laser tattoo removal is expensive and can be ineffective. In this way people can be imprisoned by their tattoos.

Once tattooed, a person can rarely intervene in how they are read - tattoos are captives of a dominant gaze, and is anyone free wherein there is a normalized and dominant gaze? Tattoos are visual artefacts, they are looked upon; indeed Lacan refers to them as the sign *of* a person, not just a sign on them. Lacan states "he marks himself as a tattoo [sic], the first of the signifiers."<sup>360</sup> The person is how they are marked. Therefore, to consider freedom and tattoos is to consider how bodies are viewed, and in nineteenth century captivity narratives they are both viewed through a masculine and imperial gaze, and become a part of it. The captivity narratives that I am studying are writings about tattoos, not tattoos themselves, and as such show that dominant gazes deconstruct.

### **Epistemology- Jacques Derrida**

Jacques Derrida spent much of his work discussing the space in between binary 'truths.' He thought that we (particularly in the 'West') have an excessive devotion to ideas and that these ideas should be questioned. Devotion to truths falsely privileges one aspect of truth over another. This does not mean that the marginalized idea should be privileged or that things should be equal; kindness is better than cruelty.

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<sup>358</sup> Felipe Carvalho, "Tattoos are Forever," 128.

<sup>359</sup> Dr Dave Ores, "Fresh Start Tattoo Removal Programme inc." accessed September 14<sup>th</sup> 2017. <http://www.freshstarttattooremoval.org/for-clients>.

<sup>360</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1978), 141.

While Derrida recognised binaries as inescapable, he thought that these opposites by which we make sense of the world can be, if not refuted, at least dissected. He believed that society favoured one in each set of binaries, and that this favouring created a centre and marginalised 'Other' - masculinity being favoured over femininity, light skin over dark, wealth over poverty, straight over gay, human over animal, sane over insane, Christianity over paganism, mind over body, and speech over writing. Through exposing the 'undecidability' of these apparently opposing terms, his works show the arbitrariness of our perceptions of 'Other.' As a non-binary person I find his way of thinking useful, and will use his ideas to guide the way that I analyse my primary texts.

Derrida's thought is helpful to point out logocentrism (the devotion to truth and reason) and accept aporia (confusion or doubt). For example, in general in the mid nineteenth century, North Americans of European origin thought that indigenous peoples practised cannibalism, and that cannibalism was primitive and morally wrong. Writers and travellers sought to confirm this truth. When William Arens wrote *The Man Eating Myth* in 1979 he found any evidence of cannibalism questionable. This is a kind of knowledge wherein aporia is better than logocentrism- whether or not people eat people is not my focus but destabilising ideas about cannibalism by reading what the authors of my captivity narratives thought is. Aporia is a useful term in this thesis because although in some ways my texts subvert logocentrisms, they do not entirely oppose them. There is an oppositional tension between the imperial gaze and aporia, however because captivity narratives were written by white people for the white gaze, they do not construct an oppositional gaze as outlined by bell hooks.<sup>361</sup>

Perhaps Derrida's most-quoted and misunderstood phrase (by both supporters and critics alike) is "there is nothing outside of the text," by which he means "there is nothing outside of context."<sup>362</sup> By reading texts in context harmful ideology can be destabilised.

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<sup>361</sup> bell hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectator," in *The Feminism and Visual Cultural Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (1992; New York: Routledge, 2003), 94–105.

<sup>362</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 158. Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1977), 136.

I should also remember that my body and my gaze is a context. René Descartes, in part IV of his *Discourse on the Method* (1637), formulated a method of Cartesian doubt, by which he attempted to doubt then justify the things which people often take for granted as truth. He famously found that there was one thing that he could not doubt. “I am thinking therefore I exist” (or ‘I think therefore I am’), was “the first principle of philosophy [he] was seeking.”<sup>363</sup> I am tattooed therefore I am embodied; I am being in my body; I am being my body. I am tattooed therefore I am. To quote the title of Robert Arp’s collection of essays- “I Ink Therefore I Am.”<sup>364</sup>

Queering and/or disrupting the imperial gaze through context unsettles white supremacy and cisheteronormativity. The captivity narratives that I am studying hint at or confirm that the indigenous people within them are cannibals, however, Melville questions whether it is morally wrong, and Torrey suggests that Europeans are no better than indigenous people. Torrey therefore shows that a logocentric idea, that indigenous people are cannibals and that this means that they are less civilized than white people, deconstructs itself. I will explore this fully in chapter six.

Jacques Derrida’s work on theoretical textual relationships is particularly useful for me as I am studying bodies through literature. This is not to claim that everything is abstract, or that everything is language, or to deconstruct identity entirely. I am not attempting a deconstruction of my texts as a method, as became the fashion in North America from the late 1960’s. In 1994 Aijaz Ahmad critiqued deconstruction;

American deconstruction was in any case highly technicist, shorn of whatever political radicalism there might have been in the original French formation; the net effect was to make the text entirely hermetic ... deconstruction isolated [text] for identifying the principle of dissolution inherent in its very textuality; but the closure of the text, its hermetic distancing, was in either case the precondition for its reading.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* (New York: Cosimo, 2008).

<sup>364</sup> Robert Arp, e.d. *Tattoos- Philosophy for Everyone: I Ink Therefore I Am*, e.d Robert Arp (London: John Wiley and Sons, 2012).

<sup>365</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1994), 55.

I hope that this thesis is not shorn of political radicalism, and through an Aporic gaze can read texts in a way that rescues them from the imperial gaze. The texts should not be isolated or distanced from imperialism, nor should my reading be entirely dependent on theory or research; scholarship is creative and interpretive, and I will read and notice what I read and notice.

Derrida's work that focuses on literary knowledge is useful to me in its literary-ness. This is an English Literature thesis after all. I want to show that the tattoo is mostly not a text even though it has been read that way. I want to show through tattoos that the mind/body dichotomy deconstructs itself, to show how tattoos occupy an in-between space. I also want to discuss the relationship between tattoos in captivity narratives, and freedom and truth. Derrida considered the relationship between literature and truth at some length.

### **"Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences."**

"Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" was a lecture that became an essay in Derrida's *Writing and Difference*, published in 1967.<sup>366</sup> In it Derrida considers that philosophy and writing has attempted to fix a truth or a centre, which eventually unravels itself. Derrida was interested in creating a philosophical situation of 'free play,' in which truths could be considered as tumbling and infinite and contextual. He states that a particular event fixes one kind of truth or norm, and further events create new ones. For example, the journals written on Captain James Cook's voyages in Polynesia brought back a set of ideas about Polynesia, which Rod Edmond says influenced each subsequent writing about Polynesia.<sup>367</sup> The event of Cook's voyage so fixed knowledge about Polynesia that most writing after only sought to confirm and occasionally deny this knowledge. As each philosopher or critic critiques a past term or idea and are then critiqued, a cycle of knowledge being constantly reaffirmed or replaced is established; "all these destructive

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<sup>366</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference* (1967), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

<sup>367</sup> Edmond, Rod. *Representing the South Pacific :Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin / Rod Edmond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.



discourses and all their analogues are trapped in a sort of circle.”<sup>368</sup> Rather than being another voice that disproves ideas, I hope to step outside of the circle by making the trap visible.

Tattoos are given their meaning and read in a certain way because of the way knowledge, particularly knowledge about race and gender, is constructed. Considering tattoos only from the colonizer perspective is to consider their truth as incarcerating, and incarcerates their truth. To say that they are not an expression of freedom takes truth and agency away from indigenous people and their tattoos, and from the people who claim that their tattoos are expressions of freedom. I will attempt to create a situation of free play and Aporia. The tattoo is a freedom of expression, and it is not. I hope that my readings of the texts are playful and expressive - I believe that they are.

### **The ‘Double Session’ and Mind/Body Dichotomy.**

In ‘The Double Session’ Derrida places two texts alongside ‘the’ question “about what goes (on) or doesn’t go (on) *between [entre]* literature and truth.”<sup>369</sup> This suggests that whilst literature and truth are two things, they are not two separate things. The captivity narratives that I study are partly fiction and, at least in a small part, true. Their authors also asserted that they were true, and as such they occupy this peculiar space between truth and fiction. Importantly, their truthfulness and meanings change according to the context and reader. For example, due to the phenomenal work of various (mostly contemporary) historians, some of the things in *Typee* and *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* have been shown to be fiction. There is less written about *Torrey’s Narrative*, and less written about William Torrey. As such, my reading is more interpretive, yet by reading context, history and ideology I can deduce that it was likely at least partly fiction too. Nevertheless, even though the texts can be cast into doubt, aporia, there are many things I cannot prove, other than that two of the protagonists (Oatman and Torrey) were tattooed, and Melville, at least at that time, was not.

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<sup>368</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences.”

<sup>369</sup> Jacques Derrida, “The Double Session” in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 197.

Tattoos themselves can easily become a stabilising centre, even though historically they have been mostly on marginalised people such as prisoners, people of colour and the working class. Although the meaning of the tattoos and the stories around them can be fictional, they are evidence of specific experience taking place. Tattoos are empirical. Tattoos, then, may be afforded a certain truthfulness that books are not, though this can be considered a 'fiction of logic.' Because the tattoo is written on the body, because a person can say, "look, here it is!" logic says that it is a truth, but its meaning can be manipulated just as much as any written thing, and it can be looked at from the perspective of aporia, doubt and freeplay.

The tattoo also shows that the mind/body dichotomy deconstructs itself. Suffering in the captivity narrative is written as more painful in consciousness than body. After the Oatman massacre, Lorenzo, in a state of physical agony states; "my consciousness now fully returned, and with it a painful appreciation of the dreadful tragedies of which my reaching my present situation had formed a part."<sup>370</sup> It is only when his consciousness connects with his physicality that his situation is true. Although in *Typee* Tom is in physical pain from a leg injury, he can "scarcely understand how it was that, in the midst of so many consolatory circumstances, my mind should have been consumed by the most dismal forebodings, and have remained pretty to the profoundest melancholy."<sup>371</sup> William Torrey does not describe his feelings very often, though he considers time spent with Noyce alone in the woods; "home, with all its allurements, would rush before us, and our untold grief could scarcely be borne. Suddenly some native would come upon us, perhaps when we were weeping, when we would feign that degree of contentedness which made them believe we were truly so."<sup>372</sup> It is mental anguish that is considered more painful than the physical, creating a disjunction between the mind and body.

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<sup>370</sup> Royal B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls: being an Interesting Narrative of Life among the Apache and Mohave Indians* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1859) .95.

<sup>371</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1860), 135.

<sup>372</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative: or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey* (Boston: A.J Wright, 1848), 80.

In "The Double Session" 'the hymen' was the name that Derrida gave to the concept of 'in between', the duality of difference;

'Hymen'... is first of all a sign of fusion, the consummation of a marriage, the identification of two beings, the confusion between two. *Between* the two, there is no longer difference but identity.<sup>373</sup>

This metaphor is useful when considering the tattoo as a membrane between a person and other people. The tattooed body is not very different from the untattooed body in function, and therefore it is not a thing of particular difference. Yet it is an artefact of identity. The tattoo is a fusion, of matter and intention and body, perhaps the consummation of a marriage of identity to the body. The tattoo shows the confusion that arises from the body/mind dichotomy. *Between* the two, the mind and body, and indeed with the tattoo, "there is no longer difference but identity."<sup>374</sup> But this identity itself is still unstable outside of the truth that cishetropatriarchy asserts.

Olive the Mohave and Olive the white woman are different, but they are also the same. William Torrey the cannibal warrior and William Torrey the married, white sailor are different but they are also the same. Herman Melville the taboo lover and Herman Melville the well-known author are different but also the same. The difference itself is in the flimsy film of captivity. Because they maintained to be held captive in their indigenous identities and actions, difference rather than identity is established. This is because they embody difference whilst denying that they truly consume or are consumed by it. This can, through tattoos, be taken apart. The tattoo shows that identity could be continuous and undefined, if it were not for the systems of marginalization that establish difference and identity itself. Identity can surely be powerful and important, but in a system of freeplay and aporia rather than marginalization.

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<sup>373</sup> Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session," 219.

<sup>374</sup> Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session," 219.

What we learn from the tattoo is what we learn about a hymen between our body and mind. They *are* a hymen between body and mind, both/neither a product of body and mind, exposing and consummating the marriage between the two. As Derrida states:

Thanks to the confusion and continuity of the hymen and not in spite of it, a (pure and impure) difference inscribes itself without any decidable poles, without any independent, irreversible terms.<sup>375</sup>

It is here that we see the value of finding knowledge in the tattoo. When I discuss the tattoo I am disseminating the conflict of body and mind, as it is not a conflict as such. A tattoo is like a marriage; 'till death do you part' is usually the intention when entering into both. Furthermore, with tattooed skin, as with the hymen,

It is not only the difference... that is abolished, but also the difference between difference and nondifference. Nonpresence, the gaping void of desire, and presence, the fullness of enjoyment, amount to the same.<sup>376</sup>

In their narratives Torrey's and Oatman's tattoos are always present but by the time of writing and publishing their narratives, their context has changed dramatically. Their tattoos are removed from a context of creation (indigenous life) to the context of being looked at. They become more visible. Further, I am reading texts about them rather than tattoos themselves. They are both present within the pages and not and there is no space between this presence and nonpresence.

Difference due to appearance is, while enforced, also removed by the tattoo. Tattooed skin is, once healed, essentially the same as untattooed skin, and thus shows that the difference between difference and nondifference also amount to the same systems of centre and marginalization. They are the same but different. The tattooed skin and thus the tattooed person amount to the same as the untattooed, and it is only by human agency that the tattoo has its power because as matter, as a functional object, it barely exists. It therefore is a sign that exposes the gaze and its process of 'knowing.'

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<sup>375</sup> Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session," 220.

<sup>376</sup> Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session," 219.

Conversely, while one can forever attest the illogical nature of attitudes of difference, difference is important. To ignore difference under an imperial gaze is to ignore women, trans people, disabled people, people of colour, and other 'Others.' Additionally, in many ways people tattoo to *be* different, as well as the same.

To get a chin tattoo so as to be allowed into the afterlife makes Olive different from those who will not pass over. It makes her like the Mohave women, and unlike white women. Yet Olive is a white woman. The tattoos show difference and nondifference, and that difference (particularly marginalized difference) is constructed by colonialism. Torrey's tattoos make him a warrior, and therefore different from the beachcombers who took on the role of pet or novelty in indigenous groups.<sup>377</sup> Difference is as important as sameness, again lending to a philosophy of freeplay rather than equality.

Tattoos are not 'natural' in the purest sense of the word, they are decided upon, and each tattoo (even a hundred of the same design inscribed on a hundred different people) will be slightly different, whilst also being the same; they are ink within the layers of the skin. This applies when tattoos belong to a group of indigenous people who are colonized. To the imperial gaze tattoos have a different meaning on a white body to an indigenous one, but this meaning is not fixed. On an indigenous body tattoos show sameness and difference within a system of indigenous values. My readings showed me that on a white body indigenous tattoos show sameness and difference within indigenous systems. However, tattoos on an indigenous body and tattoos on a white body mean differently to white systems. Derrida states; [w]hat does the hymen that illustrates the suspension of differends remain, other than Dream?...It declares "fiction."<sup>378</sup>

The tattoo illustrates sameness and difference - the suspension of difference and nondifference. The mind cannot be tattooed; it is not visible, yet the body can - though

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<sup>377</sup> I. C. Campbell, *"Gone Native" in Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 112.

<sup>378</sup> Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session," 221.

perhaps the skin being tattooed is the mind being tattooed. It externalises the inside whilst incorporating the outside. Our skin is a vital organ too.

The tattoo shows that whilst the decision to change the body may stem from the mind, the body has its own form of agency/decision. Getting a tattoo hurts for most, and it hurts that specific area of the body. A large tattoo will take on average five hours. Pain may be processed in the brain, but it is not the brain that hurts, it is the specific part of the body that is being tattooed. Pain travels from the skin to the nerves to the brain. It is both the mind and body that decide whether they can and how long they can withstand the pain, and both the mind and body which endure pain.

The tattoo creates a notion of bodily unity, even oneness. There can be freeplay in oneness. If the tattoo is a sign of the mind as the body, if both things experience it inextricably, then the mind and body are not two things at all - there is no space between the different and nondifference. Consciousness is thus exposed as physical inasmuch as it is bodily.

*In Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (1993) Judith Butler applies Derrida's position to form and matter, wherein matter is theoretical and conscious, and form is physical. Butler states; "what is excluded from this binary is also *produced by* it in the mode of exclusion and has no separable or fully independent existence as an absolute outside...it emerges within the system as incoherence, disruption, a threat to its own systematicity."<sup>379</sup> Acts that disrupt gender roles, and non-binary, and sometimes trans, genders, can be considered as this sort of disruption. Trans genders and gender variance can be form and/or matter. So can the tattoo, which is both form and matter. They barely have form, though their form is perceptible. They barely matter aside from that they exist as pure body-signs - they barely have form but they have much meaning.

Yet the meaning of the tattoos in my primary texts is different from the meaning of tattoos themselves. I am not studying tattoos; I am studying tattoos in literature. They are both

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<sup>379</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2011), 13.

embodied and they are written, and as such a philosophy of body, literature and fiction is important.

Like ink, tattoos have no gender. Tattooing is objective inasmuch as ink is an object and people are objects. Tattooing is disruptive inasmuch as bodies are disruptive. The body or writing or object or page has gender through the repeated iterations and acts that constitute gender and heteronormativity, and these things always disrupt themselves.

### **“Plato’s Pharmacy”**

George B. Palermo writes in their essay “The Skin and Freedom of Speech”;

The 21 square feet of skin that cover the human body have been for millennia the locus of freedom of speech. At times, in addition to being a protective enclosure for the body, the skin becomes the means of expression for exhibitionistic and aggressive tendencies. Indeed, tattoos have been, and still are, inscribed on the skin to express a multitude of feelings, such as fear, power, hostility, love and regret, dreams of glory and superiority, and a desire for vengeance. Basically, however, their purpose is to enhance a person’s self-esteem.<sup>380</sup>

Palmero, like Alicen Pitman and Gowri Ramachandran, considers tattoos as a freedom of speech, and Derrida was very interested in speech.

“Plato’s Pharmacy,” also published in Derrida’s *Dissemination*, demonstrates that speech has been favoured over writing for millennia in Western philosophy; Aristotle stated; “Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience. And written words are the symbols of spoken words.”<sup>381</sup> This displaces writing as being symbolic of speech rather than an equally good way of communicating. Jean-Jacques Rousseau said; “languages are made to be spoken. Writing serves only as a supplement to speech,”<sup>382</sup> and Ferdinand de Saussure

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<sup>380</sup> George B. Palermo, “The Skin and Freedom of Speech,” in *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 2011, 55 (4) 507-508.

<sup>381</sup> Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, trans. E.M. Edgehill (Adelaide: University of Adelaide, 2013).

<sup>382</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy” in *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 303.

claimed; “the spoken word alone is the object of linguistic study. Writing is a trap. Its actions are vicious and tyrannical. All its cases are monstrous.”<sup>383</sup>

I would argue that the captivity narratives I am reading are indeed traps - they are writings that could be considered tyrannical, though this is because of the white supremacist ideology shown in the captivity narratives, rather than because they are writings. Melville and Olive Oatman also lectured on their experiences, perhaps for this reason, that writing itself was not enough. It was necessary for the authors to be present and to speak about their experiences for them to be believed.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) introduced the “metaphysics of presence,” wherein he thought that whatever is present in time is considered truest.<sup>384</sup> Jacques Derrida claimed this to be a key reason that speech had been favoured over writing, and coined the phrase “illusions of presence.”<sup>385</sup> Derrida claimed that what is immediate or closest - the actual appearance of a person, thing, experience, [or tattoo], the immediate bond of God’s word to truth, and/or a person’s own bodily or conscious presence - is more likely to be deemed true knowledge. He believed that this was an illusion.

Speech is present. To hear speech (traditionally) one must be with the speaker or at least linked with the speaker in some way that a person can hear them, and thus the moment of knowledge exchange is immediate, the proximity of the imparter and gainer of knowledge is close. Writing has therefore been seen as inferior as it does not rely on physical body-to-body presence. The moment of creation, of writing, can be hundreds or indeed thousands of years apart from its reading. The writing that I am reading was published around one hundred and seventy five years ago. Writing is necessary as bodies die, and so their knowledge will die with them unless this knowledge is represented in the written word. Writing depends on absence, and speech depends on presence, as Derrida stated:

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<sup>383</sup> Roy Harris, *Reading Saussure* (London: Duckworth, 1987).

<sup>384</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

<sup>385</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 327.



To write is to produce a mark which will constitute a kind of machine that is in turn productive... The writer's disappearance will not prevent it functioning.<sup>386</sup>

Perhaps writing is freer than speech - its meaning can change and be disseminated more easily, and Derrida thought that changing meanings can be a good thing. The tattoo complicates this notion of writing. A person must be present to be tattooed, as must the person doing the tattooing (some people tattoo themselves, this is still relevant). There are (mostly) two people involved in the moment of writing, yet sometimes the tattooist, like the author of a book, will never see their work interact with the world. Sometimes they will. In smaller indigenous groups wherein the tattoo artist is a part of a small community the artist will interact with their work. In tattooed communities wherein the tattooist is a friend or relative the artist also interacts with their work. If the writer of the tattoo is the tattoo artist, then Derrida's statement is true - the tattoo will carry on existing as the customer leaves the parlour, in the writers' absence. Yet arguably the writer of the tattoo is also the tattooed person themselves, to variable extents.

If a person designs their own tattoo, goes into a shop, and requests that the image be put on their shoulder then surely they are the author. But if a person wants a tattoo from, say, renowned tattoo artist Don Ed Hardy and simply asks for a design, any design, then gets an elaborate anchor on their shoulder, they did not play as large a role in the production of that piece other than they choose to have a tattoo. Usually tattoos are a mixture of these, and a person will have an idea and work with the tattoo artist until the design meets their desires. Perhaps the tattooed person is both the author and /or artist and the page, to varying extents. If tattoos are signs which are writing as well as speech (the author is present), then they are signs of freedom because they free a writing from false absence.

To illustrate the intricacy of tattoo ownership/presence, Mike Tyson's tattooist S. Victor Whitmill sued Warner Brothers studios when the film "The Hangover Part Two" gave one of the characters a replica of Tyson's iconic tattoo.<sup>387</sup> Notably the tattoo is a "tribal" type

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<sup>386</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 316.

<sup>387</sup> David Kravets, "Warner Bros. Sued for Using Mike Tyson's Tattoo in New Movie," [accessed 02/03/2014]. <http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2011/05/infringing-tattoo/>

design. Tyson thought that it looked cool, showed his warrior status and made him look intimidating, though it had no apparent link or specific meaning to any indigenous group. Whitmill had copyrighted the tattoo (the document is available online.)<sup>388</sup> The suit claimed that the studio's behaviour was "at the very least, reckless copyright infringement in disregard of the rights of Mr. Whitmill."<sup>389</sup> He allowed the film to use 'his' image for an undisclosed amount. Tyson himself did not comment on the case. Even though the tattoo is iconic to Mike Tyson, and exists on his face, it seems that the studio plagiarised the previously almost unknown tattoo artist, not the person wearing the tattoo. Through the gaze of the law it is the tattoo artist that can claim ownership of the tattoo, even if it appears on someone else's face. This complicates both ownership and the metaphysics of tattoo presence, as the body on which the 'writing' lies will usually be present, immediate to the viewer and always present to the tattooed body. In this case the person with the tattoo was not present throughout the debacle, even though the only place where the tattoo was truly present was on Mike Tyson's face, wherever it was at the time.

Mike Tyson's face is no longer free, and neither are others to represent it in some ways without consent from a tattoo artist. This defers tattoos from an expression of freedom because of their apparent presence. Mike Tyson's tattoo is to some degree a captive of S. Victor Whitmill.

The presence of tattoos do not necessarily give any truth as to their meaning, whatever the truth of their existence. The presence of Olive's tattoos at her lectures do not make what she was saying true. The tattoo therefore lies somewhere between speech and writing, and presence and absence. The undecidability of its medium, of its status as 'present', supports Derrida's aporia, and this is before perceptions of tattoos, context of tattoos and content of tattoos are even considered.

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<sup>388</sup> S. Victor Whitmill, "Tribal Tattoo Copyright", accessed 02/03/2014.  
[http://www.wired.com/images\\_blogs/threatlevel/2011/05/10713849711.pdf](http://www.wired.com/images_blogs/threatlevel/2011/05/10713849711.pdf)

<sup>389</sup> S. Victor Whitmill VS Warner Bros, Civil Action Suit,  
[http://www.wired.com/images\\_blogs/threatlevel/2011/05/tysonatattoo.pdf](http://www.wired.com/images_blogs/threatlevel/2011/05/tysonatattoo.pdf)

Furthermore, in this thesis, this 'presence' is more deferred. This is a piece of writing about pieces of writing which feature tattooing, not a tattooed body in itself. Who and what I am writing about is not present to me, but written. As you read this now, my tattoos are not in the room either. Therefore I acknowledge that even the aspect of the tattoo that renders it a 'present' form of writing is not present here, as much as it is. This nonpresence of tattoos in this thesis frees them from the meaning that is read by the imperial gaze, but it also holds them captive in my own meaning/reading. My own reading is both a remedy and a poison.

## **Pharmakon**

Within 'Plato's Pharmacy', Derrida claims that writing is a pharmakon; it "acts as both remedy and poison."<sup>390</sup> Plato states that writing is a poison. For Plato writing inhibits true knowledge as writing is external, and true thought should come from within, and then be externalised through speech. Yet, as Derrida shows, the internal does not exist without the external, as without memory one could not learn to speak. Without the external there would be no knowledge or memory or anything to remember or know, and consciousness relies on memory. Consciousness is therefore also an external thing, like writing.

Again, due to the internal and external nature of the tattoo, the concept that it is a consciousness externalised, a physical token of decision or 'inner thought,' is relevant. The external or internal knowledge dichotomy can be destabilized by the tattoo, as they are simultaneously internal and external, both physically and conceptually. Because they are under the skin, in the skin, they are visible externally but are also embedded in the body, internally. Skin itself is a membrane. It is the external shield of the body, but also porous and breathable, taking in nutrients and keeping out harmful substances. Having a tattoo on an area of skin does not change that area of skin's function. Thus though the tattoo is in itself made up of pigments, these pigments are mixed among the live cells that keep our body alive. They reside in our largest organ, and thus although tattoos do not serve a vital bodily function, they are a part of it.

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<sup>390</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 75.

Conceptually they are also internal and external, as they demonstrate a decision (often related to personality or experience), which is visible. By looking at a twenty-year-old woman without tattoos, it is unlikely that one could immediately know whether her mother was still alive. If the woman had a tattoo along the lines of 'R.I.P Mum', you probably could. William Torrey and Olive Oatman's experiences of spending time with indigenous peoples was immediately visible - their experiences were externalised. The tattoo makes visible on the body that which is not visible – experience - externalising the internal life that is not usually visibly apparent.

Derrida examines Plato's *Phaedrus*, which discusses the myth of Theuth. Theuth, the god or father of writing, considered writing a gift that would improve memory and wisdom. King Thamus replied that knowledge from writing would be muddled by other people's ideas and make people forgetful and thoughtless. Derrida thus considered writing a Pharmakon, a poison and remedy.

... the system here is not, simply, that of the intentions of an author... Finely regulated communications are established, through the play of language, among diverse functions of the word and, within it, among diverse strata or regions of culture.<sup>391</sup>

Meaning is entirely contextual, and can be disputed by different beliefs, dissections, or readings. What we learn from reading a text will be influenced by everything we have perceived beforehand, and as such each of our webs of understanding will be greatly or slightly different. Whatever the intention of the person getting or making the tattoo, it has diverse cultural functions. My own writings about tattoos in captivity narratives and whether or not they are expressions of freedom are a Pharmakon; perhaps I have poisoned them with my ideas about gender and language of gender, perhaps I have cured them from the Imperial gaze, probably I have done both.

Derrida states that "no absolute privilege allows us absolutely to master its [pharmakon's] textual system....this limitation can and should nevertheless be displaced to a certain

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<sup>391</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 98.

extent.”<sup>392</sup> I do not need to understand a whole chain of significations, its traces, and the links or conflicts between the countless interpretations of any kind of writing or any kind of tattoo. I acknowledge my limits as a reader. I can interpret the intricate systems of gender tattoos and freedom, but in a displaced manner; I can theorize, but only upon recognising my displacement from the body studied.

### **Tattoo as Trace**

The concept of ‘traces’ in language are also relevant to the tattoo. Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure famously pronounced that language (therefore meaning) is not just a system of relationships between signifier and signified, but a play of *differences*.<sup>393</sup> ‘Boy’ and ‘joy’ (my examples, not Derrida’s or Saussure’s) are different because the marks are slightly different, and because the meanings inferred by each are also different. Though the words are similar the slight linguistic change means the fairly arbitrary marks mean something different. Saussure claimed that ‘boy’ could only mean ‘boy’ because it did not mean ‘joy’. The differences or absence of meaning gives ‘boy’ meaning. For Derrida this would be another illusion of presence. When I say ‘boy,’ the word ‘joy’ is not completely absent. ‘Joy’ is carried as a *trace* in the word ‘boy’.

The concept of ‘trace’ is key to Derrida’s study of linguistics. The traces of words or signs are neither present nor entirely absent, and means that knowledge is the differences of what is present and/nor absent, and the non/existence of all that a sign does not mean, as well as what it does, is integral to how we comprehend our world. There is no true absence of presence. For example, Olive Oatman’s tattoo carries traces of spirituality as well as heathenism; Christianity as well as Mohave theology. Her tattoo became a symbol of Christian prevalence over barbarism whilst also meaning redemption to the Mohave and to white society. The story that Stratton told about the tattoo emancipated her reputation, but her tattoo always carried her Mohave identity. It destabilizes the metaphysics of presence

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<sup>392</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 99.

<sup>393</sup> Ferdinand De Saussure, *Course in general linguistics*, ed. Wade Baskin, Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

because if what is absent is also always present as a trace, nothing can have full presence, and meaning is thus deferred.

Tattoos are traces of people. They represent an event that is absent, getting the tattoo, and infinite other things also absent such as a relation or lover, a band, spirituality or theology, artistic reference, preference or life experiences (to name but a few). They are testimonies that are always present on the wearer's body but always deferring to something intangible. They are therefore the link between the body and intention/experience.

Wimsatt and Beardsley claim, in their essay, "The Intentional Fallacy", that the "design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art."<sup>394</sup> Using a poem as an example they recognise that a poem is not an accident, it is an object of intention, yet there is usually no way of learning the poet's intention, therefore no way of knowing whether the meaning the reader reads is the same as the intended meaning. Furthermore, they state that:

[j]udging a poem is like judging a pudding or a machine. One demands that it work. It is only because an artefact works that we infer the intention of an artificer. [As Archibald MacLeish put it,] 'A poem should not mean but be.' A poem can be only through its meaning – since its medium is words – yet it is, simply is.<sup>395</sup>

Captivity narratives, particularly North American captivity narratives, are usually written with a theological intention that it is important not to ignore. They work with a purpose - a cog in an imperial machine. However, the intentional fallacy is relevant to the tattoos in the texts and on Torrey and Oatman. They claim that the tattoos were a mark of belonging. They can be read as a sign of belonging in a positive, inclusive, homely sense or in a captive sense. Either way, the intention of the indigenous people who tattoo Torrey and Oatman and who want to tattoo Melville cannot really be known. It can be deduced but it cannot be known. The tattoos simply are. If a pudding tastes bad or a poem makes no sense then perhaps they

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<sup>394</sup> W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., & Monroe C. Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy' in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: Kentucky UP 1954), 2-18, 2.

<sup>395</sup> W.K.Wimsatt, Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," 3.

can be judged not to work, yet tattoos do not necessarily make sense and their meaning is often unclear. Melville does not seem to grasp the meanings of Typee tattoos at all.

Every tattoo carries the (unwritten and unspoken) traces and possibilities of other tattoos, and even the traces and possibilities of what that particular tattoo may become. Tattoos can be easily added to but are difficult to remove, and all age and fade as a person does. The tattoo also carries the trace of the un-tattooed. Their significance lies with the fact that skin is at birth un-tattooed, and that other skin on the body or other people chose not to be. Olive's facial tattoo had meaning as feminine because it was traditionally on feminine people. The tattoo externalises internal processes, therefore highlighting them, yet this does not mean that the same processes are not happening within and on the untattooed body. Most of the things that this thesis says of the tattooed body are applicable to the non-tattooed body, they are just not necessarily as visible on it. The tattoo is a tool by which one can read embodiment as they highlight certain aspects of it.

The trace of all possible tattoos are also present in each tattoo. Why that particular mark, in that particular place? Why a stag and not a flower, a pattern and not a name, an image with no lettering, on the back not the hand, or bicep and not the chest? Why a facial tattoo rather than a hand tattoo?

Turning to Derrida's development of the term 'différance' (a word which plays on the fact that in its original French the word 'différer' means both 'to differ' and 'to defer') signs can never be fully present or meaningful. This is because signs exist within a never-ending chain of *not-meaning*, in other words, a chain for all of the signs from which they differ, defer their meaning; "there is nothing outside of context." The knowledge we can gain from tattooing relies on context. Captivity narratives are a context, as is Polynesia, as is North America, as is the mid nineteenth century as is Olive's body.

### **Tattoo and Testimony**

In *Demure - Fiction and Testimony* Derrida examines the nature of *literature*, a thing that he says can be fiction or truth or neither. Derrida states, "the name and thing called 'literature'

remain for me, to this day, endless enigmas, as much as they remain passions.”<sup>396</sup> Captivity narratives challenge the differences between literature and truth; for me they are enigmatic in this way. Stratton and Torrey claim that their narratives are not literary fiction - each preface apologises for their lack of skill as writers. Stratton, Torrey and Melville also claim their narratives to be true, but not faithful. Each also apologises in their prefaces for those bits they forgot or cannot know or leave out. These captivity narratives are in/between fiction and truth- they are testimonies.

It is the passion that Derrida feels for literature that can be applied to tattooing in these narratives:

Its [tattooing/literature] passion consists in this- that it receives its determination from something other than itself...this contradiction is its very existence, its ecstatic process...One can read the same text [tattoo] - which thus never exists ‘in itself’ - as a testimony that is said to be serious and authentic, or as an archive, or as a document, or as a symptom- or as a work of literary fiction.<sup>397</sup>

The tattoos in the captivity narratives that I am studying do not exist in the narratives as themselves. I would argue that as soon as the white people and their tattoos are removed from their indigenous contexts they no longer exist as themselves. Any epistemology that examines tattoos and/or in texts is supple, as any knowledge that we learn from these things is dependent on things other than themselves. They are ecstatic because they are things of passion. A commitment such as a tattoo, whether thought out as ‘meaningful’ or not, embodies many of the notions of passion that Derrida discusses.

Derrida examines the word ‘passion’ and all its significations; Christianity, love or desire, certainty, pain and suffering, martyrdom and testimony.

Finally and above all “passion” implies the endurance of an indeterminate or undecidable limit where something, some X- for example literature [or in this case tattoo] must bear or

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<sup>396</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Demure- Fiction and Testimony*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2000), 20.

<sup>397</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Demure- Fiction and Testimony*, 28-29.



tolerate everything, *suffer everything precisely because it is not itself*, because it has no essence but only functions.<sup>398</sup>

The tattoo often expresses love or desire of a thing or person, and even perhaps makes the body more desirable. It often shows religious passion, and as one suffers pain to be tattooed there is a certain essence of sacrifice that goes into religious tattoos. They can also be a thing that implies pain and suffering in general; for most it hurts to be tattooed. Olive Oatman and William Torrey both profess that it hurt to be tattooed, but further that their experiences as captives was largely one of pain and suffering. Particularly Olive's tattoo is a sign of tolerance, overcoming, martyrdom and suffering. Lastly, the tattoo implies "the endurance of an indeterminate or undecidable limit," as the amount of time one endures a tattoo, getting it done or wearing it, depends solely on the unknowable potential of the body.

And yet the tattoo also shows a certain amount of decidability of limits. It exists just below the literal limit of the body, its outermost surface, its skin that, though it can change, is surely in a brief moment a determinate thing, a measurable mass. And there is a determinate quality to the tattoo as though the potential of death is ever-unknowable, the body will die and the tattoo thus probably be buried or burnt with it. In Western Society mummification and preservation is not widely practised, but Dutch tattoo artist Floris Hirschfeld will now arrange to have a person's tattooed skin preserved for a few hundred euros.<sup>399</sup>

Derrida goes on to examine the nature of testimony. Testimony is often an illusion of presence. In a courtroom a testimony generally needs to be present to be useful, to be true. None of the bodies that I am discussing are present, though the tattoo is a form of bodily testimony, it 'proves' embodiment, as one must have a body to have it tattooed. In the context of the law, he states, testimony is opened up as a 'truth' which "[implies] in itself

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<sup>398</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Demure- Fiction and Testimony*, 28.

<sup>399</sup> Reuters, "Dutch entrepreneur to preserve tattoos of the dead," <http://tribune.com.pk/story/653362/dutch-entrepreneur-to-preserve-tattoos-of-the-dead/> accessed 20/02/2014].

the possibility of fiction, simulacra, dissimulation, lie, and perjury.”<sup>400</sup> That the captivity narratives profess to be testimonies means that they carry the traces of fiction. Because the tattoos of Olive Oatman and William Torrey are so true, they carry the traces of ambiguity of meaning even more.

Jacques Derrida’s thoughts are useful in showing that knowledge can be contextual, it can be inconsistent, and this inconsistency does not need to be a problem; aporia is desirable. My own body context as a tattooed queer and non binary person informed my reading. My reading creates inconsistencies. For example, queer was not used in the same way in the mid nineteenth century, but this thesis is my testimony after all. This thesis is an expression of my consciousness that is an expression of my body.

I am not forming a theory that produces a uniform reading; each text has as many differences as similarities, maybe more. Their commonalities are that they discuss tattoos and that they are captivity narratives; because of this they all construct and deconstruct the imperial gaze, but this is done in different ways. They all show create self-possession, and what it means to be possessed but this is different within each narrative. They all show belonging within a group and belonging to a group, but this is different within each narrative. They all show that home is as slippery a word as freedom, but this is different within each narrative.

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<sup>400</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Demure- Fiction and Testimony*, 29.

### Chapter Three- Olive Oatman and *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*.



Fig. 6. Olive Oatman 1838–1903, by Benjamin F. Powelson (1823–1885), Albumen silver print, c. 1863, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

In 1851 Olive Oatman's family were massacred and she was captured by what she called the Apache group of indigenous North Americans. After around a year she was sold to what she called the Mohave. She lived with them for four years before returning to white society in 1856. She was captured an unexceptional white colonial teenager and rescued a remarkable body of captivity. This was partly because of her tattoos. Margot Mifflin states that her enigma "lies in her unresolved duality. No American immigrants or captives have worn their hybrid identities so publicly."<sup>401</sup> Olive Oatman had the freedom to adopt and change identities in a way that indigenous people could not under imperial systems, at the same time her life and story was guided by older men with their own motives.

In the picture opening this chapter Olive is twenty-six. She appears stern, pious, and beautiful, staring into the middle distance. The embroidered cross-hatching on the wrists and arms of her formal dress are aesthetically similar to her tattoos, suggesting that there are more than meets the eye. Brian McGinty claims that she also had tattoos on her arms.<sup>402</sup> In the picture her facial tattoos are formed of five vertical lines which run from her bottom lip to her chin; three smaller lines in between two larger ones, which run from the corners of her mouth down. Two triangular/thorn shapes protrude out from the larger outer lines. Everything about her is neat; her oiled and curled hair, her gently clasped hands, and her downturned, gently closed lips.

Her dress and hair are severe but feminine, contrasting with the chin tattoos which, at a glance from an unacquainted eye, could be a beard. Her hair appears dark, almost black, which is curious as her light brown hair had been dyed black by mesquite dye when she was living amongst the Mohave. In 1856 the *San Francisco Weekly Chronicle* claimed that after the dye had been washed out, her hair was a "light golden colour."<sup>403</sup> Red tones did sometimes appear as dark in photographs of this era, so her hair could have been an auburn colour, but nevertheless, her hair appears dark and straight much like that of indigenous peoples. This picture may suggest she kept dying her hair, or at least the picture gives the

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<sup>401</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 5.

<sup>402</sup> Brian McGinty, *The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival* (Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 98.

<sup>403</sup> "Rescue of Young American Woman from the Indians," *San Francisco Weekly Chronicle*, March 15, 1856.

illusion that she has dark hair, linking her to her Mohave past. Her prim attire, sleek, neat hair, and modest countenance contrast with the facial tattoos that made her both well known, and not known at all. Mifflin states; “in her day, Oatman was freakish enough to invite speculation and guarded enough to ensure that the speculation never ended. Because her story was saturated with violence, military intrigue, and sexual innuendo, it quickly became legend.”<sup>404</sup> The ambiguity around her tattoos and her story meant that she would be written and re-written for the following hundred and fifty years.

Biographies and stories differ greatly on whether or not her return to white society was emancipation or another form of captivity. Certainly the meaning of her tattoos are still held hostage by the story that was written about her experiences fairly immediately after she re-joined white society. This chapter will examine at length *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, which was written by Royal .B. Stratton, a Methodist minister. Olive and her brother Lorenzo Oatman recounted their experiences to him shortly after they were reunited in 1856. *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* was first published in 1857, and Lorenzo and Olive are credited as authors in one reprint.<sup>405</sup> In Stratton’s version of Olive’s story she is taken captive, enslaved, starved, and forcibly tattooed. In this text Olive’s tattoos are an expression of captivity whilst Mohave tattoos are expressions of freedom. Olive claims that her tattoo was different from others and was a kind only given to captives and slaves of the Mohave. It marked her as peculiar within the Mohave rather than peculiar to, belonging to, the Mohave.

Margot Mifflin’s *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman* is particularly useful in reading Stratton’s story. The “Blue Tattoo” is used as the main title; “the life of Olive Oatman” is the sub title. This shows how important Olive’s tattoo was; it preceded her/self. Mifflin states that in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, “a clear pattern of manipulation emerges, and it is possible to disentangle- to a degree- his [Stratton’s] story from hers.”<sup>406</sup> Mifflin’s text can be used to de-stabilize Stratton’s, though Mifflin does not pretend to have the whole truth

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<sup>404</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>405</sup> Lorenzo D. Oatman and Olive A. Oatman, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians* (New York: 1859), (Dover, 1994).

<sup>406</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 7.

either; “it’s as if the minute she stepped back into the white world and rinsed the mesquite dye from her hair, the truth was washed away and fiction would forever infest her biography.”<sup>407</sup> The indigenous version of Olive Oatman’s story of Olive Oatman is mostly lost- Mohave versions of the story were not recorded aside from a few isolated interviews.<sup>408</sup> This manipulation by Stratton and the story told by white sources is itself a colonization of truth, which is in turn a colonization of the meaning of Olive’s tattoos. *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* is a colonization of Mohave tattoos. Recent scholarly work had made progress in liberating the tattoos from Stratton’s enforced meaning, but this does not liberate the Mohave people from the colonial crimes that they endured in the mid nineteenth century. Context can therefore create aporia in hindsight, however the damage of the imperial gaze has already been done.

Olive’s tattoos are expressions of freedom, and they are expressions of her captivity. They are expressions of freedom because Mohave tattoos express Mohave ideology society and culture, and for people to express their ideology and culture is a freedom. Yet to the white gaze Olive was not truly Mohave. Her tattoos are expressions of a particular freedom because they are on a white body that was not captive of the same boundaries of ethnicity that were imposed on indigenous people by colonists. Olive could be Mohave and tattooed and could be white and tattooed- a tattooed Mohave person could not become truly white in mid nineteenth century North America. Olive’s tattoos therefore show the freedom afforded to white people by white supremacy. Even with her tattoos she was white and could return to white society and benefit from colonial white supremacy. Indeed, her experiences and narrative was used to reassert white Christian supremacy. R. B. Stratton was a Methodist minister who intended to assert Methodist Christian white supremacy through the narrative.<sup>409</sup>

I am approaching this text as a fiction due to Stratton’s misprision of the story. I have chosen it as a primary text because this manipulation itself shows how tattoos were read in North America in the nineteenth century. It also shows that how tattoos were and are read does

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<sup>407</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 3.

<sup>408</sup> Brian McGinty, *The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival*, 7.

<sup>409</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman*, 147.

not entirely stem from the South Pacific. As Margot Mifflin claims, Olive's tattoos became legend, certainly her story is better read and known than William Torrey's. The purpose of this chapter is not to disprove the truth claims of Stratton's text, though this will sometimes be useful, but to treat it as a literary work, which contains text, subtext, artistry and information. Nevertheless, a succinct description of events as told by contemporary historians, rather than Stratton, is useful. The imperial gaze is logocentric, and the logocentrism in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* is white supremacist. Reading context can show the aporia of the text.

### **The Life of Olive Oatman.**

Olive's family, the Oatmans, left Illinois in May of 1850, and joined a band of families headed west. The family consisted of father and patriarch Royce Oatman, his pregnant wife Mary Ann, and their children; Lucy, seventeen, Lorenzo, fifteen, Olive, fourteen, Royce Jr., eleven, Mary Ann, seven, and Charity Ann, five. They travelled with the Brewsterites, a Mormon sect that was started in 1837 by James C. Brewster.<sup>410</sup> Brewster promised that the sect would settle in a utopia at the mouth of the Colorado River, which he called "the Land of Bashan."<sup>411</sup> Although "the land was not his to give," he promised it anyway, as if it were free, showing how colonialism and captivity worked in a geographical/spatial way.<sup>412</sup> The Oatman's wanted to "form a new settlement remote from the prejudices, pride, arrogance and caste" that Royce thought characterised other parts of the United States.<sup>413</sup> This didn't extend to the indigenous peoples already living on the land. Brewster, like most Christian religious leaders, promised his followers that his word was the truth, and that his truth was freedom. At first Royce believed him.

The group of around ninety began travelling the Santa Fe Trail, which connected Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, but there was soon conflict. On the Santa Fe Trail

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<sup>410</sup> Timothy Miller, *The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-century America: 1900-1960* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 89.

<sup>411</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman* 22-24.

<sup>412</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 26.

<sup>413</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1859), 14.

Brewster logged encounters with indigenous people that resolved affably, and hearsay of encounters suggests that others did not.<sup>414</sup> People in the group were concerned about hostility from indigenous people, some people within the Brewsterite group had religious differences, and they quarrelled over routes. Royce Oatman was a dissenter and instigator of conflict. Brewster had a revelation that the Promised Land laid not in California but New Mexico, and Royce Oatman disagreed.<sup>415</sup> The Oatmans and around fifty others split from Brewster in late summer, and Royce was elected leader of the new group, then replaced in October by Norman C. Brimhall.<sup>416</sup> In January five families, including the Oatmans, detached in Tucson. They never did reach paradise.

Things were desperate; they had little money and food was scarce. They thought they would stop at Maricopa Wells, but upon arriving found that people there were starving too. The route from Maricopa Wells to Fort Yuma “was considered a war zone at best,” and the other families decided to wait for a larger group to travel with.<sup>417</sup> Royce decided that his family would go on alone; he was determined to reach the mouth of the Colorado River.<sup>418</sup>

Olive Oatman’s family were massacred in what is now Southern Arizona, by what may have been a Yavapai or Tolkepaya group of indigenous Americans in 1851.<sup>419</sup> Colonial settlers often mistook other indigenous groups for Apache, as did Olive and Stratton; when quoting and discussing Stratton’s text I will use ‘Apache’ and elsewhere ‘Yavapais’ though I acknowledge that this too may be an approximation.<sup>420</sup> All but Lorenzo, who was left for dead, and Olive and her sister Mary Ann, who were captured, died.<sup>421</sup> Lorenzo made it to Fort Yuma where he spent some months healing from his injuries, before spending some time in San Francisco with Dr Henry Hewitt.

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<sup>414</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 37.

<sup>415</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 35.

<sup>416</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 39.

<sup>417</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 43.

<sup>418</sup> Edward T.; James, Janet Wilson and Paul S Boyer, *Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 646–647.

<sup>419</sup> Jennifer Putzi “Capturing Identity in Ink: The Captivities of Olive Oatman” *Western American Literature*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Summer 2004), pp. 176-199.

<sup>420</sup> Robert Marshall Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 185.

<sup>421</sup> Jeremy Rowe, *Early Maricopa County: 1871-1920* (Mount Pleasant: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 7.



Olive and Mary Ann lived among the Yavapai's for around a year. Olive claimed that in this first year she and her sister carried out menial labour, and were starving and often beaten. After about a year they were both sold to the Mohave.<sup>422</sup> Olive claimed that they were treated better by the Mohave, and lived with a leader and his partner and daughter. Both Mary Ann and Olive received facial tattoos in this time, though the white gaze would never read Mary Ann's. Mary Ann died of starvation after around two years with the Mohave. Olive remained with them until February 22, 1856. Around five years after her family were killed and she was taken captive, she was 'rescued' and returned to 'civilization' to Fort Yuma.<sup>423</sup>

Even at the time, different sources told different stories. Upon Olive's return to her brother Lorenzo, Captain Burke of Fort Yuma was the first of many to interview Olive. He does not mention her tattoos. Olive could barely speak English and most of her answers were a one word "yes." Burke noticed that she would answer "yes" to questions framed purposefully "directly opposite" each other.<sup>424</sup> In the interview she claimed that the Mohave treated her and her sister very well, and that they had plenty to eat; pumpkin, fish and wheat.<sup>425</sup> This contrasts to Stratton's narrative which claimed that Mary Ann starved to death and that the Mohave didn't know how to farm or maintain crops.

The Thompsons were a family that had travelled with the Oatmans until the group parted in 1851, and after Lorenzo and Olive were reunited Colonel Thompson took them in. One of Thompson's daughters, Susan, claimed that Olive "pined ceaselessly for a Mohave husband and children whom she left behind. According to this account, Olive tried to return to them at every opportunity."<sup>426</sup> Susan claimed that Olive married the son of the Mohave chief who

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<sup>422</sup> Brian McGinty, *The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival*, 99.

<sup>423</sup> Brian McGinty, *The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival*, 100.

<sup>424</sup> Kroeber, A. L., and Clifton B. Kroeber. "Olive Oatman's First Account of Her Captivity Among the Mohave," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (1962): 309-17, 312.

<sup>425</sup> Kroeber, A. L., and Clifton B. Kroeber, "Olive Oatman's First Account of Her Captivity Among the Mohave," 312.

<sup>426</sup> Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 72.

she lived with and that Olive had two sons of her own.<sup>427</sup> However, Susan Thompson later claimed that Olive lived with her for four years, when in reality it was more like two months, somewhat discrediting her assertions.<sup>428</sup> There is also no record, written or oral, within the Mohave of mixed race children residing with them around that time. Rumours of Olive's Mohave family followed her throughout her life, though they may well have been just that, rumours.

The April 1956 edition of the *Los Angeles Star* contains the first lengthy interview with Olive after her return. Interestingly they introduce Olive as "here embodied."<sup>429</sup> This emphasizes presence, attesting against its illusion. Although the interview is written, the interviewer makes clear that Olive was embodied and present to the interviewer, who is given authenticating authority. The article introduces the instability of whatever facts it manages to find; Olive is unable to give details "unassisted," and later she is unable to express her emotional thoughts "in language." She is not free to express herself to the interviewer who was in the position to shape and discern what they thought was true about her and her story. She is described as beautiful, but "disfigured" by her tattoos. In this interview she claims she was treated as family by a Mohave family, and her and her sister could do as they pleased. In this account she was not a captive.<sup>430</sup> She was told she could return to the whites if she wanted, though no Mohave would escort her for fear of retribution. She cited this as her reason to stay; she said she could not make the journey alone. She also says that she was delighted to return home. She was both free to leave and free to return, and had agency in either decision. In this interview her tattoo is not an expression of captivity.

This is supported by other sources that show that Olive could have left or escaped the Mohave. In 1854 when Lieutenant Amiel Weeks Whipple traversed the land with a huge group to map a railroad, the Mohave were welcoming, friendly and helpful. There was no sign of Olive or Mary Ann who were concealed, either by themselves or the Mohave. Mifflin suggests that this is a sign that Olive chose to remain among the Mohave, as it would have

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<sup>427</sup> Brian McGinty, *The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival*, 89.

<sup>428</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 132.

<sup>429</sup> "Olive Oatman the Apache Captive," *Los Angeles Star*, 19/04/1856 [accessed 10/10/17].

<sup>430</sup> "Olive Oatman the Apache Captive," *Los Angeles Star*, 19/04/1856

been easy to get word to or present herself to them, and the Whipple party isn't mentioned in Stratton's narrative.<sup>431</sup>

TokwaOa, a Mohave person who claimed that they guided Olive to Fort Yuma when she was rescued, told white American anthropologist A. K. Kroeber about Olive through a translator in 1903. The Captivity of the Oatman Girls claims that the rescue took place after a long negotiation. At first the Mohave refused to let Olive go, then when they were told that millions of whites would come to Mohave valley go to war with them they ceded and let her go. TokwaOa's account corroborates this. TokwaOa claimed that the Mohave were very fond of Olive, and that she was treated well. TokwaOa claimed that the Mohave said that they raised her so that she could be returned to whites, therein showing the kindness of the Mohave and dispersing potential conflict. Olive herself promised TokwaOa that she would tell the whites good things about her time with the Mohave- this was a promise of good faith and not a threat.<sup>432</sup> She was meant to tell the whites about her good treatment, not bad; she was meant to make whites feel more favourable and kindly towards indigenous people, not more genocidal. Kroeber himself doubts the validity of the intricacies of TokwaOa's story, for example, TokwaOa claimed to be the only Mohave to travel with Olive, but Kroeber claims that this was not the case. Kroeber thought that TokwaOa was exaggerating Olive's good treatment so as to make better relationships between the Mohave and whites, which he had good cause to do.

## **Captive Violence**

The Oatman massacre and the sisters' detention were woven into stories of captivity and brutality. Considering freedom, according to Stratton's account, at least in the first year of her captivity, Olive and her sister had little. Olive as an individual colonised nothing; she was a benign cell in a malignant tumour. A white colonizer living under the captivity of indigenous people is not free, but under colonial rule and the white gaze, neither are the indigenous people. This is because whilst Olive as an individual suffered trauma and

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<sup>431</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 83.

<sup>432</sup> A. L. Kroeber, "Olive Oatman's Return," 1903, accessed October 1<sup>st</sup> 2017. <http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/anthpubs/ucb/text/kas004-002.pdf>.

apparently captivity, the white supremacist system of the imperial United States nearly drove both indigenous practises and indigenous peoples in general to extinction.

Although the Oatman Massacre was an instance of violence, I would claim that it could be read as an instance of resistance to a dominant system of violence. Robert Marshall Utley states; “the intensity, if not the origins, of both Yavapai and Walapai hostility could be traced to white treachery.”<sup>433</sup> When Olive and Mary-Anne are on their long journey away from the scene of their attack, two indigenous ‘pirate’ people attempt to shoot Olive with a bow and arrow. She later learns that this is because the shooter lost his brother to “an affray with the whites upon this same Santa Fé route.”<sup>434</sup>

The Mohave advised Olive that white people “have forsaken nature and want to possess the earth, but you will not be able.”<sup>435</sup> Colonialism in what is now the United States was not a tit for tat equal process; white colonists had the upper hand. Benjamin Madley states; “many whites articulated genocidal intent” in North America and “...although California Indians resisted, they also suffered genocide.”<sup>436</sup> Brendan C. Lindsay claims that Judge Serranus C. Hastings, prominent Californian Lawyer, rancher and then Judge in the mid nineteenth century and those like him, “in the name of freedom and democracy...made freedom, happiness and property holding for California Indian peoples nearly an impossibility.”<sup>437</sup> White supremacy in the United States eroded the “cultural and moral barriers to the homicide and mass murder of Indians.”<sup>438</sup> I would argue that captivity narratives were both a product of and contributed to this culture.

Stratton’s text can be read as a cultural artefact that erodes moral barriers to genocide. Particularly the Apache, who were known as a group that would give violent resistance to their colonization, are completely dehumanized by Stratton. Stratton’s text is a captivity

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<sup>433</sup> Robert Marshall Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891*, 173.

<sup>434</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 92.

<sup>435</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 128.

<sup>436</sup> Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 178.

<sup>437</sup> Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873*, 3.

<sup>438</sup> Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2016). 175.

narrative that seemingly shows indigenous people to be dangerous and threatening, it naturalizes atrocity against Indigenous peoples. The narrative itself should therefore be read as threatening towards indigenous people. Indigenous culture itself- queerness, cannibalism and violence- is written as a threat to European culture, and Olive's tattoos are a sign for that threat. In this way *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* is a brick in the prison that the United States built around indigenous peoples. It is an artefact of imprisonment rather than of captivity.

In *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* Royce Oatman is described as having sympathy for indigenous peoples. He is aware of colonial atrocities;

He had always been led to believe that the Indians could be so treated as to avoid difficulty with them...he often censured the whites for their severity towards them; and was disposed to attribute injury received from them to the unwise and cruel treatment of them by the whites.<sup>439</sup>

Stratton's text sends a clear message; that assimilation or kindness towards indigenous people was met with captivity and death. A reviewer of *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* stated in Sacramento's *Democratic State Journal* that "the reader will rise from it perusal with a feeling prompting him to seize the musket and go at once and chastise those inhuman wretches among whom Olive spent five years."<sup>440</sup> The reviewer homogenizes the Mohave and Apache that is another way of constructing a marginalised 'Other.' Even though the Mohave were far kinder to the sisters and were not connected to the massacre they are also inhuman wretches to this reviewer. For this reviewer the moral barrier to genocide was eroded.

In such a context, Olive's tattoo should perhaps be read as a sign of her experience. As such it was a visual thing that was not just read as violent by the imperial gaze, but inspired violence. For those who read Olive's tattoo as a mark of captivity and slavery, it was a sign that a boundary had been crossed. The face, made in gods image had been marked. In turn

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<sup>439</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 55.

<sup>440</sup> Quoted by Margot Mifflin, in *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 149.

the tattoo itself is an expression of captivity because it inspired hatred in white colonizers who committed genocide against indigenous people.

### ***The Captivity of the Oatman Girls***

Reverend Royal Byron Stratton began writing *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians* shortly after Olive and Lorenzo were reunited in 1856, and the Methodist Book Concern first published it in 1857. Stratton was a Methodist reverend, a preacher who met the Oatman survivors in Gassburg in 1856. In *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* Stratton claims that Lorenzo asked Stratton to write the narrative, and that Stratton used some of the profits of the novel to pay for Olive and Lorenzo's formal education. From 1858 Olive travelled and lectured about her experiences to promote the book, which was a great success; it sold 26,000 copies by 1860.<sup>441</sup> It went through three editions, each one longer and more detailed than the former; this work refers to the third and longest edition unless otherwise indicated.

Stratton asserts that the text was not written for a person to enjoy or appreciate; its purpose is to inform rather than to entertain. He claims that he is not a famous or experienced author, and wants to write in a "plain, brief and unadorned style, deeming that these were the only excellencies that could be appropriate for *such* a narrative."<sup>442</sup> The italicised word "such" both establishes the book's place in the captivity narrative genre and show that it is a particular and peculiar story. It is not the writing but the message and events that are important. He asks "the reader [to] avail himself of the *facts*, and dismiss, so far as he can, the garb they wear."<sup>443</sup> This could refer to Olive's tattoo as well as the text, maintaining that despite her tattoo she is a reliable narrator. He relinquishes his status as a writer, and reaffirms his role as a truth teller. This idea of truth and Stratton's role within it was particularly important due to his intents for the text. It was his "... purpose was to write a pious account that would inspire people to give money to build Methodist churches, and

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<sup>441</sup> Jennifer Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink: The Captivities of Olive Oatman." 178.

<sup>442</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed..

<sup>443</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed..

he was successful.”<sup>444</sup> There was a tangible and immediate reason for him to manipulate the narrative.

Nevertheless, Stratton shows that he cannot tell the whole story. He confesses that much of the emotional particulars experienced by the siblings “must forever remain unwritten... the hearts deepest anguish, and its profoundest emotions have no language.”<sup>445</sup> In this he shows that the narrative is very much written through his limited perspective. It is unlikely that Olive would have been able to express the nuances of all her feelings; she would have been semi literate and her English would have been unpractised. Stratton also states that in the narrative “the tinselling’s of romance would be but a playing with sober, solemn and terrible reality.”<sup>446</sup> This also cleverly sheds any responsibility for conveying Olive or Lorenzo’s actual feelings, distancing them from their story whilst inserting himself into it. He also indicates that romance and sentimentality have been purposefully left out, which may have been a hint at the rumours of Olive being married to a Mohave person. It was important that Olive was seen as pious and unmolested to further the Methodist doctrine, whilst allowing the sexualized subtext to remain in order to fascinate the public.

The preface to the second edition, as is typical, reads as a defence of the first edition. He augments and reiterates the success of the first edition, whilst continuing his defence of the style in which it was written. Again he disclaims “all literary taste” and maintains that the plain and prosaic style of writing is appropriate, despite some criticism for it.<sup>447</sup> By the third edition, perhaps as it was published in New York and intended for a larger audience, Stratton seemingly succumbed to criticism and in its preface he claims that the reader will find the style “much improved.” Nevertheless, in all editions the text is descriptive, romantic, sentimental and emotional, all things that Stratton maintains it is not.

The writing style was far from plain or unromantic. The story starts near the Rocky Mountains with the sun “imparadising the whole plain and mountain country in its radiant

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<sup>444</sup> Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California*, 70.

<sup>445</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed..

<sup>446</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed..

<sup>447</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed..

embrace.”<sup>448</sup> The night that the family are kidnapped, Stratton writes (from Olive’s perspective);

The full moon arose and looked in upon our rock-girt gorge, with a majesty and serenity that seemed to mock our changeable doom...the sky was clear, the wind had hushed its roar and laid by its fury, - the larger and more brilliant of the starry throng stood out clear above, despite the superior light of the moon, which had blushed the lesser ones into obscurity.”<sup>449</sup>

The description of the landscape is often beautiful and because the reader is told that only the facts are presented, this beauty is presented as objective fact. Further, it makes the land seem like an enticing place to settle and live, as it was important captivity narratives did not to put migrants off coming to the “promised land” and as such the setting itself is often described as beautiful.

It is unlikely that Olive, who was fourteen at the time of the massacre, would remember this, nor was she likely educated enough to use such descriptive imagery. Olive and Lorenzo were only partially literate at the time the narrative was written. When Olive arrived at Fort Yuma she remembered little English and her countenance was that of an indigenous girl confronted by whites; she said a simple, nervous ‘yes’ to most questions asked, even when they conflicted with each other.<sup>450</sup> It seems likely that this book was the result of another shy ‘yes’ to the request of her brother as well as to Stratton- it was Lorenzo who apparently requested the book be written.

In his conclusion Stratton claims; “if there is one who shall be disposed to regard reality as being over-drawn, we have only to say, that every fact has been dictated by word of mouth, from the surviving members of that once happy family.”<sup>451</sup> Logically it would not have been word-of-mouth; Olive and Lorenzo were not very educated and the style and structure of

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<sup>448</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2.

<sup>449</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 84.

<sup>450</sup> Kroeber, A. L., and Clifton B. Kroeber. "Olive Oatman's First Account of Her Captivity Among the Mohave," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (1962): 309-17, 312.

<sup>451</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.,.



the narrative is sophisticated. Stratton's voice and influence is very clear throughout the text.

Supporting this is the way that perspectives are divided. Other than the section wherein Olive is in captivity and therefore Lorenzo is not present, the story comes mostly from Lorenzo's perspective. The actual story of captivity is surprisingly short; nearly half of the text is dedicated to the events that lead the Oatmans to the moment of the massacre. Olive barely has a perceptible input until nearly half of the way into the text. Even though her tattoo became a unique selling point of the narrative, it is not often mentioned. Her experiences are also sometimes written in third person, drawing attention to the fact that she is not the true narrator.

The text varies greatly in its narrative form; it moves from first to third person, present to past tense, prose to play-format speech, flowing description to pragmatic recounting of events, and from narrator to narrator. There are also several illustrations that differ from edition to edition and print to print. Mostly they are by Charles and Arthur Nahl, though a 1935 re-print uses engravings by Malette Dean. Despite this, Stratton's voice is consistent. Although Olive and Lorenzo's first person sections are mostly in quotation marks as a reminder that their stories are empirical, writing the style is the same as the sections wherein Stratton is writing explicitly from his own perspective.

There are steady reminders that Stratton is the true author of the text. He sometimes addresses the reader directly. The night before the Oatmans are to be attacked, he changes to the present tense and tells the reader to "look at this family; the scattered rough stones about them forming their seats."<sup>452</sup> He then asks the reader to imagine how the Oatmans felt, which in the preface he asks the reader not to do.

Stratton states in the preface to the second edition that he wrote it as he believed there was "sufficient interest- though melancholy of character- to insure an attentive and interested

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<sup>452</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 53.

perusal in everyone into whose hands and under whose eye this book may fall.”<sup>453</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two, captivity narratives generated various kinds of interest. They were morally and religiously instructive which appealed to various Christian denominations; they were exciting and sexually suggestive which appealed to a mass market, and, because they were both religious and suggestive, white Christian women could read them and both sympathize with the victim and peep into the forbidden.<sup>454</sup> For example, in Stratton’s text Olive appears mature- she nurtures and protects her younger sister who is portrayed as the child of the two; “a nubile girl captive among savages is a much more titillating subject than a child. She was a child of eleven when captured, of twelve when she reached the Mohave.”<sup>455</sup> The younger the person was when captured by an indigenous group, the more likely they were to consider them home.<sup>456</sup>

### **Tattoos, Monuments.**

Travelling to Maricopa the Oatmans see the gory evidence of those unsuccessful people who went before them on the roadside. Stratton states;

Monuments!- monuments, blood written, of these uncounted miseries...are inscribed upon the bleached and bleaching bones of our common humanity and nationality; are written upon the rude graves of our countrymen and kin, that strew the highways of death; written upon the mouldering timbers of decaying vehicles of transport; written in blood that still preserves its tale telling...; written, ah! too sadly, deeply *engraven*, upon the tablet of memories, that keep alive the scenes of butcheries.”<sup>457</sup>

Olive’s tattoos are also monuments, blood written. The passage links monuments and tattooing to writing; “written upon” “tale telling” “deeply *engraven*, upon the tablet of

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<sup>453</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.,.

<sup>454</sup> Christopher Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patter Hearst* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>455</sup> Kroeber, A. L., and Clifton B. Kroeber. "Olive Oatman's First Account of Her Captivity Among the Mohave," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (1962): 309-17. 313.

<sup>456</sup> Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Post Modern Images of Indian Captivity*, 5.

<sup>457</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 41.

memories” Olive is evidence of her own story. Nevertheless, this version of her story is captive of Stratton and constructs her gaze in the image of the imperial.

*The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* shows Olive’s tattoos to be monuments of suffering, misery and captivity. Although Olive’s tattoos could mark her as crossing the boundary between white and indigenous, in Stratton’s narrative they instead symbolize a wretchedness which connects white people against indigenous people. Moreover, humanity and nationality only refer to white people. With great sad irony people indigenous to North America were not considered countrymen and kin of Stratton and the Oatmans because they were less than men; less than human. The Mohave could well have been kin to Olive, but this was almost written out of Stratton’s story. Mifflin states; “Oatman’s tattoos highlight the threat posed to white Christian society by the experience of captivity...[Stratton reassures] audiences of the unassailable nature of gendered and radicalized identity, even within the extreme conditions of Indian captivity.”<sup>458</sup> Even though she is tattooed her tattoo is a symbol of the Other, not of herself. Her Mohave tattoos are captives of her story.

Olive’s descriptions of tattoos among the Mohave are fairly brief. On her experience of getting tattooed Olive states;

We had seen them do this to some of their female children, and we had often conversed with each other, about expressing the hope that we should be spared from receiving their marks upon us. I ventured to plead with them for a few moments, that they would not put those ugly marks upon our faces...they knew why we objected to it; that we expected to return to the whites, and we would be ashamed of it then; but that it was their resolution we should never return, and that as we belonged to them we should wear their “Kie- e- chook.” They said further, that if we should get away, and they should find us among other tribes, or, if some other tribe should steal us, they would by this means know us.<sup>459</sup>

In the text the tattoo is thus described as a mark of ownership, of captivity rather than freedom. Olive claims; “the process was somewhat painful... they and given us a different mark from the one worn by their own females- as we saw- but the same with which they

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<sup>458</sup> Jennifer Putzi “Capturing Identity in Ink: The Captivities of Olive Oatman,” 179.

<sup>459</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 134-135.

marked all their own captives.”<sup>460</sup> This excused the probable reality that Olive chose to be tattooed; “tribal elder Llewellyn Barrackman believed that Olive, like most Mohave females, chose to be tattooed, because, he said, the tribe never forced the tattoos on anyone.”<sup>461</sup> Mifflin points out that she did not physically resist her tattoos as shown by their neatness, though lack of physical resistance is not a useful measure of consent.

The Mohave did not tattoo slaves in such a manner, and Olives tattoos are like those that Mohave women had. Moreover, Mohave captives were not thought of as prisoners in the same way as white people were used to considering prisoners; “the Mohaves took captives- usually women and children- to employ as laborers or savor as symbols of victory. But the term they used to describe them, *ahwe*, meant “stranger” or “enemy,” not “slave” or “captive.””<sup>462</sup> Captives were expected to assimilate and could easily become a part of the group.

Among the Mohave, tattoos were more symbolic for women than men, and it was an honour to receive them; “most boys had decorative facial tattoos.... Tattoos were much more consequential for women, who received them on the chin between puberty and marriage so that they could reach the land of the dead to greet their relatives.”<sup>463</sup> That Olive had these tattoos shows that she hoped to meet either her white or Mohave family in the afterlife.

Her tattoo also somewhat aided her re-assimilation into white society. It would be easy to consider her a captive of Stratton, but she certainly had agency that was afforded to her by her tattoo. Her tattoo made her an expert on her experiences. Stratton took the siblings to New York to release the third edition of *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* in 1858. Stratton booked himself to lecture at the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, and brought Olive and Lorenzo as support. By 1859 the roles reversed, and he became the support act. Olive was far more popular and a better public speaker than Stratton. She “was

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<sup>460</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 134.

<sup>461</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 78.

<sup>462</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 57.

<sup>463</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 47.

presenting a kind of educational freak show in churches and schools.”<sup>464</sup> Her tattoos gave her the freedom of speech; she lectured. Her tattoos are expressions of freedom because she could be temporarily Mohave, and then re-join her society perhaps in an even freer role than she would have had as an unremarkable unmarked woman.

The aesthetics of Olive’s tattoos have been little studied in academic writings. To a white person in the mid-nineteenth century, the angular design with its lines, crosses, and points, could seem like the bars of prisons. This is often how such tattoos were read (such as in *Typee*), as imprisoning. However the link between prison bars and tattoos was not explicitly made in the book. The girls themselves are often referred to as imprisoned, but Olive is not referred to as imprisoned by her tattoos. The placing of Olive’s tattoos may also have been read as masculinizing; from a distance they could be seen as a beard; they cover the chin. In this way she is gender/queered by her tattoos.

This link would have been entirely contextual. Mohave men didn’t grow much facial hair and the Mohave would not have made the link between facial hair as masculine and chin tattoos. When, at the same time that Olive lived among the Mohave, Whipple’s party met a number of Mohave, the Mohave found their facial hair interesting; “unaccustomed to hairy faces, the women thought the beards made the men look like talking vaginas.”<sup>465</sup> For the Mohave white men’s beards gender/queered them.

### **Gendering Tattoos.**

Indigenous clothing, nakedness and tattooing are shown to be both captivity and freedom in the narrative. Wildness is linked with the freedom to fulfil desires, and nakedness and indigenous dress is linked to wildness. Nevertheless, this nakedness and these desires are described as morally objectionable and un-consensual towards Olive and Mary Ann; in the text nakedness and tattooing are forms of captivity for them.

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<sup>464</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 164.

<sup>465</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 88.

For example, when most of the Oatman family is massacred both Lorenzo and Stratton link the skins that the Apache wear to wildness. The Apaches who attack the Oatman family are described as having “borrowed” their clothing from “wild beasts.” Stratton describes Apache dress as “shocking and indecent.” Both their dress and their nakedness are read as freeing, though this is not a good thing. Freedom is juxtaposed against civilization in this instance; although the Apache are free to express their desires- to be naked and murderous- this is a bad thing. Particularly for a Methodist reverend, too much freedom was a bad thing.

Olive and Mary Ann are quickly un-civilized by being un-clothed when they are captured by the Apache. The article in the *Los Angeles Star* that was written before Stratton’s text claims that as soon as her and her sister were captured, Olive and Marry Ann are stripped of nearly all their clothing.<sup>466</sup> This is not so in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, wherein their Christian clothes are slowly removed, first their shoes and scarves are taken by the Apache, then they are given beads, then they are illustrated bare chested wearing skirts. It reads as a striptease perhaps. The Mohave are also described as wearing little. They are “barkclad, where clad at all, the scarcity of their covering indicated either a warm climate or a great destitution of the clothing material, or- something else!”<sup>467</sup> It is the “something else” which is of most interest to me.

How Olive and Mary Ann were clothed when living with the Mohave is not mentioned in the text until near the end, wherein Olive is confronted by white society and apparently realises her own indecency. She comes to Fort Yuma in “bark skirts” and, as described by Stratton, “with her characteristic modesty, was unwilling to appear in her bark attire and her poor shabby dress, among the whites.”<sup>468</sup> Modest is an essential characteristic of Olive and of whiteness that can survive indigenous nakedness. Yet modesty of such is only relevant when she is in contact with white society; nakedness itself is not immodest, the body is not immodest, but nineteenth century white North American society made it so. However, despite the text itself mostly avoiding discussing the girl’s nakedness, the illustrations that

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<sup>466</sup> “Olive Oatman the Apache Captive,” *Los Angeles Star*, 19/04/1856 [accessed 10/10/17].

<sup>467</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 120.

<sup>468</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 198.

accompany the text do not. The publisher “boldly printed illustrations of nubile bare-breasted Olive dressed only in a bark skirt.”<sup>469</sup>

Clothing, in particular the bark skirt, rich and varied meanings for the Mohave in the text too. The bark skirt was a sign of indigenous femininity for the Mohave as well as for whites; Will Roscoe claims that the alyha [trans/feminine people] underwent a gender-ritual in which the bark skirt was a central figure.<sup>470</sup> Clothing is also relevant to Mohave spirituality:

There was once a flood in ancient time that covered all the world but that mountain, and all the present races were merged then in one family, and this family was saved from the general deluge by getting upon that mountain... after the water subsided, of the family took all the cattle and our kind of clothing and went north...another part of this family took deer skins and bark, and from these the Indians came. They held that this ancient family were all of red complexion until the progenitor of the whites stole; then he was turned white.<sup>471</sup>

Olive claims that the Apaches thought that white people “had evil assistance, which made them great and powerful.”<sup>472</sup> Western white clothing is a signifier of deviance for the Mohave. It was a misdeed by whites that created whiteness; the original people were all of a “red complexion.” This shows that to the Mohave whiteness was not central or standard. It is visible. Mary Ann and Olive are also usually the objects of focus, hyper visible, in the images accompanying their narrative.

In an image in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* entitled “Arrival of Olive at Fort Yuma” she is depicted as pale and wearing a full light-coloured dress. In this image she is also not tattooed. In the second edition in the same titled-image Olive is welcomed wearing a bark skirt and her upper body is bare. This shows that the reader, the imperial gaze, was more interested in indigenous sexuality than in Christian modesty.

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<sup>469</sup> Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California*, 72.

<sup>470</sup> by Will Roscoe in *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 141.

<sup>471</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 129.

<sup>472</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 104.



Fig. 7. Untitled, by Charles and Arthur Nahl in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, 3<sup>rd</sup> e.d. (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1859).

In the image figured above, Olive and Mary Ann sit talking underneath a tree. Even though they are under the tree, they are bathed in light and the rest of the image is in shadow. Mary Ann would have been eight years old but nevertheless she has fairly sizable breasts. A dark man peeps at them from behind the tree on which they lean- he is both dark and in the shadows, with short hair and what appears to be some facial hair, neither of which were characteristic of Mohave.<sup>473</sup> The girls are vulnerable, sexualized and shining a white light on their surroundings. However, Susan Thompson's memoir claimed that when Olive arrived at Fort Yuma she appeared dark and indigenous:

'Oh, I told you it was a parcel of Indian lies,' exclaimed the major as he saw the girl.

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<sup>473</sup> Patricia Janis Broder, *Shadows on Glass: The Indian World of Ben Wittick* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990), 84.



'Look, here!' cried Carpenter, as he turned back her ear, disclosing the white skin behind it.<sup>474</sup>

She did not appear white. This is supported in the text of *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*. When Lorenzo met Olive again after her rescue at Fort Yuma, Stratton writes; "she was grown to womanhood; she was changed, but despite the written traces of her outdoor life and barbarous treatment left upon her appearance and in person, he could read the assuring evidences of her family identity."<sup>475</sup> Olive's skin was read as dark and along with her tattoos and indigenous dress she appeared indigenous. Her dress could be easily changed, whereas her tattoo "registers as a mark of permanent violation, unlike her Mohave wardrobe, which signalled only temporary membership."<sup>476</sup>

An engraved portrait of Olive from the waist up, tattoo very visible, was moved from the back of the first edition to the front of editions two and three. Jennifer Putzi notes that in newspaper articles and in advertisements her tattoos were the focus; the Evansville Enquirer stated "she will bear the marks of her captivity to her grave."<sup>477</sup> After she was returned to Fort Yuma, Olive and Lorenzo moved to Gassberg (now Phoenix) where they worked in their cousin Harrison's hotel. A patron said "she had her face, mouth and chin all tattooed, and her features had a regular Indian cast, and not knowing who she was, [I] would have taken her for a half breed squaw; her complexion, form, and features had become so by their habits and diet and mode of living."<sup>478</sup>

In the image wherein Mary Ann has just died Olive holds Mary Ann's hand. Again, both girls are bare breasted and again Mary Ann, who would have been around ten years old when she died, has larger and more visible breasts than Olive. In neither picture are Olive's nipples drawn, though Mary Ann's are. Perhaps this was to preserve the modesty of the living. The white girls are also drawn as very light against the darker people and huts that surround

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<sup>474</sup> Susan Thompson Lewis, "Following the Pot of Gold at the Rainbow's End in the Days of 1850," The Huntington Library Collection, San Marino, California.

<sup>475</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 201.

<sup>476</sup> Royal B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, 3rd ed. 144.

<sup>477</sup> Jennifer Putzi "Capturing Identity in Ink: The Captivities of Olive Oatman" 178.

<sup>478</sup> Quoted by Margot Mifflin in *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 128.

them. Christopher Castiglia states that in captivity narratives the white female body became a national symbol; “to the degree that the captive resists taking on the attributes of their captors, she represents the impermeable, defensive borders of the white, Anglo nation.”<sup>479</sup> These images support this idea of impermeable whiteness, but not impermeable sexuality.

These images differ greatly from the images in the 1935 printing of the text, done by Harold Malette Dean, which do not picture the naked bodies of the girls. The engravings are also very dark, and picture all of the figures as black. This both un-sexualizes the girls whilst creating the illusion of ‘colour blindness,’ reinforced by the fact that indigenous men are pictured as having short hair and beards which was not typical of Mohave men.

There is a tension between her tattoo as a useful signifier of her experiences, and something that has been hidden, throughout her life. She tended to cover her chin with her hand when she met new people, which came across as suitable shame of her tattoos, but it was also a Mohave gesture to indicate embarrassment.<sup>480</sup> Although her tattoos made both her and the book successful, neither girl is depicted with their tattoos in any of Charles and Arthur Nahls drawings. The image of Olive, that opens the second and third editions of the text appears on and just inside the front cover of a 1859 digitalized re-print, but the chin tattoo has been rubbed out- there are quite obvious white patches on the chin where the tattoo was.<sup>481</sup>

This may be because of the link between Olive’s tattoos and her sexualisation. They are a sign of deviant sexuality, despite the text asserting that Olive was not violated sexually. Mifflin states; “it would have sealed her doom as a perpetual outsider and, sexually, as hopelessly damaged goods” if she had been perceived as having sexual contact with indigenous people, whether consensually or raped.<sup>482</sup> Olive attests that she has no sexual relationships with any indigenous people; “I considered my age, my sex, my exposure, and was again in trouble- though to the honour of these savages, let it be said they never offered

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<sup>479</sup> Christopher Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patter Hearst* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 9.

<sup>480</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 128.

<sup>481</sup> Royal B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, 3rd ed. (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1859).

<sup>482</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 72.

the least unchaste abuse to me.”<sup>483</sup> Mifflin draws the parallel between this sentence and a sentence in *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) “not one of them ever offered the least abuse of un-chastity to me, in word or action.”<sup>484</sup>

This was probably true; as a general rule indigenous people in North America were wary of being physically close to white people as so many died due to coming into contact with white diseases. Olive also had some interesting nicknames recorded. Some were phonetic or family based; “Ali” or “Aliútman” a variation on Oatman, “Olivino” and “Oach” the clan name of her Mohave family. She was also nicknamed ““Spansa,” which meant “rotten vagina” or “sore vagina.””<sup>485</sup> This may have referred to her undesirability among the Mohave, or her hygiene (Mohave considered Westerners unhygienic) or her sexual exploits. It is worth noting that this name was recorded by a different indigenous group, a Yuma person, and may have been an insult. It was unlikely to have been an insult for the Mohave, for whom it would have been a light-hearted jest; her nicknames prove assimilation rather than insult.<sup>486</sup> Nevertheless, it was unlikely that she was forced into any sexual relationships. Importantly the converse was true in considering indigenous/white relationships; “white assaults on Indian women were common in the mining districts where Stratton had been a missionary.”<sup>487</sup>

Although Olive attests that she did not enter into sexual relationships, she does claim to witness them, to her horror. After the Mohave win the battle against the Cocopa, they have a feast, at which, Olive/Stratton<sup>488</sup> claims; “I witnessed some of the most shameful indecencies, on the part of both male and female, that came to my eye for the five years of my stay among Indians.”<sup>489</sup> As a voyeur rather than a participant, Olive can be witness to depravity and disapprove without tarnishing her reputation. Despite her body being visually and permanently touched by Mohave tattoos, crossing the borders of her sexuality was a

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<sup>483</sup> Royal B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, 3rd ed., 168.

<sup>484</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 148.

<sup>485</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 148.

<sup>486</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 74.

<sup>487</sup> Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California*, 71.

<sup>488</sup> I sometimes use “Olive/Stratton” rather than “Olive” or “Stratton,” to draw attention to the instability of the narrator. It is both Olive’s Story and Stratton’s.

<sup>489</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 204.

step too far for the text. The tattoo could hint at touching and at vulnerability, but the text also explicitly denied Olive partaking in sexual contact with indigenous people. This is not to assert that Olive necessarily had a sexual relationship with anyone at all, she was after all just a child of twelve when she first lived with the Mohave, but to say that the text and context mean that this aspect of her experience was uncertain. There is a freedom for Olive in this not-knowing. If Olive was written as having had sexual relationships with indigenous people she would have found assimilating with whites difficult, perhaps impossible.

### ***“All flesh”***

It was a necessary part of colonization to view indigenous North Americans as less than human. Stratton’s text dehumanizes indigenous people, particularly when written through Lorenzo’s perspective. Lorenzo would have been old enough to better remember his family being murdered, and he certainly had no close personal or family relationships with indigenous people like Olive did. Lorenzo was also not marked as Mohave. He could view indigenous people as completely different to himself, whilst Olive lived with the Mohave and had Mohave tattoos; she could understand how people were the same.

After the Oatman massacre Lorenzo describes the Apaches as “brutal savages and human shaped demons!” He observes that they wear animals skins “as if to furnish an appropriate badge of their savage nature and design.”<sup>490</sup> The clothing of the Apache is used as a sign of their inhumanity. Lorenzo refers to their clothing as a badge, which, unlike a tattoo, is not a permanent thing, but it is a proud thing. Badges communicate achievements or messages, and are thought of as items of honour. The word ‘design’ is also curious, as it indicates that God designed indigenous people to be savage, but also that the group’s designs, of murdering the family, are also savage. This creates a situation of moral freedom and captivity- if the Apache were made by God to be savage, to be wild like animals, then their choice to behave as such is not their responsibility. The Apache are captive to their savagery. This means that the indigenous North American could not be converted or changed, indicating that genocide could be a moral solution.

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<sup>490</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 80.

Although Olive is far more forgiving, some sections of the text from Olive's perspective reassert racist stereotypes about indigenous people. Olive reiterates many, many times that both the Mohave and Apache are lazy, that their way of farming and living is inferior, and that white society is superior in all ways. This is far from true; indigenous Americans have been described as the "first farmers," and over half of the crops the world now utilizes originated in the Americas.<sup>491</sup> Further, we must remember that in the interview with the Los Angeles Star Olive claimed to have been well fed.

Even when describing the Apache, who apparently treated Olive and Mary Ann badly, Olive does not consistently link them to animals or describe them in the same consistently derogatory way Lorenzo does. However, she does say that they "ate worms, grasshoppers, reptiles, *all flesh*, and were perhaps, living exhibitions of a certain theory by which the nature of the animal it eats leaves its imprint upon the man or human being who devours it."<sup>492</sup> Later, with the Apache Olive and her sister are given meagre parcels of meat, and it is not often clarified what kind of meat it is.

The text does not often make use of italics, and so *all flesh* is poignant. Cannibalism is a more powerful and central theme in *Typee* and *Torrey's Narrative*, however in North American colonial consciousness indigenous North and South Americans practised cannibalism. In this way, food and the lack thereof, or the kind of food that Olive eats is shown to make the Mohave and Apache immoral in a more general way. Olive's tattoos were around her mouth, and when she first returned to white society she spoke Mohave far more fluently than English. Her tattoo could be read as an imprint of what she had consumed, whether sexual or, as we will now discover, cannibal. This peep at cannibalism, at the consummation of peculiar flesh, at the desire for *all flesh* can be read as a peep at peculiar genders/sexuality.

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<sup>491</sup> Theron Douglas Price and Anne Birgitte Gebauer, *Last hunters, first farmers: new perspectives on the prehistoric transition to agriculture* (New Mexico: School of American Research Press, 1995).

<sup>492</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 98.

The Mohave declare war on another indigenous group, the Cochopa's. Olive is told she will be sacrificed when the first person of the Mohave is slain, which was not a Mohave war practise.<sup>493</sup> The Mohave did not use sacrifice of humans as a spiritual or war practise at all and it is an odd though poignant allusion from an imperial perspective. The allusion is poignant since Methodists considered sacrifice as virtue; to sacrifice comfort, stability and safety for God showed spiritual strength. However, as Jeffrey Williams states; "through this sense of sacrifice holiness advocates retained violent discourse, though their sacrificial language had little relation to a person's bodily experiences."<sup>494</sup> It seems that this section of the text has little relation to real bodily experience and more of a relationship to metaphor and doctrine.

Luckily for the fictional Olive, the Mohave win the battle with no loss of life, and take in four captives. Olive observes that one of the captives, Nowereha is "a handsome, fair complexioned young woman, of about twenty-five years of age. She was as beautiful an Indian woman as I have ever seen; tall graceful and lady-like in her appearance. She had a fairer, lighter skin than the Mohaves or the other Cocopa captives."<sup>495</sup> Olive links beauty and civility to the lightness of her skin. Because of this she is an 'Other,' who can represent whiteness, and therefore Mohave threat to whiteness. Nowereha is in particular grief for a husband and child who escaped. She howls and cries and attempts to escape. This grief and how it is presented are a familiar image;, since Olive herself was rumoured to be grieving for her Mohave children and a husband and determined to escape back to them.

When Nowereha attempts to escape and is captured, she is given a crown of thorns and nailed to a cross. This is almost certainly a falsification. Mohave have never been known to crucify prisoners, or to treat them badly; women and children as prisoners of war were usually expected to integrate and increase the population.<sup>496</sup> Olive describes; "she hung in this dreadful condition for over two hours ere I was certain she was dead, all the while

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<sup>493</sup> Jeffrey Williams, *Religion and Violence in Early American Methodism: Taking the Kingdom by Force* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 153.

<sup>494</sup> Jeffrey Williams, *Religion and Violence in Early American Methodism: Taking the Kingdom by Force*, 153.

<sup>495</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 161.

<sup>496</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 141.

bleeding and sighing, her body mangled in the most shocking manner.”<sup>497</sup> Olive looked on with the remaining Cochopa captives.

What was the purpose of this image? Mifflin claims that it would explain why Olive never tried to escape. After the incident Olive resolves to remain among the Mohave. I think it’s also a complicated image that further justifies colonization and promotes Christianity. Stratton could not have placed a white person on that cross, nor a Mohave- that could make the Mohave sympathetic or show that they were only a threat to themselves. He also could not put a man on that cross- the image would be too close to the image it referenced; Jesus on the cross. Further, captivity narratives were used to define white masculinity and white violence as morally superior. Men killing men was encouraged, but men killing women could still be viewed with ethical white superiority. He therefore fabricated a white mother out of a neighbouring tribe, and killed her. It is an ultimate damning event in the text. It is most likely that by killing her on the cross Stratton was deliberately trying to sensationalise, shock his white Christian readers.

### **Gender Honour.**

*The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* was written at a turning point in how Methodist teachings considered gender. In the early nineteenth century Methodism had lauded women’s social contributions, but by the end of the nineteenth century they encouraged piety and domesticity.<sup>498</sup> Olive’s narrative is pious and encourages and lauds domesticity, but also was written with the mind to make a social contribution to the Methodist church. This is perhaps why Stratton and Lorenzo’s voices are more dominant in the text, and why Lorenzo claims to have requested it be written. Olive was the person whose experience was of most interest, but it still encouraged piety and domesticity through her by making her an incidental hero.

From the beginning of the text the Oatman family are presented as the paragon of white, Christian, normative-binary gender embodiments. Mrs Mary Ann Oatman, the mother of the

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<sup>497</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 165.

<sup>498</sup> William J. Abraham, James E. Kirby, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

family, was “ abundantly qualified to make her husband happy, and his home an attraction. She was sedate, confiding, and affectionate.”<sup>499</sup> Her best qualities are as a wife and as a homemaker. The idea of homemaker has particular resonance here; the whole family, and indeed the whole nation, were creating a national home. Mothers and their place within this were to be stable and compliant.

Stratton and Lorenzo attempt to protect the patriarchal family structure in how they consider Royce Oatman, but are barely successful. After all, his decisions lead to the massacre. Lorenzo describes Royce as;

...a medium sized man...in the very prime of life/ Forty-one winters had scarcely been able to plough the first furrow of age upon his manly cheek...[from his boyhood he thought] nothing within all the circuit of habitable earth should be left out of the field of his ever curious and prying vision.<sup>500</sup>

Unlike his wife, his thoughts are less about home- finding a place to settle and live, and more about adventure and conquering. In another version of his life he may well have absconded from a ship in the Marquesas alongside Melville or Torrey. Prying, curiously, into all habitable earth is certainly a good description of colonialism and the imperial gaze, though whether this passage or indeed this book is suggesting that this is a good thing is debatable. Whilst the curiosity of exploration is a good characteristic for the North American colonial man, Royce leads his family to danger because of it.

Lorenzo in particular is defensive of his father and describes him as noble, stoic and brave. The beginning section of the text which is written in Lorenzo’s perspective explains that they would have died of starvation had they not chosen to travel alone, and that it was a brave and valiant thing to have set out from Maricopa that day. They were after all Brewsterites. Their journey was not just to find a home, but to find a spiritual home in a promised land. Royce likely considered he and his family protected by God.

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<sup>499</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 5.

<sup>500</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2.



Royce's contemporaries however considered him corruptly foolish. Max Greene, an outsider who joined the Oatman's travelling party part way through, described Royce as "a fine fellow enough in most respect, but sinfully reckless, and... a most dangerous companion on the Grand Prairie."<sup>501</sup> His decision to travel through dangerous territory alone was not just unwise but sinful, spiritually wrong.

Despite Royce Oatman's wrecklessness, the commander of Fort Yuma, Samuel P. Heintzelman, was partly blamed for the Oatman massacre; he had ignored a cry for help a few days before the murder. Because of this he had good reason to try and shift the blame. Nevertheless he believed that "Royce Oatman got what was coming to him...Oatman was of an obstinate & contrary disposition & would take advice from no one"" he claimed.<sup>502</sup> Albert L. Hurtado, describes Royce Oatman as "the most dangerous of western traveling companions- a man of little experience, strong opinions, and some persuasive ability."<sup>503</sup> It seems that the Oatman family were in some ways captives of Royce.

Mifflin states "Like Melville's hero, Ishmael, Olive had survived an epic journey, led by a man, her father, every bit as monomaniacal as Ahab in his determination to push as far into the unknown as he wanted."<sup>504</sup> This is certainly a different reading of Royce than that outlined in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, which hints at Royce's hubris whilst also praising and defending him. The patriarchal father role can also be cast into doubt, aporia, using context.

*The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* writes Royce as mistaken but righteous, and emphasizes indigenous men as dangerous. Royce as a religious man on a religious journey is the unlucky hero in the good/evil dichotomy set up by the massacre. This danger is both violent and sexual.

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<sup>501</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 36.

<sup>502</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 60.

<sup>503</sup> Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California*, 68.

<sup>504</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 81.



Fig. 8. "The Massacre," by Charles and Arthur Nahl in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, 3<sup>rd</sup> e.d. (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1859).

In the third edition of *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* an engraving shows the scene of the massacre. Dark men with short hair and hooked noses (looking very little like Mohave men) ransack the Oatmans caravan. In the foreground a person who I assume to be Lorenzo has been pushed to the ground, an indigenous man holds Lorenzo's hand and raises his club, about to strike Lorenzo. Mrs Mary Ann Oatman (not pictured as pregnant though she probably was) is kneeling, a child wraps their arms around her neck, and she holds her hand out to the three indigenous men holding clubs around her as if to stay 'stop.' A girl in the background (who may be Olive) is on her knees, hands clasped and raised in desperate prayer as an indigenous man holds her hair and raises a club. It is a somewhat sexual image, though not as suggestive as that at the front of the frame. A man is lying on his side the floor, facing away from the viewer. An indigenous man stands over him, bending over to apparently go through his pockets though it appears that he is inspecting his genitals. The indigenous man's hands are between the fallen man's thighs, appearing to pry them apart. The indigenous men are portrayed as both violent and sexually aggressive.

In this engraving the Oatmans are wearing white and are fully dressed. They are only differentiated by whether they are wearing skirts or jackets. White gender relationships in the text are shown to be natural, honourable and modest. Royce Oatman is the strong

willed home-finder and Mrs Mary Ann Oatman is the compliant homemaker. Ana Mar'a Alonso states that the conquest of North American indigenous groups "had to be grounded in a logic of difference that made the colonists ontologically superior to the colonized. This was achieved by constructing Apache identity in terms of *only* the natural dimension of gender honour."<sup>505</sup> Stratton's text portrays indigenous men as being dishonourable in their gender-relationships. Olive states that the Apache:

Were disbelievers in the propriety of treating female youth to meat, or of allowing it to become their article of subsistence; which, considering their main reliance as a tribe upon game, was equal to dooming their females to starvation...their own female children frequently died, and those alive, old and young, were sickly and dwarfish generally."<sup>506</sup>

This over-masculinizes the Apache men by showing their unequivocal dominance. To a white society which proclaims 'women and children first,' the assertion that they would be last on the food chain suggests the men to be cruel. Further, the eating of meat itself can also be linked to violence and masculinity, which further affirms masculine cruelty.<sup>507</sup> Stratton portrays the division of labour amongst the Apache as another indication of barbarism;

Their women were *the* labourers, and principle burden bearers, and during all our captivity," says Olive, "it was our lot to serve under these enslaved women, with a severity more intolerable than that by which they were subjected to their merciless lords...they had the frankness soon to confess, to fume their hate against the race to whom we belonged."<sup>508</sup>

Women being written as cruel appeases the imperial ideology of white supremacy, but women as powerful would not. Stratton therefore claims that the women of the group were enslaved; they were not free within their community. This is a misinterpretation. Whilst there was some differentiation between how different genders built or maintained Apache culture, these roles could be fluid and certainly neither was thought of as better or worse. In general "women gathered and prepared food and, with their children, harvested the meagre

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<sup>505</sup> Ana Mar'a Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), 94.

<sup>506</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 97.

<sup>507</sup> Nick Fiddles, *Meat: A Natural Symbol* (London: Routledge, 2004), 110.

<sup>508</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 98.

crops; men hunted, guarded the camp, dressed skins, built huts, and sometimes farmed.”<sup>509</sup> Although women appeared to be more continuously occupied, generally men took on more dangerous roles.<sup>510</sup> This was considered fair.

Gender roles could also be more fluid than this. Women could become warriors, and people could be transgender.<sup>511</sup> Romantic relationships were fluid and quite the opposite of enslaving; women could separate from their partners easily. The Apache viewed women as far from inferior; they were “respected, protected, cherished and admired in Apache society.”<sup>512</sup> Perhaps that is one reason why women were able, so easily and without controversy, to move between the domestic role and the warrior role. Quite the opposite of being enslaved by a patriarchy as Stratton presents, Apache genders and roles were free when compared to the colonial Methodist gender roles modelled by Royce and Mary Ann Oatman. Imperial binary genders and gender roles held and hold many people captive. Context in this case casts the logocentrism of imperial gender roles being better than indigenous ones into aporia.

In Stratton’s text gender relationships amongst the Mohave are slightly more forgiving. Mary Ann and Olive live with a group leader, Espianola (indigenous name Kohot), a person that Olive perceives to be his wife, Aespaneo, and their daughter, Topeka. In the text Topeka goes by her original Mohave name, whilst Espianola and his partner go by Mexican names, suggesting that they had previously had some significant contact with Mexican colonists. Olive describes Espianola as “a tall, strongly built man, active and generally happy. He seemed to possess a mildness of disposition and to maintain a gravity and seriousness in deportment that was rare among them.”<sup>513</sup> He is quite the opposite of Royce, who is described in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* as in poor health but playful.

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<sup>509</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 46.

<sup>510</sup> Elizabeth M. Scott, *Those of Little Note: Gender, Race, and Class in Historical Archaeology* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 60.

<sup>511</sup> Spotted Eagle, quoted by Nancy Cook in *Gender Relations in Global Perspective: Essential Readings* (Ontario: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 2007), 41. R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 60.

<sup>512</sup> John P. Williams, *Against the Wind: Courageous Apache Women* (New York: Page Publishing, 2015), 17.

<sup>513</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 171.

Olive becomes particularly close to Aespaneo and Topeka. She belongs with Mohave women in particular; her femininity is a part of her identity. It was mostly women who got facial tattoos, they are peculiar to Mohave women whether transgender or not. The tattoos do not just mark her as belonging to the Mohave, but belonging as a woman. Olive describes Topeka as “a beautiful, mild, and sympathizing woman.”<sup>514</sup> When Mary Ann dies Aespaneo “sobbed, she moaned, she howled.”<sup>515</sup> Aespaneo brings Olive some gruel and shows her kindness, saving her from starvation, even when others in her Mohave family were starving. Olive concludes; “from this circumstance, I learned to chide my hasty judgement against ALL the Indian race, and also, that kindness is not always a stranger to the untutored and untamed bosom.”<sup>516</sup> However, in the text this love from and towards the Mohave women does not defend the Mohave or indigenous people as a whole, far from it.

The humanizing of the Aespaneo and Topeka is used to further de-humanize the men, therefore the Mohave as a whole, and by extension other indigenous people. On the gruelling trek from the Apache to Mohave land, the Mohave “habits of barbarousness could not bend to courtesy even towards those of rank. She [Topeka] had walked the whole distance to the Apaches, carrying a role of blankets, while two horses were rode by two stalwart, healthy Mohave’s by her side.”<sup>517</sup> Rather than reading this as a show of strength, Stratton writes it as a show of inferiority and cruelty. Topeka obviously had status and power within the group- she is the person who first bargains for and collects Olive and Mary Ann from the Apache. Her role within the community is not explicitly discussed, and it may well have been that she was a warrior, and was either expected to or happy to be travelling long distances on foot.

Further, in the interview in the Los Angeles Star, written soon after Olive returned to white society, Olive, speaking of herself and Mary Ann’s initial arduous journey with the Apache, states that when Mary Ann could go on no longer “the Indians carried her in her arms.”<sup>518</sup> Whether or not this is a poor turn of phrase, it suggests that it may have been a woman

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<sup>514</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 110.

<sup>515</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 142

<sup>516</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 147.

<sup>517</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 119.

<sup>518</sup> “Olive Oatman the Apache Captive,” *Los Angeles Star*, 19/04/1856 [accessed 10/10/17].

carrying Mary Ann, showing that care, nurturing and enduring physical strength can be feminine for the Apache.

### Home-Body.

Home is meant to be a place where one is free to live as one wants to, though of course this is not always the case; most gender based violence takes place in the home. In *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* the Oatman family travels thousands of miles on foot, “seeking a home.”<sup>519</sup> At the beginning of Stratton’s text Lorenzo states that the band of colonists wanted to “form a new settlement remote from the prejudices, pride, arrogance and caste” that they perceived in the Midwest.<sup>520</sup> There is some irony in this. The text writes indigenous people from a perspective of imperial prejudice and hierarchy. Pride and arrogance influence Royce’s fateful judgement in leading his family through dangerous territory alone. Further, the family seek a home where it is already a home to indigenous people. Eventually the Mohave lost their home. In 1865 half of the group moved to a reservation in Arizona, and by 1859 their area was no longer written into maps.<sup>521</sup>

When the Apache captured Mary Ann and Olive the sisters are still seeking or yearning for some kind of new home. Although the time with the Apache is meant to be a time of only subjugation and suffering, after the demanding walk to the Apache camp Olive states; “nevertheless to get even into an Indian camp was home.”<sup>522</sup> Once the sisters had learnt some of the Apache language, Olive and Mary Ann “told them of the distance we had come to reach our home among them, they greatly marvelled.”<sup>523</sup> This section is particularly poignant; they consider the Apache land home at the same time as they can speak in their language. In speaking the language of the group with which they live, they become at home. Understanding is homely.

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<sup>519</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2.

<sup>520</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 14

<sup>521</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 181.

<sup>522</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 95.

<sup>523</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 105.

Upon arriving in Mohave valley Mary Ann says; “Oh isn’t it a beautiful valley? It seems to me I should like to live here”” Olive responds “”Maybe,” said [Olive], “that you will not want to go back to the whites any more.”<sup>524</sup> This makes the Mohave land appealing to white settlers. Within the Mohave group the sisters are even more at home. Olive claims; “I could hardly wake up to the reality of so long a captivity among savages, and really imagined myself happy for short periods.”<sup>525</sup>

Nevertheless, Olive never does feel truly at home with the Mohave. Home is not just where you are, but who you are with, and within the text and according to Stratton Olive does not consider the Mohave kin. When Mary Ann dies it is Stratton’s voice that takes over the narrative, in third person. Stratton writes that Olive would gladly, “if it had been in her power, have gathered the few mouldering remains of that loved and cherished form, and borne them away to a resting place on some shaded retreat in the soil of her own countrymen.”<sup>526</sup> This sets up a false situation wherein the newly taken North American land is considered somehow different from indigenous land. Olive perpetuated this false sense of spacing herself, beyond the confines of Stratton’s book; in her lectures she asked “the young ladies of this Audience” to “appreciate the word home.”<sup>527</sup>

When she stopped lecturing her fame wore off. She married a farmer-turned-business man named John Brant Fairchild in 1865 and did community and charity work, particularly in orphanages. She was orphaned at a young age herself. In 1873 she adopted a daughter nicknamed Mamie.<sup>528</sup> Olive’s nickname among the Mohave was spansa, which meant “rotton vagina”; perhaps she could not have children of her own. Outwardly she lived a full, busy, and mostly happy life, though she suffered from some mental and physical health problems. In later life she was captive of her body physically more than aesthetically. She had eye problems that she claimed in a letter to her aunt kept her “confined” for six weeks.<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 117.

<sup>525</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 184.

<sup>526</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 193

<sup>527</sup> Jennifer Putzi “Capturing Identity in Ink: The Captivities of Olive Oatman,” 192.

<sup>528</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 182-185.

<sup>529</sup> Olive Oatman “Letter to Sarah Abbott,” 1866, quoted in *The Blue Tattoo* by Margot Mifflin, 212-218.

Mifflin considers Olive a perpetual captive; firstly of her father, then the Mohave. When she was rescued she was quickly “again a captive- this time of her ghostwriter [Stratton].”<sup>530</sup> Her white husband John Brant Fairchild did not like her tattoos nor her story. He “bought and burned every copy of the Oatman book he could find” before their wedding.<sup>531</sup> She died of a heart attack in 1903. “Her obituaries- one in the *Sherman Weekly Democrat* five days later- suggested that her husband was still censoring her story: they made no mention of the Oatman Massacre.”<sup>532</sup> The truths of her tattoos were perpetually captive, whether it was at her behest or her husband’s. Importantly, although tattoos are considered permanent, hers had faded with old age. She apparently mostly wore a veil to conceal them, but also used make up and powders. In a photograph taken of her at forty-two years old her tattoos are not visible.<sup>533</sup> She was no longer peculiar, she was home among whites.

## Conclusion.

*The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* ends with a short poem written for Olive and Lorenzo by a Californian poet called Montbar.

In captive chains whole races have been led,  
But never yet upon one heart did fall  
Misfortune’s hand so heavy. Thy young head  
Has born a nation’s grief’s, its woes, and all  
The serried sorrows which earth’s histories call  
The hand of God.<sup>534</sup>

It is a poem that should perhaps have been written for the indigenous people of what is now North America. The poem claims that Olive’s individual experience of woe is worse than captivities of whole races. Her individual (peculiar) and tattooed head represents all of the grief of the United States. This supports the message of Olive’s suffering justifying colonialism. However, the last two lines of the poem complicate Stratton’s intended

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<sup>530</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 142.

<sup>531</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 183.

<sup>532</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 196.

<sup>533</sup> Olive Oatman, Abbott Collection, Morrison, Illinois.

<sup>534</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 290.



message. It was his intention to portray Olive as an example of Christian redemption, but the end of the poem poses the aporia of God's omnibenevolence and omnipotence. It is by the hand of God that her family was murdered and she was tattooed. The same line could easily have read 'hand of evil' or 'hand of the devil,' but it does not. Her tattoos therefore represent the instability of Christianity, the tension between love and suffering.

Olive's tattoos are captive, and they are free. They are expressions of white freedom and indigenous captivity because they show that white people could transverse ethnic boundaries wherein indigenous people could not. In a letter to her Aunt she stated how happy she was to be engaged to Fairchild, and that she went to a party and met "hundreds of others with pleasing addresses + smiling faces."<sup>535</sup> It seems that she integrated fairly easily into a relatively privileged life who smiled at her tattooed face. This shows that white people could be at home anywhere, and that is a freedom, for whites.

However, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* also contains the subtext of possibilities. Her tattoos could mean love and marriage. They could mean spirituality. She could have had queered sexual relationships, she could have had children. They probably signify that she had a home. The unstable meanings undoes the logocentrism that Olive's tattoos are peculiar marks of captivity.

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Co<sup>535</sup> Olive Oatman "Letter to Sarah Abbott."

## Chapter Four. “Lovers of Flesh”- *Typee, a Peep at Polynesian Life* and *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville.

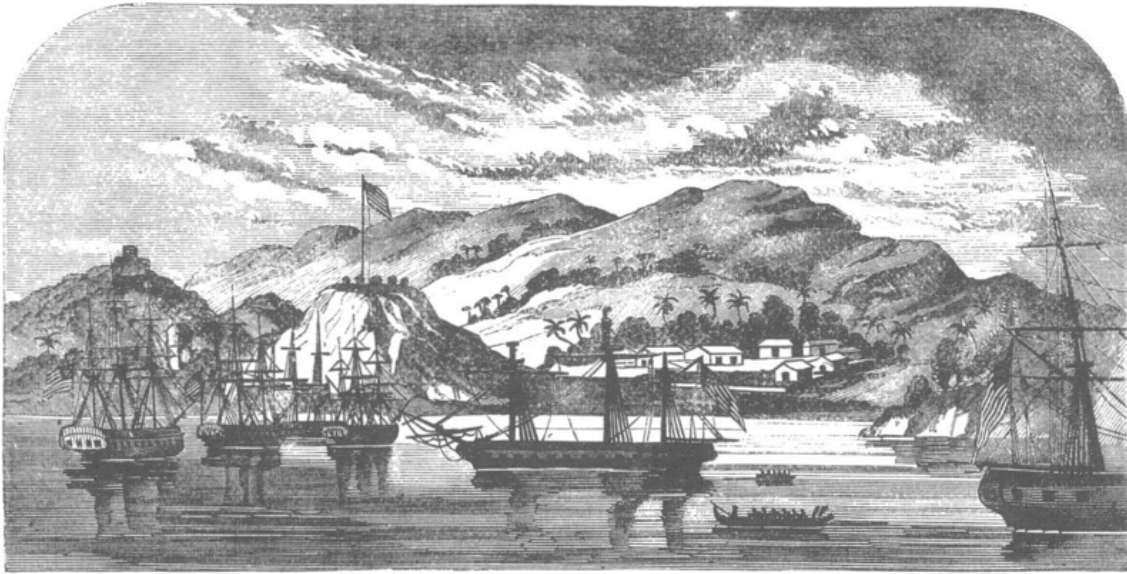


Fig. 9. United States Navy Commodore David Porter's fleet off Nuku Hiva in October 1813.

The image opening this chapter shows six large ships in a Nuku Hivan bay, some with their bows facing the bay, some drifting side on. Commodore David Porter, who lead this expedition, was a captain in the United States Navy. He went to the South Pacific due to the war between the United States and the United Kingdom in 1812. In 1813 Porter captured twelve British whale ships and took three hundred and sixty prisoners.<sup>536</sup> The United States Navy established a base on Nuku Hiva, pictured above. The European style slanted roof houses sit on the land behind the beach, and behind them are trees then mountains. Atop a cliff near the bay is what appears to be a huge American flag on a tall pole. The size of the flag appears out of scale and likely was not so large in reality. The picture suggests that the island has been dominated by the United states; the island itself can only be seen through the ships that overwhelm the picture; the houses and flag show just who has claimed the island; the United States in 1813.

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<sup>536</sup> Eric Jay Dolin, *Leviathan: the history of whaling in America* (New York: Norton, 2007).

In this time the United States went to war with the Happahs and Tai'pi's, the groups on which Herman Melville's *Typee* are based, as a part of the "Nuku Hiva Campaign." The United States Navy joined forces with the other main group on the Island, the Te L'is, at the Te L'is request. The Happahs ceded to the United States- Te L'is coalition, and joined them. The Tai'pis declared war on the three-strong coalition and the force of five thousand North Americans, Te L'is and Happah were defeated by the Tai'Pis in the first battle.<sup>537</sup> The Te L'is and Happahs grew angry at the North Americans, and fearing being massacred Porter and his men successfully defeated the Tai'pis. Porter did not relish this victory, afterwards he claimed the Tai'pis were "happy and heroic people," and the aftermath of the battle was a "scene of desolation and ruin."<sup>538</sup> It is interesting that the Tai'pis then got the reputation as terrible cannibal warriors rather than heroic warriors. Perhaps this was because the Happahs and Te'lis had more contact with colonists and thus could construct Tai'pi reputations.

Porter left after a few months to continue waging war on British whale ships, and left behind a small group of Naval officers, headed by Lieutenant John Gamble, twenty one sailors, some of whom were British, and six British Prisoners.<sup>539</sup> The British sailors mutinied, released the six British prisoners, and left on one of the three remaining ships. The Te L'I attacked and killed most of the remaining sailors, and Nuku Hiva was decolonized for a short period.<sup>540</sup> This incident perhaps shows why the Marquesas were never colonized to the same scale as the United States. The warring groups were large, hostile, and within a close distance of each other. The terrain was difficult to navigate. Like in North America, indigenous groups were not passive and often used colonists in wars against their indigenous enemies.

Despite, or possibly because of the outcome of the war, the Tai'pi's developed a reputation for being fearsome warriors, which transferred into a reputation of being cannibals. The war

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<sup>537</sup> Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 36.

<sup>538</sup> Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, 36-37.

<sup>539</sup> Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, 37.

<sup>540</sup> Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, 38.

also shows the expectation of the violent nature of Tai'pi's in contact with white North Americans, of which Melville was one.

## Herman Melville

A great deal more has been written about Herman Melville's life than Olive Oatman's, and because Melville claimed that *Typee* was autobiographical, his biography is relevant to this reading of the text. Melville was born in New York 1819, the son of a commercial merchant trader called Alan Melville, who provided the family an initially privileged life.<sup>541</sup> Alan lost most of the financial support from his and his wife Maria's families, and, in debt, they moved to Albany. In 1830 Herman went to the Albany Academy, where he learnt Christian and Jewish religious theology, English grammar, and Greek, Roman and natural history. His knowledge of the classics, in particular theology, would influence his writing throughout his life.<sup>542</sup> He was in and out of school over the next seven years, likely due to his family's financial problems.<sup>543</sup> Nevertheless, he was certainly the most educated of the authors whose captivity narratives I discuss. Olive Oatman was a semi-literate teenager when her narrative was written, and as far as his story goes, William Torrey worked in factories in the place of secondary schooling.

Melville's travels were more of a free choice than Oatman or Torrey's. Oatman was a child travelling at the behest of her father, and Torrey considered his choices to be the factory or the sea. Although his family had financial difficulties and he was pulled out of school several times he was very educated; Melville was a schoolteacher for a time before setting his sights on engineering. He returned to teaching but after a term was not paid. He had trouble finding work, and, likely inspired by other successful books about seafaring life (such as Richard Henry Dana Jr.'s *Two Years Before the Mast*), he found work on board the *Acushnet*,

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<sup>541</sup> Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography, Volume 1; Volumes 1819-1851*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005) 22. Laurie Robertson-Lorant, *Melville: A Biography* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 28.

<sup>542</sup> Merton M. Sealts, *Pursuing Melville, 1940-1980: Chapters and Essays* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 18, 38.

<sup>543</sup> Merton M. Sealts, *Pursuing Melville, 1940-1980: Chapters and Essays*, 18.

the whaler on which *Typee* and *Moby Dick* would be based.<sup>544</sup> Melville set sail on his first whaling voyage in 1841, and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1842 the ship docked at Nuku Hiva.<sup>545546</sup> He and his shipmate Richard Tobias Greene absconded, and, according to Melville and Greene, they hid in the mountains to avoid capture then dwelt among the Tai'pi's, a group of indigenous islanders, for four weeks.<sup>547</sup>

*Typee* documents the adventures of a sailor named Tom who absconds from a whaling vessel with a young sailor named Toby. Tom is injured, and Toby goes mysteriously missing in an attempt to get help. Tom lives amongst a group of indigenous people for four months before being rescued. In this time he is taken in by the group leader and taken care of by a man called Kory Kory, develops a romantic relationship with the beautiful woman Fayaway, nearly receives facial tattoos, and realises that the Typees are cannibals before escaping. The text goes into a great amount of detail on the Typee's and their customs and lives. *Typee* was met with critical acclaim and became a bestseller overnight, being better received than *Moby Dick* during Melville's lifetime.<sup>548</sup>

Melville said that *Typee* was autobiographical, but the narrative has been shown to be at least partially fiction. For example, the narrator's time on Nukuheva is around five months, whereas Melville stayed for around four weeks. Biographers acknowledge that Melville elaborated on his experiences in writing *Typee*, yet they usually claim it to be largely based on truth. For example, Hershal Parker claims it to be factual in "much of its substances and grand items."<sup>549</sup> Yet even these 'grand items' have been called into question, from as early as the time of the novels publication.

A reviewer for the *New Englander and Yale Review* claimed in 1846 that by the time Melville wrote *Typee*, "what he remembered of the Pacific had become a sort of confused mass in

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<sup>544</sup> Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography, Volume 1; Volumes 1819-1851*, 181.

<sup>545</sup> Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography, Volume 1; Volumes 1819-1851*, 185.

<sup>546</sup> Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography, Volume 1; Volumes 1819-1851*, 211.

<sup>547</sup> Carl Edmund Rollyson, Lisa Olson Paddock, and April Gentry, *Critical Companion to Herman Melville: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007), 303.

<sup>548</sup> Perry Miller, *The Raven and the Whale: The War of Words and Wits in the Era of Poe and Melville* (New York: Harvest Book, 1956), 4. Robert S Levine, "Chronology of Melville's Life" *The New Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>549</sup> Hershal Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography, Volume 1; Volumes 1819-1851*, 214.

his own brain.”<sup>550</sup> As Mary K. Berclaw Edwards argues, Melville began orating his story “on board the *Lucy Ann* [the ship which rescued him] in 1842, four years before its publication. During those years of oral transmission, his stories were shaped and crafted in response to their audience.”<sup>551</sup> In this way it can be argued that the imperial gaze shaped the story. However, the gaze as constructed by sailors and the gaze as constructed by a more general readership were rather different. As I will show throughout this chapter, the most queered and peculiar descriptions were taken out of the second edition.

Furthermore, in “Questioning Typee,” Edwards states that Melville’s desertion of the ship *Acushnet* at Nuku Hiva in 1842 is well documented, but not much else is.<sup>552</sup> Edwards claims that the extent to which the narrative is fictional has been underestimated, and even suggests that he did not spend time with the Tai’pi’s (on whom the novel is based) at all, but at a busy Nuku Hivan port. Edwards shows that Melville borrows ideas and experiences from other texts for namely; *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean* by David Porter (1815, 1822), *A Visit to the South Seas* by Charles S. Stewart (1831) and *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World* by Georg H. von Langsdorff.<sup>553</sup> David Porter was the Navy commodore who waged war against the Tai’pi’s in 1815, and Charles S. Stewart was a colonel in the US army who travelled around Polynesia and South America in 1829 and 1830. Langsdorff was a German naturalist, who travelled to Polynesia in 1803 as a part of the same Russian explorative voyages as Wilhelm Gottlieb Tilesius von Tilenau, the artist of the illustration that opens this thesis. Langsdorff also wrote on cannibalism and tattooing on Nuku Hiva.<sup>554</sup>

There are other inconsistencies in *Typee*. For example, names of prominent Typee characters do not exist in logs and documents, though names of characters from the Nuku Hivan port do. Thus, Edwards suggests that Melville may well have resided in the colonized

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<sup>550</sup> Edward Royal Tyler et. al, *New Englander and Yale Review*, vol 4, United States, 1846: 449

<sup>551</sup> Mary K. Berclaw Edwards, “Questioning Typee.” *Leviathan* 11, no. 2 (2009): 24-42. <https://muse.jhu.edu/> [accessed August 10, 2017]. 26

<sup>552</sup> Mary K. Berclaw Edwards, “Questioning Typee.” 27.

<sup>553</sup> Mary K. Berclaw Edwards, “Questioning Typee.” 32.

<sup>554</sup> G. H. von Langsdorff, *Voyages and travels in various parts of the world: during the years 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806, and 1807*, (Philadelphia: M. Carey & Son, 1817).

Nuku Hiva bay, and fictionalized his *Typee* adventure altogether. She concludes that *Typee* is; “a fully realised literature, not a lightly fictionalized autobiography.”<sup>555</sup>

### **“Strange visions” of Tattoos.**

Considering Polynesia Tom pictures the islands in typical imperial terms, othering the indigenous people:

The Marquesas! What strange visions of outlandish things does the very name spirit up! Naked houris- cannibal banquets- groves of cocoa-nut- coral reefs- tattooed chiefs- and bamboo temples; sunny valleys planted with bread fruit trees- carved canoes dancing on the flashing blue waters- savage woodlands guarded by horrible idols- heathenistic rites and human sacrifices.<sup>556</sup>

This passage is a promise of peculiarity. “Strange visions” is prophetic, and *Typee* fulfils its prophecy: concerning nudity, tattoos and cannibal banquets in particular. It also draws attention to the gaze. In this context the fantasy imperial gaze (vision) is formed before arriving. Tom wants to see, to look, and to understand indigenous life, but he falls short. The full title of the text is *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life During a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas*. Melville admits that the text is a peep rather than a good look. This is also sexually suggestive. Peep shows usually consisted of some kind of box that had viewing holes for a person to look through, in which various pictures were slotted. They could tell perfectly innocent stories, but those that were popular in the same seventeenth and eighteenth century sideshows that tattooed people were exhibited were sexually explicit.<sup>557</sup>

Lee Wallace explains that in James Cook’s and others writings on sex and sexuality in the Pacific, indigenous people are made the visual objects of deviance. Only when “the male European becomes himself available to sexual visualization, then he simultaneously

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<sup>555</sup> Mary K. Bercaw Edwards, "Questioning Typee," 26

<sup>556</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1860). 3.

<sup>557</sup> Leonard Cassuto, ““What an object he would have made of me!”: Tattooing and the Racial Freak in Melville’s *Typee*,” in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed Rosemary Garland Thompson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 234-247.

becomes imbricated in circuits of desire which are more promiscuous in their effects and which give the lie to imperial omnipotence and abstraction.”<sup>558</sup> Although Typee produces the imperial gaze, through tattooing it sometimes subverts it. Tattoos are expressions of sexual freedom in *Typee*. In the first edition of the text, when Tom first encounters Island natives in Nukuheva, the tattooed “Island Queen” comes aboard a French ship to greet the sailors.

She singled out from [the Frenchmen] an old salt, whose bare arms and feet, and exposed breast, were covered with as many inscriptions in India ink, as the lid of an Egyptian sarcophagus...she hung over the fellow, caressing him, and expressing her delight in a variety of wild exclamations and gestures...all at once the royal lady bent eagerly forward to display the hieroglyphics on her own sweet form, and the aghast Frenchmen retreated precipitately, and tumbling into their boat, fled the scene of so shocking a catastrophe.<sup>559</sup>

This passage homogenizes the exotic; Polynesian body, Indian ink, Egyptian sarcophagi. It mocks everyone involved, and sexualizes the Island queen; “the royal lady bent forward.” At this time the Monarch of England was Queen Victoria and this phrase could be read as ridicule. Further, the passage also teases the French who flee from the “shocking...catastrophe” of the woman’s body. For me this passage suggests that the whites are portrayed as even more ridiculous and peculiar than the indigenous island queen. It is interesting that this description was taken out of the second edition; perhaps it was too rude, sexually and politically.

Though he is captive, all of Tom’s hosts treat him well. Yet there are two characters who live in particular servitude of Tom; Kory Kory and Fayaway. Fayaway is the nymph-like heterosexual love interest of Tom, and Kory Kory is one of the masculine figures who I shall argue is queered in the text. Melville may have taken inspiration for Kory Kory from Robinson Crusoe’s Friday. Friday is an indigenous character who acts as Crusoe’s servant.<sup>560</sup> Kory Kory has facial tattoos.

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<sup>558</sup> Lee Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 67.

<sup>559</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (New York: J. Murray, 1846). 6.

<sup>560</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), e.d Michael Shinagel (New York: Norton, 1994).



Each completely spanned his physiognomy; one extending in a line with his eyes, another crossing the face in the vicinity of the nose, and the third sweeping along his lips from ear to ear. His countenance thus triply hooped, as it were, with tattooing, always reminded me of those unhappy wretches whom I have sometimes observed gazing out sentimentally from behind the grated bars of a prison window; whilst the entire body of my savage valet, covered all over with representations of birds and fishes, and a variety of most unaccountable-looking creatures, suggested to me the idea of a pictorial museum of natural history, or an illustrated copy of "Goldsmith's Animated Nature."<sup>561</sup>

Visually, to Tom, these tattoos are expressions of captivity rather than freedom, he compares them both to the bars of a prison window and to the wretched prisoner behind it. Tattoos are therefore linked to the captive criminal.

Goldsmith's *Animated Natures* is a five volume "history of the earth and Animated Nature," first published in 1774.<sup>562</sup> It was a popular collection that catalogued creatures by species using writing and numerous plates. Melville criticises its drawings of whales in *Moby Dick*, claiming that they are inaccurate, though here I do not read a particular judgement on its accuracy.<sup>563</sup> Melville likens Kory Kory's tattooing to writing as well as to illustrations through this simile; Goldsmith's *Animated Natures* was text heavy, and Melville specifies that Kory Kory looked like an illustrated version of the text. Perhaps, in Melville's judgment, all people are texts, and tattooed people are illustrated versions.

Likening Kory Kory to a pictorial museum objectifies Kory Kory but creates a complicated image, which makes him into the ultimate mark of civilization, the museum, and also the ultimate mark of barbarity; the thing that goes inside it- the focus of the gaze. Tattooed indigenous people were considered natural curiosities and displayed as such in Euro/American popular culture, further showing that they were the focus of the imperial gaze. They were the focus of the gaze because they were considered peculiar, they were considered peculiar because they were in between civilization and nature. Kory Kory is also in between civilization and nature, unsettling this division.

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<sup>561</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 90.

<sup>562</sup> Oliver Goldsmith, *A history of the earth and animated nature* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Peter Brown, 1834).

<sup>563</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (1851) (Plain Label Books, 2010), 360.

The tattoos as emblemised by Kory Kory disrupt the civilized/barbarous binary. This has significance in the rest of the text, since Kory Kory disrupts Tom's conception of gender roles, and also disrupts the cis/hetero binary in Tom and Fayaway's relationship. Of the three, Kory Kory is the only one heavily tattooed, and so the tattooed figure queers the potentially white heterosexual fantasy relationship.

Kory Kory attends to Tom's every whim and feeds and washes him when he is ill. Kory Kory is even used as Tom's transport, and as Tom is injured Kory Kory carries Tom around on his back. Upon arriving in the valley Kory Kory feeds Tom by hand "like an infant," then later he regularly "tenderly bathed" Tom, "like an infant." From then on, Kory Kory bathes Tom "twice a day, in the early morning and evening."<sup>564</sup> Kory Kory is queered in his maternal devotion to Tom.

Tom is also well attended in the stream by Typee women, who he insists as referring to as nymphs; all young indigenous women are nymphs in *Typee*. He is rubbed with oil by "sweet nymphs," whilst Kory Kory "watched their proceedings with the most jealous attention."<sup>565</sup> Caleb Craine shows that Kory Kory is in fact a part of Tom's captivity;

Like a lover (or as a lover), Kory-Kory has custody of Tommo's body. He takes care of its pleasures and its needs, but by virtue of that, he controls Tommo. Tommo can't escape from the Typees until he can escape from Kory-Kory.<sup>566</sup>

Kory Kory is presented as the voyeur to sexual activity, though there are signs that he is more than that. Tom dwells with and sleeps with Kory Kory and Fayaway, and Kory Kory takes Tom and Fayaway out on the lake. Fayaway is the perfect white straight fantasy, but Kory Kory is always present disrupting the binary. Kory Kory is his valet, and a servant could

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<sup>564</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 99.

<sup>565</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 126.

<sup>566</sup> Many academics such as Crain refer to Tom by "Tommo," which is what the Typee call him. I chose to refer to him as Tom to emphasize that even though for a time he is called Tommo, he maintains his whiteness. Caleb Crain, "Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville's Novels" *American Literature* 66.1 (March 1994): 25–53.

be expected to stay with a person at all times. If Kory Kory and Tom's relationship is queered, the relationships between upper class people and their same-sex servants can also be queered.

It is important to note that the Tai'pi's which the text is apparently about, had a very different conception of gender. In various Marquesan communities people could be trans or gender variant.<sup>567</sup> This complicates Tom's analysis of gender and gender relationships, because he may be either excluding trans people, reading them as cis, or reading them as queer. Either way, his cis Western reading of gender in the text considers Typee sexual relationships to be peculiar.

Yet they are only peculiar through an imperial gaze. Kory Kory, Tom and Fayaway's relationship could well be the kind typical for the Typees, a polygamous three. In the text the typical Typee relationship structure is thus: teenage women take a fellow teenage lover. When they get a bit older, an older man enters into a formal committed relationship with both the woman and the younger man. The men as well as the woman have a domestic relationship and live together. Tom and Fayaway, the young and attractive couple, live with Kory Kory, the older man.

We can be sure that Melville knew the queered aspect of Typee relationships since in the first edition of the novel we find it described with reference to Mehevi, the warrior leader of the Typees. In his household there resides a women called Moonoony, and a younger man. Tom states: "I sometimes beheld him and the chief making love at the same time. Is it possible, thought I, that the valiant warrior can consent to give up a corner in the thing he loves?"<sup>568</sup> Melville raises the possibility of sexual liberation, wherein love is not defined by monopoly. Moonoony is not limited to or fully owned by one husband. This relationship is not written into the revised second edition. Maybe polygamous men could have been

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<sup>567</sup> Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Gender Reversals and Gender Cultures: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 29.

<sup>568</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 211.

acceptable but women's sexual freedom was too challenging for the white gaze. Further, the description of this relationships suggests that Melville may have had one similar.

Melville describes Fayaway more as a white male fantasy than as a fully realized character. She is Tom's "peculiar favourite" out of the women.<sup>569</sup> As with all young Typee women, he describes her as a nymph; "her free pliant figure was the very perfection of female grace and beauty...[the features of her face] as perfectly formed as the heart or imagination of man could desire."<sup>570</sup> This description of her does not change between editions.

Fayaway is also made white through Melville's descriptions; she has blue eyes. She is therefore an indigenous person that represents whiteness, in a similar but different way to Nowhereha, the woman nailed to the Mohave cross. Whilst Nowhereha's lightness is so that the imperial gaze can consider the Mohave crueller, Fayaway's whiteness is so that Melville can appear more heteronormative. We might easily imagine Melville shaping her on ship after ship as he tells and re-tells his tale in response to the prompts of listening sailors, creating her in the desires of the white cishetero gaze. She is pliant, bendable to his will, perfectly formed in desire and imagination.

Melville also westernizes her through her tattoos. She is only tattooed a small amount, with has three small dots on both lips and bands of tattooing on her shoulders;

[Fayaway is mostly free from] The hideous blemish of tattooing ... the practitioners of the barbarous art, so remorseless in their inflictions upon the brawny limbs of the warriors of the tribe, seem to be conscious that it needs not the resources of their profession to augment the charms of the maidens of the vale.<sup>571</sup>

Tattooing is "hideous" and "barbarous," a "blemish" and an "infliction," and it is more so a masculine custom than a feminine. Indigenous masculinity is therefore defined by ugliness

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<sup>569</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 93.

<sup>570</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 93.

<sup>571</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 94.

and violence. For Fayaway to be appealing she must be less tattooed. In addition, to be less tattooed is to be 'free from' it; tattooing is captivity.

Nevertheless, Fayaway does have some stripes tattooed on her shoulder, which remind Tom of the "stripes of gold lace worn by officers in undress."<sup>572</sup> Warriors tattoos will be compared to feminine lace, whereas Fayaway's tattoos are compared to the stripes of the western military. This image is also homoerotic, the 'undressed' group of officers adorned with gold. This demonstrates a potential ambivalence to sexuality.

Older women are less desirable to Tom, however they are more extensively tattooed. Kory Kory directs Tom's attention:

...to a peculiarity [Tom] had frequently marked among many of the females;- principally those of a mature age and rather matronly appearance. This consisted in having the right hand and the left foot most elaborately tattooed... the hand and foot thus embellished were, according to Kory Kory, the distinguishing badge of wedlock...<sup>573</sup>

The hand tattoo is an expression of sexual freedom and a queer commitment. Typee marriage is a queered threesome arrangement after all. Further, marriage is only captivity if one is trapped in it, and the Typee's liberal system of sexuality means that a woman is not bound entirely to their partner/s. The hand tattoo in *Typee* makes visual women's sexual self-determination rather than objectification.

### **Strange Glances.**

Tom is not only the eye (the I) in the text. He is also a visual subject. Beachcombers were renegades who existed on the margins and crossed cultural boundaries. They were objectified and sexualized in ways that other white people were not. Lee Wallace states that in *Typee*, "the American sailor turn beachcomber experiences, as if for the first time, his

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<sup>572</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 95.

<sup>573</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 221.

own visibility.”<sup>574</sup> Fayaway is one of the few characters that have a look of their own; she can look and understand, she can translate and sympathize with Tom’s captivity. When Fayaway looks at him, Tom claims that it is as if “she alone seemed to appreciate the effect which the peculiarity of the circumstances in which we were placed had produced upon the midst of my companions.”<sup>575</sup> Fayaway can see Tom’s captivity and finds his situation peculiar. Her look makes him strange to himself, as Melville notes:

By many a legendary tale of violence and wrong, as well as by events which have passed before their eyes, these people have been taught to look upon white men with abhorrence.<sup>576</sup>

Mehevi, the Typee king can also see Tom; he turns Tom’s gaze back on himself. When Tom first meets Mehvi he states;

One of them in particular, who appeared to be in the highest in rank, placed himself directly facing me; looking at me with a rigidity of aspect under which I absolutely quailed. He never once opened his lips, but maintained his severe expression of countenance, without turning his face aside for a single moment. Never before had I been subjected to so strange and steady a glance; it revealed nothing of the mind of the savage, but it appeared to be reading my own.<sup>577</sup>

It is likely that Mehvi’s face is heavily tattooed, due to his rank, yet his tattoos are not described here. Perhaps this is because Tom is the object, Tom is peculiar, and Mehevi is the centre, the norm, and the looker. The gaze is reversed; Mehevi is a leader and as such can look at Tom, and Tom cannot look back. Mehevi is unashamed, he does not flinch, Tom “quailed” with fear. It is a peculiar situation altogether for Tom, he has never been the subject of such a look, but neither is he explicit about knowing he is usually the perspective rather than the subject. Mehevi rejects Tom’s imperial gaze, and shows how peculiar it feels to be met with such a look. This look could be a lesson for the white reader if it were not for one word; “savage.” Because he is a savage he is still inferior; his look means less.

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<sup>574</sup> Lee Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2003), 81.

<sup>575</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 78.

<sup>576</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 231.

<sup>577</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 74.

This returning or inverting of the gaze is also only temporary. The second time Tom meets Mehvi, he is in full ceremonial attire and Tom does not recognize him. Tom takes in Mehevi's body and his indigenoussness before realizing that it is the same person who looked at him.

That which was most remarkable in appearance of this splendid islander was the elaborate tattooing displayed on every noble limb. All imaginable lines and circles and figures were delineated over his whole body, and in their grotesque variety and infinite profusion I could only compare them to the crowded groupings of quaint patterns we sometimes see in costly pieces of lace work. The most simple and remarkable of all these ornaments was that which decorated the countenance of the chief. Two broad stripes of tattooing, diverging from the centre of his shaven crown, obliquely crossed both eyes- staining the lids- to a little below either ear, where they united with another stripe which swept in a straight line along the lips and formed the base of the triangle. The warrior, from the excellence of his physical proportions, might certainly have been regarded as one of nature's noblemen, and the lines drawn upon his face may possibly have denoted his exalted rank.<sup>578</sup>

His tattoos are the reason that Tom can admire and describe Mehvi's body, they are the acceptable connection between Tom, his gaze and his desire. When Mehevi faced and looked at Tom he quailed, now he reads Mehevi's body and his face and demeans it to being like lacework. White men had stopped wearing lace by the end of the eighteenth century; it was feminine.<sup>579</sup> Lace work is traditionally a woman's craft which (like tattoos) has historically not been considered 'real art.'<sup>580</sup> This queers masculinity; the masculine, heroic leader of the Typee men is covered in lace. This imagery of lace is used elsewhere to make the land seem feminine. Tom considers a main source of food for the islanders, the bread fruit tree; "the bread fruit tree, in its glorious prime, is a grand and towering object, forming the same feature in a Marquesan land scape that the patriarchal elm does in New England

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<sup>578</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 83.

<sup>579</sup> "Lace Collection," The Museum of Natural History, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/object-groups/lace-collection> [accessed 02/03/2018].

<sup>580</sup> Thomas Leddy, *The Extraordinary in the Ordinary: The aesthetics of everyday life* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2012).

scenery...the leaves of the bread fruit are of great size, and their edges are cut and scalloped as fantastically as those of a lady's lace collar."<sup>581</sup> The lace is emphasized as "lady's" lace.

Mehevi's lacework tattoos contrast with his facial tattoos that are geometric lines, but they are still not masculinized. Mehevi's facial tattoos are likened to stripes of rank, but he is ranked as "nature's nobleman" not as a civilised and fully human man. Kory Kory's geometric facial tattoos that cover the eyes are similar to Mehevi's but Kory Kory's are described as a prison, a masculine brutal image, or a museum, a regal stately image. Although Kory Kory is the more submissive and motherly figure his masculinity and violence is reinforced whereas although Mehevi is the warrior king his masculinity is undermined.

One apparently masculine character can be read as being desired most by Tom; Marnoo, the interpreter, guide, and person who helps Tom escape. He is taboo which means he can move between indigenous groups without being harmed. He can also speak English, which, like Fayaway's blue eyes, connects him with whiteness. Nigel Rigby draws attention to the similarity between Marnoo and Mahu- there is the hint that he crosses gender as well as tribal boundaries.<sup>582</sup> This is supported by the attention paid to his name. When Tom is told that a person called Marnoo is about to enter the village he says; "'Marnoo, Marnoo" cogitated I, "I have never heard that name before. Some distinguished character, I presume, from the prodigious riot the natives are making;" the tumultuous noise drawing nearer and nearer every moment, while "Marnoo!- Marnoo!" was shouted by every tongue."<sup>583</sup> Just like the word 'peculiar,' the word 'distinguished' has several meanings; it means "important" and "of status" but also "different". Perhaps Marnoo is distinguished by his gender. Tom certainly thinks Marnoo is beautiful;

His unclad limbs were beautifully formed; whilst the elegant outline of his figure, together with his beardless cheeks, might have entitled him to the distinction of standing for the statue of the Polynesian Apollo...But the marble repose of art was

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<sup>581</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 130.

<sup>582</sup> Nigel Rigby, *A Sea of Islands: Tropes of Travel and Adventure in the Pacific 1846-1894* (PhD thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1995), 87-9

<sup>583</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 156.



supplied by a warmth and liveliness of expression only to be seen in the South Sea Islander under the most favourable developments of nature. The hair of Marnoo was a rich curling brown, and twined about his temple and neck in little close curling ringlets, which danced up and down continually when he was animated in conversation.<sup>584</sup>

He is likened to classic masculinity; Apollo, marble, and the bronze bust, but his hair is feminine. His cheeks are hairless and his hair falls in feminine ringlets that dance when in animated conversation. The comment suggests that Tom and Marnoo have animated conversations, and one can but wonder what they concerned. Further, his tattooing is both feminine and Tom describes them with desire.

His cheek was of a feminine softness, and his face was free from the least blemish of tattooing, although the rest of his body was drawn all over with fanciful figures...The tattooing on his back in particular attracted my attention...Traced along the course of the spine was accurately delineated the slender, tapering, and diamond chequered shaft of the beautiful "artu" tree....Indeed, this piece of tattooing was the best specimen of the Fine Arts I had yet seen in Typee. A rear view of the stranger might have suggested the idea of a spreading vine tacked against a garden wall....A slight girdle of white tappa, scarcely two inches in width, but hanging before and behind in spreading tassels, composed the entire costume of the stranger.<sup>585</sup>

Marnoo's face is "unblemished" just like Fayaways. Because Marnoo is not a Typee (indeed he does not belong to any group) this is more ambiguous; if a Typee man had no facial tattoos they would perhaps not be a man, but neither Tom nor the reader can deduce what Marnoo's tattoo styles mean. Tom's reading of them shows his own desire. The shaft of the 'artu' tree is phallic, the girdle shows his near nakedness. Tom states several times that Marnoo is a stranger, yet he seems so familiar with him. He says "a rear view of the stranger might..." but it seems that he is familiar of the rear view of Marnoo, which is linked with a "spreading vine." Both of these descriptions of Marnoo are left out of the second edition; they are too queered.

Rod Edmond suggests;

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<sup>584</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 150.

<sup>585</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 150.

As with so much else in the text, the representation of sexuality through cannibalism and tattooing keeps doubling. In the Taboo Groves, tattooing is associated with repellent, decaying, male homosexual bodies; in Marnoo, however, this is reversed. The attractive pole of this opposition between forms of tattooing then doubles again into heterosexual and homosexual alternatives (or complementaries), with the heterosexual as represented by Fayaway dominant, but the homosexual in the form of Marnoo remaining palpably attractive.<sup>586</sup>

I would suggest that Tom's considers Marnoo as more attractive than any others. Fayaway's tattoos are likened to officer's stripes, Kory Kory's to a prison and Mehevi's to lacework, but Marnoo's is "the best specimen of the Fine Arts." If Marnoo can be read as Mahu, *Typee* can be read as considering the trans body as a centre rather than in the margins.

### Being Tattooed

However, Tom wants to stay in the position of observer. If he were to receive facial tattoos this would mark him as belonging with the Typees. He wants to peep at rather than be peeped at. Tom's greatest fear is that he will be tattooed. As Kerstin Knopf states; "Tommo's anti-colonial attitude and cultural consciousness find a dead end when he is asked to become a protagonist."<sup>587</sup> He does not want to be visibly marked as peculiar, to truly receive the gaze. If tattooed, Tom would be immediately and physically linked with the indecipherable exoticism and physical deviance. He would be permanently captive in an identity rather than temporarily captive in an adventure.

It is only nearer the end of the text that Tom witnesses someone being tattooed. He describes the violence of it; "I beheld a man extended flat upon his back on the ground, and, despite the forced composure of his countenance, it was evident that he was suffering agony. His tormentor bent over him."<sup>588</sup> Women are not allowed to be present when men are tattooed, and this passage can be read as homoerotic; the man lies on his back receiving

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<sup>586</sup> Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 92.

<sup>587</sup> Kerstin Knopf, "Tattoos as Texts in Melville's Sea Fiction," in *Probing the Skin*, ed. Caroline Rosenthal, Dirk Vanderbeke (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 122-159, 131.

<sup>588</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 247.

the tattoo as the artist bends over him. Marnoo, tattooed on the back, would have laid on his stomach to receive his.

The tattoo artist, Karky, is keen to tattoo Tom, in particular his face. Tom is

...horrified at the bare thought of being rendered hideous for life...The idea of engrafting his tattooing upon my white skin filled him with all a painter's enthusiasm: again and again he gazed into my countenance and every fresh glimpse seemed to add to the vehemence of his ambition...<sup>589</sup>

Whereas the imperial gaze considers whiteness neutral blankness, Karky makes Tom's whiteness visible *because* Tom is blank. Tom's blank whiteness is not a neutral that makes him invisible, his whiteness makes him particularly visible. Tom is terrified of this visibility and the violation that it invites. Being tattooed would be a violation that also made him differently visible to the imperial gaze, just as Olive Oatman was .

Karky sets particular designs on tattooing Tom's face;

I now endeavoured to draw off his attention from [my face] and holding out my arm in a fit of desperation, signed to him to commence operations. But he rejected the compromise indignantly and still continued his attack on my face, as though nothing short of that would satisfy him. When his fore-finger swept across my features, in laying out the borders of those parallel bands which were to encircle my countenance, the flesh fairly crawled upon my bones.<sup>590</sup>

Tom's fear is not just that he should be tattooed- he offers an arm- but that his face should be tattooed. He says "nothing but the utter ruin of my "face divine"... would satisfy." Facial tattoos are masculine among the Typee, and they are taboo, sacred. Tom is offered a choice of any masculine facial tattoo; he can get the triangle style that Mehevi has, or the lines that imprison Kory Kory. He can adopt the visage of the chief or the servant, but neither will do. He rejects Typee masculinity and Typee custom. Geoffrey Sandbourne states; "in *Typee* tattooing is mostly represented either as a desecration or as a form of imprisonment,

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<sup>589</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 247-248.

<sup>590</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 247-248.

permanently spoiling or enclosing the “face divine.””<sup>591</sup> In this case Tom’s tattoo would be both:

This incident opened my eyes to a new danger; and I know felt convinced that in some luckless hour I should be disfigured in such a manner as never more to have the face to return to my countrymen, even should an opportunity offer.<sup>592</sup>

Tom thinks that if he were tattooed, he would be a captive of his own face.

Every time Tom comes across Karky the artist, Karky runs at him with his mallet and chisel.

Tom exclaims; “What an object he would have made of me!” Tom cannot stand being made an object of, in the same way as he objectifies the Typees. In this he is confronted with his own gaze. As Jeff Berglund states; “Tom fears losing himself, either through incorporation into alien culture or through literal incorporation through cannibalistic destruction.”<sup>593</sup>

I would add to this that he fears losing himself to queerness, he fears becoming irreversibly queer. Jason Berger states: “...the colonial failure to control natives bodies and desires reveals a related and potentially more formative peril.”<sup>594</sup> Tom’s fear of tattoos, and indeed fear of cannibalism, is the fear that he himself will become peculiar. He will become an irreversibly queer body, and subject to the colonist gaze.

## **Taboo.**

‘Taboo,’ means sacred. In *Typee* some people from different warring indigenous groups on the island are announced ‘Taboo’ and can travel safely between groups. Marnoo is such a person. Tom is declared ‘Taboo,’ which explains his devoted treatment from the Typees, though it does not earn him freedom of movement. ‘Taboo’ is therefore corporeal. Tom

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<sup>591</sup> Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal: Melville and the Making of a Postcolonial Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

<sup>592</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 248

<sup>593</sup> Jeff Berglund, *Cannibal Fictions: American Explorations of Colonialism, Race, Gender, and Sexuality* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 11.

<sup>594</sup> Jason Berger, *Antebellum at Sea- Maritime Fantasies in Nineteenth-Century America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 98.

manages to change/test 'Taboo' because he wants Fayaway in the canoe on the lake. Eventually the group concedes.

Tom can list various instances of 'Taboo,' and of the Typees' religion, but he cannot understand it and doesn't believe that the Typees can either; "I confess my almost entire inability to gratify any curiosity that may be felt with regard to the theology of the valley, I doubt whether the inhabitants themselves could do so."<sup>595</sup> The coloniser cannot comprehend a reading that he cannot perform. Does his view that the Typees cannot understand it either infantilise or denigrate them in some way?

Tattoo, cannibalism and queerness are a part of 'taboo'- the spiritual and moral rules of the Typees. Tom states; "The savage, in short, lives in the continual observance of its dictates, which guide and control every action of his being."<sup>596</sup> Even though the Typees are without prisons, they have strict laws.

Marnoo, the character that I read as most queered, is taboo. This means that he can access all "the valleys in the island."<sup>597</sup> He can physically transverse the island and be accepted in all groups. Tom also becomes taboo but in an opposite way; he is not allowed to leave the Typee valley at all, however he is protected and pampered while he is there.

Taboo also creates homosocial environments; women cannot witness men being tattooed, nor are women allowed in the "Hoolah Hoolah," or holy ground, which "condemned to instant death the sacrilegious female who should enter or touch its sacred precincts..."<sup>598</sup> He first visits the Hoolah Hoolah ground with Toby and says; "we were struck with the aspect of four or five hideous old wretches, on whose decrepid forms time and tattooing seemed to

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<sup>595</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 250.

<sup>596</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 251.

<sup>597</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 163

<sup>598</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 10.

have obliterated every trace of humanity.”<sup>599</sup> They settle down and eat there, then share a pipe before sinking into a “drowsy repose.” They awake alone, unaware of what has happened. There is a fire in the distance and Toby is convinced that they will be eaten. Instead they are presented with some meat, which Toby is convinced is human. “The next morning, after being again abundantly feasted by the hospitable Mehevi,” Toby and Tom are guided out of the Hoolah Hoolah intact.<sup>600</sup>

Tom thinks that there are virtues in the Typee and their way of life, but this benevolence is left out of the second edition. In the first edition he states; “let the savages be civilized, but civilize them with benefits, and not with evils; and let heathenism be destroyed, but not by destroying the heathen.”<sup>601</sup> It is heathenism, spirituality that should be corrected. The Typees should be treated kindly but they should be converted.

### Lovers of Human Flesh

As David Bergman states; “The intersection of homosexuality and cannibalism began as a theme used to represent sodomy as horrible, ‘unnatural,’ and demonic.”<sup>602</sup> Karky the tattoo artist becomes this demonic figure, who stalks Tom with a mallet and chisel. Because of this tattooing is queered, it also represents sodomy and cannibalism. Bergman discusses cannibalism and homosexuality in *Typee*, and claims that;

The tribes name- according to Melville- means “lover of human flesh.” It turns out, in fact, that Melville invented the derivation, but that indicates how much he wished the book to be read as an extended mediation on man as eater and eaten.<sup>603</sup>

Melville holds the Typees captives of cannibalism; they are defined by their very name as cannibals even though this was likely not the case for the Tai’pi’s on whom the book was

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<sup>599</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 102.

<sup>600</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 106.

<sup>601</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 217.

<sup>602</sup> David Bergman, *Gaiety Transfigured* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 161.

<sup>603</sup> David Bergman, *Gaiety Transfigured*, 142.

based. Lover of human flesh can also mean at least to two things, lover of eating it, and loving of it. Because of this language free play, cannibalism and sex are linked. Tom's fascination with being eaten can be read as a metaphor for his fascination with queer sexuality. Rod Edmond states; "tattooing is the third term of a cluster linking cannibalism and sexuality."<sup>604</sup> I would argue that the tattoo is written as a sign of queerness and in turn, cannibalism in the text.

Birgit Brander Rasmussen considers how cannibalism is linked with tattooing in *Typee*;

Cannibalism and inscription are connected because they represent modes of incorporation, which is a central issue at stake in colonial conflict. Cannibalism and tattoos function as tropes of savagery in the narrative.<sup>605</sup>

The difference is that indigenous people did tattoo, but may well have not been cannibals. The true-ness of tattoos therefore becomes a representation of cannibalism. Cannibalism is the trope, and tattooing is the proof.

Tom discusses cannibalism throughout the text, though for a time doubts that the Typee's practise it. On board the *Dolly* Tom considers the reputation of the Typee's. He hears that they have a reputation as violent warriors and cannibals. Upon docking in the bay of Nukuheva, Captain Maryatt stresses that Typee's are cannibals; "Oh, the bloody cannibals, what a meal they'd make of us...but they say they don't like sailors flesh, it's too salty."<sup>606</sup> The joke lightens the warning. Soon after, Tom claims that he heard of an English ship, which, landing at the wrong bay, was greeted by the Typees who claimed that they could guide the ship in their canoes: "that same night the perfidious Typees, who had thus inveigled her into their fatal bay, flocked aboard the doomed vessel by hundreds, and at a given signal murdered every soul on board."<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 91.

<sup>605</sup> Birgit Brander Rasmussen, *Queequeg's Coffin: Indigenous Literacies and Early American Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 181

<sup>606</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 26.

<sup>607</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 26.

Nevertheless, for the majority of the text Tom considers cannibalism as hypothetical; a fantasy rather than a fact. When in doubt he is sympathetic:

Many a petty trader has navigated the Pacific whose course from island to island might be traced by a series of cold-blooded robberies, kidnappings, and murders...How different is our tone when we read the highly-wrought description of the massacre of the crew of the Hobomak by the Feejees; how we sympathize for the unhappy victims, and with what horror do we regard the diabolical heathens, who, after all, have but avenged the unprovoked injuries which they have received... How often is the term "savages" incorrectly applied!<sup>608</sup>

He is proved wrong and realises that the Typees are indeed cannibals, and as such this could work similarly to the way that Royce Oatman sympathises with indigenous people only to be killed by them. However, this quote is in the first but not second edition of the text. Initially Melville wants his white readers, the white gaze, to examine colonialism. In the first edition Tom considers that whites are not much better than savages, that perhaps they are the savages, yet the second edition is more straightforward. While maybe well intentioned, however, the tactic simply reinforces the distinction between civilized and savage.

Melville also, at first, questions the division of Christian/heathen. Tom considers the barbarism of Christians at least equal to those he considers cannibals, and challenges the imperial gaze with moral relativity. In the first edition Tom asks "whether the mere eating of human flesh so very far exceeds in barbarity that custom [i.e slavery] which only a few years since was practised in enlightened England."<sup>609</sup> In a rather Foucauldian way, he reflects on a Christian history of gore and public punishment, and discusses the tradition of criminals being drawn and quartered. He holds this up against cannibalism to show the imperial gaze that it too is gory and barbaric. The logocentric notion that indigenous people are barbaric whilst white people are civilized is cast into doubt.

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<sup>608</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 26.

<sup>609</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 138.



This changes as the text develops. When Tom is threatened with being tattooed and marked as an object himself he moves from describing Karky and Kory Kory by name to exclaiming that he ran from terror from the “three savages” that threaten him with tattoo. The closer that he feels he gets to being made like a Typee, the more captive that he feels. From the time that Karky sets his sights on Tom, Tom states:

Not a day passed but I was persecuted by the solicitations of some of the natives to subject myself to the odious operation of tattooing...I felt how easily they might work their will upon me...I had grown familiar with the narrow limits to which my wanderings had been confined; and I began bitterly to feel the state of captivity in which I was held.<sup>610</sup>

His fear of being tattooed coincides with his fear of being eaten, and he is increasingly suspicious of the Typees. Paul Lyons considers cannibal narratives; “the more fear saturates the scene of contact, the more dramatic becomes the performative qualities of action.”<sup>611</sup> Because Tom is so afraid, the indigenous person is constructed as something ‘Other,’ to be afraid of. Geoffrey Sanborn states; “as Tommo’s attraction to the primitive becomes more intense, his visions of cannibalism become increasingly racist.”<sup>612</sup> Although he is initially critical of colonialism’s effects, “Melville’s ironic deconstructive work is undermined” when cannibalism is confirmed.<sup>613</sup>

In the nineteenth century, “any book that promised eyewitness was guaranteed an audience.”<sup>614</sup> Furthermore, “It is a singular fact, that in all our accounts of cannibal tribes we have seldom received the testimony of an eye witness to the revolting practise.”<sup>615</sup> It is highly likely that cannibalism in *Typee*, cannibalism is a literary device used to create tension rather than based on Melville’s true experiences. The threat of cannibalism surfaces at

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<sup>610</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 265.

<sup>611</sup> Paul Lyons, “Lines of Fright- Fear, Perception and the ‘Seen’ of Cannibalism in Charles Wilkes *Narrative* and Herman Melville’s *Typee*,” in *Body Trade: Captivity, Cannibalism and Colonialism in the Pacific*, edited by Barbara Creed and Jeanette Hoorn (London: Routledge, 2013), 127.

<sup>612</sup> Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal: Melville and the Making of a Postcolonial Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998) 82.

<sup>613</sup> Kerstin Knopf, “Tattoos as Texts in Melville’s Sea Fiction,” in *Probing the Skin*, ed. Caroline Rosenthal, Dirk Vanderbeke (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 122-159, 127.

<sup>614</sup> Andrew Delbanco, *Melville: His World and Work* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2006), 84.

<sup>615</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 266.

various points, from the beginning when Captain Maryatt warns the sailors of it, to Toby's suspicions of it and subsequent mysterious disappearance. Cannibalism is therefore used as a literary device to move the narrative forward and give it tension, as Jeff Berglund argues: "cannibalism forms the narratives backbone and supports all its various thematic limbs."<sup>616</sup> I could argue that tattoos also do this, tension builds around tattooing as well as around cannibalism. Thus, although he is treated well, Tom states that he is:

...consumed by the most dismal forebodings, and I remained a prey to the profoundest melancholy It is true that the suspicious circumstances which had attended the disappearance of Toby were enough of themselves to excite distrust with regard to the savages, in whose power I felt myself to be entirely placed, especially when it was combined with the knowledge that these very men, kind and respectful as they were to me, were, after all, nothing better than a set of cannibals.<sup>617</sup>

Tom draws attention to the peculiar situation that he is in. He is a white captive and he has no power. He also muses that the Typees are 'nothing better' than cannibals. Although earlier in the text he considers white people no better than indigenous people, once he considers the Typees as cannibals, white supremacy is established.

Tom confirms cannibalism when he sees Typee people with open packages of shrunken heads. In a glance he deduces that one of the heads, to his "horror," is that of a white man, and believes it to be the shrunken head of his shipmate, Toby. Tom "shuddered at the idea of the subsequent fate his inanimate body might have met with."<sup>618</sup> However, several years after *Typee* was published, a man claiming to be the character on which Toby was based came forward to confirm that Melville's story was true. Toby's story, is told in the epilogue of the second edition, and was intended to confirm the truth of Melville's narrative.

Near the end of Tom's narrative, after a small battle between the Typees and their enemies, the Happers, Tom is convinced that the chiefs and priests have eaten a few of their captured

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<sup>616</sup> Jeff Berglund, *Cannibal Fictions: American Explorations of Colonialism, Race, Gender, and Sexuality* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 11

<sup>617</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 135.

<sup>618</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 266.

enemies. The chiefs of the group have a ritual feast within their religious ground and Tom is denied entry, which is unusual. Thus far, as long as he is within Typee valley Tom can go where he pleases.

Tom has “an uncontrollable desire to penetrate the secret so jealously guarded.”<sup>619</sup> Tension builds, Tom skulks around, asks questions and casts his suspicious eye anew on everything. His gaze that showed aporia becomes imperial. This was stylistically usual for such narratives. Within most nineteenth and twentieth century narratives about cannibals, the evidence is “of its aftermath rather than its performance.”<sup>620</sup> The narrator finds human bones, threatening cooking tools, missing people, mysterious rituals, or an ominously bubbling pot. Like the title suggests, Tom gets a peep at Typee cannibalism rather than a look. Tom’s suspicions are apparently confirmed in just this way when he glances at what appears to be a stripped human skeleton in a stew pot; “a slight glimpse sufficed.”<sup>621</sup>

The imperial gaze in *Typee* is in some ways challenged through the tattoo. Because the tattoo is a focus point, Tom can look upon the tattooed body. He can desire the tattooed body; the tattoo gives him the freedom to look queerly. He also links tattoos to cannibalism and is horrified by tattoos and the thought of being tattooed. The beginning of the first edition of the text shows the tattoo as an expression of sexual freedom, however cannibalism undermines aporia in favour of the imperial gaze.

## **Moby Dick**

Queequeg in Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick* is perhaps one of the most iconic tattooed characters in literature in English and deserves some attention.<sup>622</sup> In the text, inexperienced sailor Ishmael befriends Queequeg, the tattooed Polynesian ‘cannibal,’ and together they

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<sup>619</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 232.

<sup>620</sup> Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Margaret Iversen, *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>621</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 271.

<sup>622</sup> Casey Cothran and Mercy Cannon, *New Perspectives on Detective Fiction: Mystery Magnified* (London: Routledge, 2015), 54.

join a whaling voyage headed by Captain Ahab, whose quest is to defeat the fearsome white whale that maimed and disfigured him. *Moby Dick* is part-based on Melville's time on board the whaling ship *Acushnet*, the same ship he would abscond from to spend time in Nuku Hiva and formulate *Typee*.<sup>623</sup>

### **Truth/Fiction.**

Although both texts are based on the same period of Herman Melville's life, they have as many differences as similarities. First and foremost, according to Melville, *Typee* was a true story, and *Moby Dick* was fiction. *Moby Dick* is not in the same genre as my other texts. It is not an indigenous captivity narrative, though I could read it as a captivity narrative; I could argue that all of the crewmembers are captives of Captain Ahab. Even the term "captain" rings of "captor." The Latin "capt" could mean to seize or to lead, showing the link between control and freedom; those who lead can seize, those who are captors can control.

This presents a very different power dynamic to that between white captives and indigenous groups. Ishmael is white and a majority of the sailors on the ship are white. In *Typee* it is the white coloniser who lives with indigenous people in their home country. The settings of potential captivity are also very different. A ship is far smaller than a valley, which is where both Tom and Olive Oatman were held captive. Yet Oatman was captive because of the expanse of her prison- she claimed she could not escape because she would starve in the desert. The desert is the boundary around her. Tom cannot escape even though the island is relatively small, but he is injured. His body is his boundary. Ishmael is on a ship, that he willingly chose to be on; his ship is his boundary but it is one he chose. He is the companion of an indigenous person who he chooses to be with. With this the narrator's attitude towards tattoos is also different; Ishmael gets non-indigenous tattoos that he chooses and shares a bed with an indigenous man.

Queequeg is a singular Polynesian person, and I would say a more crafted character. In *Typee* there are many varying indigenous characters who together represent a specific

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<sup>623</sup> Hershal Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography, Volume 1; Volumes 1819-1851* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2005).

group of indigenous peoples, the Typees. Queequeg is made to represent Polynesian people and therefore the indigenous 'Other' in general. He is from Rokovoko, a fictional island and as such does not represent any group in particular, or rather he represents all groups. Geoffrey Sanborn makes a convincing argument that Queequeg is Maori rather than Marquesan, which could account for some of the differences in how he was written.<sup>624</sup> Although Melville's understanding of tattoos was not perfect, he does not completely homogenise Polynesian people and their tattoos. Maori tattoos were understood as a record of achievement and experience, and in the nineteenth century images of a person's *moko* could be used as signatures on documents, whereas Marquesan tattoos indicated social status.<sup>625</sup> Queequeg uses an image of his tattoos to sign his contract as a harpooner on board the *Acushnet*.

Lawrence Buell states that Melville "liked to think of his vocation as truth telling rather than tale telling."<sup>626</sup> John Bryant and Haskell Springer state that a central theme of the text is the fluidity of perception and the variability of truth.<sup>627</sup> As such, although it is a fictional work elements of it are true or based on truth. Melville was influenced by the story of Mocha Dick, an albino sperm whale that according to legend intentionally and aggressively attacked whaling ships.<sup>628</sup> He was also likely influenced by the story of the whaling ship *The Essex*, which sunk after being struck by a sperm whale two thousand miles off the coast of South America.<sup>629</sup> After it was struck and the ship sunk, twenty men, spread across three of the smaller boats attached to the ship and used for whaling, survived. The Marquesas were the closest islands, but the men feared encountering cannibals and so aimed for South

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<sup>624</sup> Geoffrey Sandborn, *Whipscars and Tattoos: the Last of the Mohicans, Moby Dick, and the Maori* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>625</sup> Moko are a Maori form of facial tattoos, usually characterized by swirling, fluid patterns. The skin is carved rather than punctured, resulting in grooves rather than a flat surface. Kerstin Knopf, "Tattoos as Texts in Melville's Sea Fiction," in *Probing the Skin*, ed. Caroline Rosenthal, Dirk Vanderbeke (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 122-159, 127.

<sup>626</sup> Lawrence Buell, "Moby Dick as Sacred Text," in *New Essays on Moby Dick*, ed. Richard H. Brodhead (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 53-72, 53.

<sup>627</sup> John Bryant and Haskell Springer, ed. in *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, (London: Pearson Longman, 2007).

<sup>628</sup> J.N. Reynolds, "Mocha Dick: or the White Whale of the Pacific: A Leaf from a Manuscript Journal", *New-York Monthly Magazine*. 13.5, May 1839, pp. 377-392.

<sup>629</sup> Nathaniel Philbrick, *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* (New York: Viking, 2000).

America.<sup>630</sup> Ironically, after landing on an uninhabited island, exhausting its resources, and returning to sea, some of the survivors resorted to cannibalism and ate a deceased crewmember.<sup>631</sup> There is truth in *Moby Dick*, and fiction in *Typee*. In this way perhaps the true/false dichotomy that I argue defines freedom and captivity is unsettled.

By the time that Melville wrote *Moby Dick* it seems he wanted to distance himself from *Typee* and its fiction-sold-as-truth, though did not achieve this in his lifetime. *Typee* received better critical attention in Melville's lifetime than *Moby Dick*. In a letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne written while in the last stages of composing *Moby Dick*, he complained, "What 'reputation' H.M. has is horrible. Think of it! To go down to posterity is bad enough, and way; but to go down as a 'man who lived among the cannibals'!"<sup>632</sup>

Perhaps his desire to distance himself was because of subsequent stories such as William Torrey's *Torrey's Narrative*, which were more sensational and less seriously literary. The full title of William Torrey's claimed he "Was Held a Captive by the Cannibals of the Marquesas." Queequeg may have been a response to the cheapening of Melville's experiences, an indigenous person who was more complex and meaningful; in *Moby Dick* "Melville attempts to transform the spectral cannibal of *Typee* into the basis of a reformulated vision of humanity and its 'Other.'"<sup>633</sup>

### Facing Queequeg.

Ishmael's first meeting with Queequeg takes place in an inn, "The Skrimshander." There is no room at the Inn (perhaps a biblical reference- which are rife throughout the novel) and Ishmael is offered to share a bed with a harpooneer. Once the innkeeper tells Ishmael that the harpooneer is "dark complexioned," and only eats rare meat, Ishmael is suspicious.<sup>634</sup> Queequeg's is a 'head pedlar,' which harkens back to *Typee*- it is the shrunken heads that

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<sup>630</sup> Thomas Farel Heffernan, *Stove by a Whale: Owen Chase and the Essex* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1990), 213.

<sup>631</sup> Thomas Farel Heffernan, *Stove by a Whale: Owen Chase and the Essex*, 171.

<sup>632</sup> "Letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, "June 1851 <http://www.melville.org/letter3.htm> [accessed 02/02/2018].

<sup>633</sup> Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal: Melville and the Making of a Postcolonial Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), xv.

<sup>634</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (1851), (Plain Label Books, 2010), 360.23.

initially confirm to Tom that the Typees are cannibals. *Typee*'s success at the time was much owed to the thrill of cannibalism, and made it a best-seller.<sup>635</sup> As in *Typee* the shrunken heads are seen at an unsettling glance, not properly and clearly. There is, again, no real instance of or proof of cannibalism or even of the shrunken heads for which Queequeg is known. Whether or not Queequeg is a cannibal is not a question, he simply is, however, the implications of that are different.

Queequeg comes in to their shared room whilst Ishmael pretends to be asleep. There is no tension built around the potential that he is a cannibal, no glances of human parts or ominous feasts, though he does briefly consider that Queequeg could eat him. The initial horror at Queequeg comes more from his tattoos than from the shrunken head he carries into the room. Ishmael reacts;

Heavens! What a sight! Such a face! It was of a dark, purplish, yellow colour, here and there struck over with large, blackish looking squares. Yes its just as I thought, he's a terrible bedfellow; he's been in a fight, got dreadfully cut, and here he is, just from the surgeon.<sup>636</sup>

In the same way as captives were first returned to white society they are not recognized as white, initially Ishmael does not recognize Queequeg as indigenous. Instead he recognizes him as damaged and vicious. Ishmael assumes that this countenance is that of someone violent, immediately linking Queequeg's physiognomy with brutality. Ishmael quickly realises that the squares are tattoos;

... soon an inkling of the truth occurred to me. I remembered a story of a white man- a whaleman too- who, falling among the cannibals, had been tattooed by them...And that is it, thought I, after all! It's only his outside; a man can be honest in any sort of skin.<sup>637</sup>

Ishmael shows himself to be an unreliable truth teller. A truth occurred to him that was true, there were tattooed beachcombers, however Queequeg is not a beachcomber, he is

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<sup>635</sup> Edward L Widmer, *Young America: Flowering of Democracy in New York City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 117.

<sup>636</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 26.

<sup>637</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 28.

indigenous. Again, Ishmael reads Queequeg as white. Queequeg's tattoos and Ishmael's memories thus hide Queequeg's indigenusness rather than reveal it.

Ishmael's attitude to another white man being tattooed is far more agreeable than the abject fear that Tom experiences when being threatened with tattoos in *Typee*. His attitude quickly changes to that of the white philosopher. If a white man can be tattooed, then a tattooed man can be honest. But Queequeg is not a white man, and his colour causes Ishmael much speculation and curiosity; he finds Queequeg's race stranger and more fearful than the tattooing itself. Ishmael is terrified; "I confess I was now as much afraid of him as if it was the devil himself."<sup>638</sup>

Queequeg jumps into bed and discovers Ishmael. As he does so he exclaims "Who-e debel you?" Through his white gaze Ishmael considers Queequeg "the devil himself," yet Queequeg asks the devil who Ishmael is. At this pivotal moment the question is where the gaze falls. Who is looking at whom, who is bedevilling whom? Because Ishmael is linked to the devil but does not consider himself as such, he realises that he may be wrong about Queequeg too, and Queequeg might also be human.

Ngahuia Te Awekotuku states that Maori tattoos are "based essentially on the connection we have with one another, the environment, all living things, the universe, our ancestor connections, and the creator of all things."<sup>639</sup> This reads similarly and differently to how Ishmael describes Queequeg's tattoos. Queequeg's tattoos are; "a complete theory of the heavens and earth and a mystical on the art of attaining truth; so that Queequeg in his own proper person was a riddle to unfold; a wondrous work in one volume."<sup>640</sup> Although Ishmael, like Te Awekotuku, links tattooing to the metaphysical, he unmoors them from community and body-body relationships. He textualises and therefore objectifies them. He draws attention to their metaphorical as well as metaphysical status. Ishmael considers Queequeg's tattoos meaningful, as meaningful as a mark can be, however he does not know

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<sup>638</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 26.

<sup>639</sup> Henriata Nicholas, with Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, "Uni Ta Moko" - Designs carved in skin," in Juhon Ruszkiewicz, Daniel Anderson, and Christy Friend, e.ds., *Beyond Words: Reading and Writing in a Visual Age* (New York: Person Longman, 2006), 158.

<sup>640</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 208.



what they mean. They are the meaning of life but Ishmael, like perhaps most of us, is unsure what the meaning of life is. Because there are no other Maori or Polynesian persons in the novel to see Queequeg's tattoos for what they are and what they mean, their meaning is a captive of Ishmael's gaze. Several people such as David Dowling and Juniper Ellis have written about how Queequeg's tattoos are devoid of meaning through an imperial gaze that cannot translate them.<sup>641</sup> Ellis states; "Such signification becomes both universalized and unmoored from its Pacific origins."<sup>642</sup>

Queequeg defies meaning geographically as well as physically; "Queequeg was a native of Rokovoko, an island far away to the West and South. It is not down in any map; true places never are."<sup>643</sup> This also suggests that *Typee* is not set in a true place, indeed it calls into question the truth-knowing of the imperial gaze. An indigenous place is only true when it cannot be read. White sailors have been there, yet it is not on a map because "presumably is not possessed, colonized, or even known by imperial powers."<sup>644</sup> This frees Queequeg from the Colonialism of language and borders. His home cannot be translated either.

Although neither Ishmael nor the white reader can read Queequeg's tattoos, Queequeg can. This gives him a power of truth that no white gaze has. He not only understands his tattoos but writes them. Queequeg's tattoos are his signature; when he joins the voyage, in signing the contract, "...taking the offered pen, copied upon the paper, in the proper place, and exact counterpart of a queer round figure which was tattooed upon his arm..."<sup>645</sup> His tattoo is peculiar to himself- it is his signature and a signature is a mark of proof.

When Queequeg becomes very ill, he builds a coffin and carves his tattoo on to it. It is this coffin that Ishmael floats on when the ship is destroyed. Birgit Brander Rasmussen considers his tattoos and the identical marks on the coffin he carves when he thinks he is dying as

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<sup>641</sup> David Dowling, *Chasing the White Whale- The Moby Dick Marathon; or, What Melville Means Today* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 51.

<sup>642</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 21.

<sup>643</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 52.

<sup>644</sup> Birgit Brander Rasmussen, *Queequeg's Coffin: Indigenous Literacies and Early American Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 15.

<sup>645</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 53.

forms of indigenous writings; the text on his coffin remains similarly beyond the comprehension of colonial categories, maps, or schemas because it is never deciphered.<sup>646</sup> Kerstin Knopf states, "The tattoo text of Queequeg's body... now copied onto the coffin, and Ishmael's tattooed whale measurements are the only texts that survive the shipwreck."<sup>647</sup>

Although neither the reader nor Ishmael are told what Queequeg's tattoos mean, Ishmael has tattoos that are very legible to a white gaze. Ishmael is tattooed on the arm with the measurements of a whale skeleton;

The skeleton dimensions I shall now proceed to set down are copied verbatim from my right arm, where I had them tattooed; as in my wild wanderings at that period, there was no other secure way of preserving such valuable statistics. But as I was crowded for space, and wished the other parts of my body to remain a blank page for a poem I was then composing- at least, what untattooed parts might remain.<sup>648</sup>

Ishmael is therefore very tattooed, but it is unclear with what. It is unclear where, which 'blank parts' remain on Ishmael and it is unclear whether some of his tattoos are indigenous. If they are then they are not discussed. His most important tattoos are and will be legible to him. In this way, as we have seen, from *Typee* to *Moby Dick*, Melville's

...treatment of tattoos undergoes a development from outright supremacist rejection to cross-cultural tolerance and respect for the tattooed 'Other' and the cultural signifier tattoo, to introducing the Western self as tattooed "Other" within Western discourses.<sup>649</sup>

Whereas in *Typee* he rejects tattoos, in *Moby Dick* he accepts the tattoo on Ishmael's arm. However, the tattoo on Ishmael's arm is a true whaling sailor's tattoo, it is not an indigenous tattoo. By transforming the tattoo into something Western, something clearly understandable and in the universal language of mathematics, it is less peculiar, less queer.

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<sup>646</sup> Birgit Brander Rasmussen, *Queequeg's Coffin: Indigenous Literacies and Early American Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 15.

<sup>647</sup> Kerstin Knopf, "Tattoos as Texts in Melville's Sea Fiction," in *Probing the Skin*, ed. Caroline Rosenthal, Dirk Vanderbeke (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 122-159, 153.

<sup>648</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 339.

<sup>649</sup> Kerstin Knopf, "Tattoos as Texts in Melville's Sea Fiction," 153.

## Queering Tattoos.

*Moby Dick*, in particular Queequeg and Ishmael's relationship in it has been read as queer by many scholars. Indeed, Christoph Hartner states that "as a postmodern queer scholar there is really no other way to read" it.<sup>650</sup> I do not think this true; a book can be read in many different ways, however *Moby Dick* certainly lends itself to a queer reading, least of all because the word queer is repeated throughout.

Stubb in particular reiterates the word. When Ahab strikes him he says "It's very queer... It's queer; very queer; and he's queer too; aye, take him fore and aft, he's about the queerest old man Stubb has every sailed with.... Damn me, but all things are queer, come to think of 'em."<sup>651</sup> Queer can be synonymous with peculiar. Queerness is outside of the established norm but in an undefinable way fits with the concept of aporia.

There are also several references to 'inversion.' Like 'queer' the term inversion began to be used as a formal category or a slur to describe deviant sexualities and genders in the late nineteenth century. In the late nineteenth century, stemming from sexological study, inversion became linked to queered genders and sexualities. It did not necessarily define homosexuality, and referred to gender identity and social relationships as much as sexual relationships.<sup>652</sup> Ahab's compass is inverted; "the needles were exactly inverted;" and in a storm the ship's tiller is "inverted."<sup>653</sup> Staring into the fire of the try-works ovens Ishmael quotes Solomon "Give not thyself up, then, to fire, lest it invert thee, deaden thee; as for the time it did to me."<sup>654</sup> *Moby Dick* was written just before this language change, in 1851. Whilst it cannot be linked directly to this medicalised language of queering, it can be queered simply by taking it at face value.

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<sup>650</sup> Christoph Hartner, "A Squeeze of the Hand: A Queer Reading of *Moby Dick*," in *Landscapes of Postmodernity: Concepts and Paradigms of Critical Theory*, ed. Petra Eckhard, Michael Fuchs, Walter W. Holblin (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2010), 179.

<sup>651</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 105.

<sup>652</sup> Heike Bauer *English Literary Sexology, Translations of Inversion, 1860-1930* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 4.

<sup>653</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 385.

<sup>654</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 320.

Before encountering Queequeg Ishmael is adamant that he does not want to, nor is it normal for, sailors to share beds with each other. He states; “to be sure they all sleep together in one apartment, but you have your own hammock, and cover yourself with your blanket, and sleep in your own skin.”<sup>655</sup> This seems to be a denial of sodomy or at least physical closeness on ships. The last image is strange, is it possible to sleep within a persons skin? It draws attention to the skin boundary. The skin is the line between people, and tattoos are within the skin.

Ishmael finds that he has to look beyond Queequeg’s boundaries, his tattoos, to find him an appealing bedfellow. He states; “for all his tattooings he was on the whole a clean, comely looking cannibal... better sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian.”<sup>656</sup> Queequeg is “comely,” inviting and appealing, whereas a drunken white man would be more troublesome. But troublesome in what way? What trouble can a man be to another one in bed? This perhaps queers the white Christian, or at least shows that he is not to be trusted in bed. This inverts what may be expected of white/indigenous relationships, and reverses Tom’s fear of the indigenous people in *Typee*.

Ishmael is not threatened by Queequeg as cannibal, he is a “comely looking cannibal.” The term ‘comely’ is more typically applied to women and femininity and femininity is typically non-violent. This suggests that Queequeg is non-threatening and non-violent. There is a juxtaposition of ideas here; Queequeg is “comely” and cannibal. Further, although Ishmael has made it clear why he thinks Queequeg looks like a cannibal; mainly due to his top knotted hair and his tattoos, he does not describe in what way Queequeg is “comely.” He looks like a cannibal because of specific visual markers but he looks attractive because of Ishmael’s internal desire. This challenges the white heteronormative gaze. Caleb Crain states, “...once Ishmael sees Queequeg is a cannibal — and not a belligerent drunk, a renegade, or a Satanist — he is willing to sleep with him.”<sup>657</sup>

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<sup>655</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 24.

<sup>656</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 29.

<sup>657</sup> Caleb Crain, “Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville’s Novels” *American Literature* 66.1 (March 1994): 25–53.

Ishmael falls into the best sleep he has ever had, and when Ishmael awakes, Queequeg is holding him:

Upon waking next morning about daylight, I found Queequeg's arm thrown over me in the most loving and affectionate manner. You had almost thought I had been his wife. The counterpane was of patchwork, full of odd little parti-coloured squares and triangles; and this arm of his tattooed all over with an interminable Cretan labyrinth of a figure, looked for all the world like a strip of that same patchwork quilt.<sup>658</sup>

Although Queequeg is feminized in the night, by the morning it is Ishmael who is feminine. "I had been his wife" is a peculiar turn of phrase. Melville could have written "you had almost thought I was his wife" but the past tense suggests that any "wife" action had taken place during the night. Tattoos are queered as a part of this wifely embrace; it is the tattooed arm that holds Ishmael lovingly. Queequeg is often referred to as like a wife to Ishmael:

When our smoke was over, he pressed his forehead against mine, clasped me round the waist, and said that henceforth we were married; meaning, in his country's phase, that we were bosom friends.<sup>659</sup>

Ishmael's translation of meaning makes this agreement unclear. Queequeg says to Ishmael that they are married, but in his country the phrase meaning marriage means "bosom friends." Does this mean that there is no traditional marriage in Rokovoko? This again draws attention to the context of indigenous/white. Marriage to Queequeg is not binary gendered, nor is it necessarily sexual or romantic.

This is linked to Queequeg's tattoos, because tattoos are bodily, and because this wifely behaviour is about physical affection, Queequeg's tattoos are a part of this affection. They are the thing which makes Queequeg visually queer, but also a part of touching.

We had lain thus in bed, chatting and napping at short intervals, and Queequeg now and then affectionately throwing his brown tattooed legs over mine and then drawing them back, so entirely sociable and free and easy were we.<sup>660</sup>

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<sup>658</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 29.

<sup>659</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 54.

<sup>660</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 51.

In this case Queequeg's tattoos signify the easy freedom of companionship. Although Geoffry Sanborn considers his tattoos Maori moko, Birgit Brander Rasmussen considers them Marquesan tattoos. Rasmussen states that the chequered tattoos on Queequeg's face may refer to illustrations of indigenous Marquee people with chequered tattooing of the period. "This motif was called *te vehine na'u*, which, according to Langsdorff, meant "my little wife." This pattern...represents myriad "little wives" accompanying the wearer as he moves through the world."<sup>661</sup>

Ishmaels physical intimacy with Queequeg reminds him of an incident when he was a child; he was punished for 'some caper' by his stepmother, who instructed him to remain in his bed for sixteen hours. Captive of his bed, perhaps a metaphor for his sexuality, he awoke from a strange sleep with a "supernatural hand" holding his own; "the nameless, unimaginable, silent form or phantom, to which the hand belonged, seemed closely seated by my bed-side."<sup>662</sup> This strange vision is perhaps a prophecy of queerness to come.

Later in the novel, Ishmael and the other sailors hunt and butcher the sperm whale specifically for its sperm; male sperm is the most treasured part of their vocation. To prepare the whale fat, turn it to oil and process it the oil must be worked through and the lumps squeezed out by hand. Several sailors do this at one time. Ishmael states;

I found myself unwittingly squeezing my co-labourers' hands in it, mistaking their hands for the gentle globules. Such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling did this avocation beget; that at last I was continually squeezing their hands, and looking up into their eyes sentimentally; as much as to say, - Oh! My dear fellow beings, why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill humour or envy! Come; let us squeeze the hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other.... Into the very milk and sperm of kindness."<sup>663</sup>

This is a very different sentiment expressed than that at the beginning of the novel, wherein Ishmael states that sailors keep strict boundaries. After spending nights with Queequeg,

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<sup>661</sup> Birgit Brander Rasmussen, *Queequeg's Coffin: Indigenous Literacies and Early American Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 119.

<sup>662</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 32.

<sup>663</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 316.

whether they be romantic, loving or sexual, Ishmael's boundaries have dissolved and it seems he thinks others should too.

## Conclusion.

After Queequeg and Ishmael's first night together at the Inn, Ishmael's gaze changes. He watches Queequeg in their room together at the end of the next day.

Savage though he was, and hideously marred about the face – at least to my taste – his countenance yet had something in it, which was by no means disagreeable. You cannot hide the soul. Through all his unearthly tattooings, I thought I saw the traces of a simple honest heart; and his large deep eyes, fiery black and bold, there seemed tokens of a spirit that would dare a thousand devils...Queequeg was George Washington cannibalistically developed.<sup>664</sup>

Ishmael acknowledges that peculiarity is contextual. Queequeg's face is hideous in Ishmael's taste. In Rokovoko Queequeg would be normal, even handsome or beautiful. However, Rokovoko does not exist and his tattoos are unearthly because of this.

In *Typee* it seems that facial tattoos obscure humanity; the only person that Tom truly respects is Marnoo who has no facial tattoos. Mehevi is briefly given the opportunity to look upon Tom, however, even though Tom is in Typee valley, in their home, he is still the observer, the person who peeps rather than the person who is looked at. In *Typee* there is little understanding between indigenes and whiteness. Yet in *Moby Dick* Ishmael can read the tattooed face despite the fact that he cannot read the tattoos. By drawing attention to Queequeg's eyes Queequeg is granted agency, a reciprocal look.

The joke at the end of this section could be read as undermining the challenge of perception; it mocks Queequeg whilst again reducing his identity to cannibal. However I read it as playfully reinforcing the idea that truth is contextual; if Queequeg were white he could have been president of the United States. This freeplay of meaning creates aporia around Queequeg's tattoos that *Typee* did not as successfully achieve.

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<sup>664</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 28.

## Chapter Five- “A Mark Peculiar.” *Torrey’s Narrative*



Fig. 10. “William Torrey” by William Torrey, in *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey* (Boston: A. J. Wright, 1848).



*Torrey's Narrative: or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey* (hereafter referred to as *Torrey's Narrative*), is, now at least, the lesser known of my texts. This may change or be changing since hard copies of the narrative were reprinted in 2014 and 2016. William Torrey "ran away from a New England Factory at age sixteen and went to sea."<sup>665</sup> In his narrative twenty-three year old Torrey is shipwrecked on an island in the Marquesas'. He lives among a group called the Teheda for eighteen months, and in that time he is tattooed, becomes a warrior, and eats his enemies in cannibal feasts.

Inside the front cover is an engraving of Torrey himself apparently from a sketching 'of his own hand.' There is some irony in this as his hands have been drawn on- it is his hands that are tattooed. The picture is of Torrey from the waist up. He is wearing a large white slouched shirt and small waistcoat, quite different to the stiff formal dress of Olive. His hair is dishevelled and dark, and he faces the viewer squarely, staring at the viewer. His nose is very long and straight, and his eyes are heavy lidded. One elbow leans on something out of the frame. His hands are small and delicate, one in a fist resting on at his waist, one dangling from whatever it is he is leaning on. Each hand is tattooed with light patterns of duel lines that don't appear to have much symmetry or particular shape- they are hard to read. There are lines on his neck that curve from the neckline of his shirt up to the throat then down again, which look like they may be tattoos but may be shadows. There are deep lines on his face which frame his visage, one above the inside of each eyebrow which extends down, past the inside corners of his eyes and down his nose, one running from each cheekbone to the corners of his mouth, one from the side of each nostril to the corners of his mouth, and one running from each side of his nose across his cheek. They are most likely deep wrinkles but they look like they could be tattoos. He only mentions being tattooed on his hands in his text, but the engraving suggests that he might be fully covered. His face is marked in some way, by his experiences and by time.

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<sup>665</sup> Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 244.

The *Narrative* was published in 1848 and was printed just once, in one edition in his lifetime, when Torrey was thirty-four years old.<sup>666</sup> It was printed by A. J. Wright's Steam Press that was advertised as printing writing of "every description done at the shortest notice, and the lowest living prices."<sup>667</sup> This is in contrast with the 1846 edition of *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* which was published by a successful New York Methodist Press called Carlton and Porter and ran 30,000 copies.<sup>668</sup> Likewise, *Typee* was published by John Murray in London in 1846 and in New York by Wiley and Putnam, a leading publisher at the time also in 1846. A second edition was published in 1860.<sup>669</sup> *Torrey's Narrative* was not as successful as my other texts in that it made only one edition and was not, to my knowledge a best seller. I could not determine how many copies were sold, and the publisher's comment suggests it might have been a vanity press.

Little has been written about *Torrey's Narrative*, and little is known about William Torrey outside of what we know from the pages of his narrative. This may be partly because his text was less well written than *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* or *Typee*. It skims over the surface of a lifetime rather than diving into his captivity itself. Despite the story being fantastic, he is not as readable as Stratton or Melville. The time the reader would be most interested in, his time with the Tahuata wherein he became a tattooed cannibal warrior, is paid no more attention than any other storm or voyage. Torrey did not have the formal education of Stratton or Melville; he is a sailor more than a writer. There is no flowery description or obvious philosophical or theological musings.

Stylistically Torrey's narrative is different to my two other texts. There are few characters; he names neither a single indigenous person, nor his thirteen-year-old indigenous wife, nor does he even name his Irish/Canadian wife. William Torrey gives a reader's digest of a life that is fairly unpalatable. It is not moralizing or religious, nor is it well written, and as such its

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<sup>666</sup> I. C. Campbell, *"Gone Native" in Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 40.

<sup>667</sup> A. J. Wright and R. K. Potter, "Wright & Potter, Book and Job Printers," in *The Boston Almanac for the Year 1865* ed S.N. Dickinson.

<sup>668</sup> Brian McGinty, *The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival* (Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 169.

<sup>669</sup> Leon Howard, (1968), "Historical Note," in Herman Melville's, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life the Writings of Herman Melville Vol. 1* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 277–302.

value was to be its ability to thrill and entertain. However he is not a particularly engaging writer, nor a particularly good or bad person. He sometimes considers whites as corrupt and uncivilized as people of colour; he is exploitative of indigenous people but considers himself no better than them. This ambivalence could be linked to aporia rather than the imperial gaze

## Biography

Much of what is known about Torrey comes from his narrative, and as such his biography is mostly of his own telling. He is a fairly unreliable source- the text was published and written over fifteen years after he first set sail. Stratton wrote *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* two years after Oatman was rescued, and Melville wrote *Typee* four years after returning from the Marquesas. Yet, to return to Jacques Derrida's idea that proximity is an illusion of presence: that which is the closest to the event does not necessarily make it truer. Both Stratton and Melville, as we have found, were at least unreliable and at most wilfully deceptive.

Like Stratton and to some extent Melville, Torrey seems to hold himself in some sort of moral authority, though unlike Stratton and Melville he fights and swindles his way around the world. Simply put, he is a hypocrite. He is not very religious, nor is he particularly invested in the truth. He often inserts long passages of other people's writing to describe the places he visits, and rather than describing the feelings of a disastrous situation, he simply claims them not to be possible to describe. Stratton also claims that he cannot put into words the feelings of painful situations, but then usually goes on to describe them anyway; Torrey does not. It would be a worthy undertaking fully to uncover the extent to which his story is true and to write a biography of Torrey, but as an English Literature thesis this is not the place to do so, and nor is 'the truth' of his story altogether necessary for my analysis. The ideas that it explores are worth studying without a clear biography of Torrey.

Nevertheless, there are several details within the narrative which other evidence contradicts. I.C. Campbell states; "this throws some doubt on the authenticity of the narrative, or at least on the accuracy of some aspects of it, but it is possible that Torrey

misremembered certain details or misunderstood them at the time.”<sup>670</sup> Campbell notes that Torrey claimed a group of missionaries refused to rescue him and his fellow captive Noyce from the Teheda, whereas this conflicts with logs of missionary contact at the time.<sup>671</sup> These logs will be explored further later in this Chapter.

Christopher Kilham writes on Kava, the roots of which are and were used in medicine and for spiritual practises throughout Polynesia. He states that Torrey’s Narrative “offered a skewed account of the effects of kava consumption among natives.”<sup>672</sup> Torrey claims that when people consumed Kava; “copious draughts cause a dizziness and a horribly distorted countenance. They lose the use of their limbs and fall and roll about on the ground, until the stupefaction wears away.”<sup>673</sup> It is unlikely Kava would be taken in such large amounts, and it wouldn’t have been taken in large amounts so regularly. He takes some himself when he is bitten by an insect, and in the morning the pain is gone. This is likely how Kava was regularly used, as medicinal rather than for regular intoxication.

Nevertheless, one of the things that makes this story so interesting is that there is less “truth” to the author. I am studying these texts as semi fictional because proving their truth or fallacy is not within my remit or possibility. To refer to Roland Barthes, Within Torrey’s text is the death of the author, simply because I do not know his intentions.<sup>674</sup> Context however is still important, even when studying something fictional. I still find a succinct plot summary or biography to be useful before discussing the text, even if it is mostly of the author’s own potentially unreliable telling. In this way it is less imperial than my other texts, and more aporia oriented in its intention to be sensational without a logocentric devotion to the truth.

William Torrey biography suggests how he was less likely to peep with an imperial gaze at the adventures of his life. He was born in Wilbraham, Massachusetts in 1814 to “poor yet

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<sup>670</sup> I. C. Campbell, *“Gone Native” in Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific* 40.

<sup>671</sup> I. C. Campbell, *“Gone Native” in Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific* 42.

<sup>672</sup> Chris Kilham, *Kava: Medicine Hunting in Paradise* (Rochester: Park Street Press, 1996), 71.

<sup>673</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey* (Boston: A. J. Wright, 1848), 118.

<sup>674</sup> Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” trans. Richard Miller ( New York: Hill and Wang, 1974).

respectable parents.”<sup>675</sup> He was of a lower class than Olive Oatman or Herman Melville. Unlike Melville he took to the sea somewhat by necessity rather than just the pull of adventure, though this did play a part. He worked in a factory as a youth and was bored and badly treated, so he resolved to cast himself “upon the wave of life.”<sup>676</sup> The sea becomes his life; in some ways his freedom and in some ways his captivity.

He is not a patriot. As a youth he felt a captive of his class in New England. He finds the factory life for which he is destined dull, and so attempts to abscond to adventure. Torrey claimed that he first left home to find work at sea at thirteen years old. Finding none, he was taken under the wing of a thief, Mr. Harris. Harris and Torrey assisted on a ferry, transporting a wealthy group of people along the river from Farmington to New London. Harris was affectionate towards young William.

One day, Harris stole a watch from a gentleman. William was the only person not searched, so Harris slipped the watch into William’s pocket, unbeknownst to William. That night Harris placed two pistols under his pillow and remarked, “that he should be pleased to see the man that dared disturb his slumber, and getting in bed took [William] in his arms.”<sup>677</sup> This image is similar to that of Queequeg in *Moby Dick*, holding Ishmael in his arms, yet Harris is threatening rather than “comely.” Perhaps this is the sort of Christian Ishmael is less keen to bunk with.

In the following days Harris stayed close to William and held him by the hand so William could not tell the rest of the company that Harris was the watch thief, for which there was a search. This is foreboding; it is Torrey’s hands that are tattooed, his hands that therefore mark of his insider/outsider status, and it is his hands that are held by Harris. Harris’s physical closeness to William might be read as same sex desire, particularly considering the femininity and smallness of Williams hands in his self portrait. Like in *Moby Dick*, the hands are written as queered or gendered body parts. Juniper Ellis claims that in the Marquesas

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<sup>675</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 11.

<sup>676</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 11.

<sup>677</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 14.

hand tattoos were more linked to women. This is fairly generalizing but could further feminize Torrey's hand tattoos.

This time of Torrey's life and determination to go to sea can also be queered. As James Neill states:

There is also evidence that a large portion of the population of boys and young men from whom seamen were drawn would have been individuals who already had homosexual experience.... sons of poor families, orphans, runaways, seasonal workers or former apprentices roamed the countryside of England. Disparaging accounts of them by contemporary writers portrayed them as sinister gangs of miscreants with dissolute habits who were a threat to the survival of the nation."<sup>678</sup>

Although Neill considers the late seventeenth century in England here, Torrey matches this description of runaways, who were also and still roaming seaside towns in North America in the eighteenth.

Torrey attempted to leave the factory of his hometown four times before he succeeded. On his fourth attempt to run away from the factory and find work at sea, he and his companions were forcibly taken back to the factory. Upon arriving back at the factory he was "given up to the tender mercies of one- the then reigning tyrant... of the Manufacturing Corporation, viz: that of Agent. His tyranny I felt to be far more oppressive than that of any other power I was ever doomed to submit to."<sup>679</sup> This incident is largely the reason why he did not want to go home and does not speak to his family for fifteen years.

The incident at the factory might make us wonder what could be so terrible a punishment for a man who was beaten, in pain, and close to death many times afterwards. He nearly dies in the text various times; he is nearly murdered, by sailors and by indigenous people, he nearly dies in several storms, he is ill and close to death twice, he even nearly dies being chased by a hog. Considering a particularly bad storm he says: "so accustomed are the

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<sup>678</sup> James Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2011), 408.

<sup>679</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 20.

mariners to danger, that perils past cause no forebodings. They are soon forgotten, they rush on to new dangers.”<sup>680</sup> What is it then that the head of the factory did to Torrey?

On the fifth attempt to find work at sea, he managed to board a whaler bound for West Africa. He set to sea in 1825, at sixteen years of age, and did some coastal trips before venturing further afield, “to the Caribbean, Brazil, and the African coast.”<sup>681</sup> If Melville disapproved of those sailors who spread violence, disease, sex and disgrace around the world, Torrey was probably a person of whom Melville would have disapproved. Torrey may even have been a reason that Melville wanted to distance himself from *Typee*. Melville did not want to be known as a “man who lived among the cannibals!”<sup>682</sup> Torrey did.

Torrey spent some months working from ship to ship, mainly travelling the Caribbean, Polynesia, and South America. He and a few others absconded from their ship near Payta, Peru, with the mind for an adventure, but it was a disaster. They did not take enough food and ended up drinking their own urine to stay alive, then were delivered to the authorities as deserters. He sailed again across the Pacific aboard the *Huntress* in 1832; by this time he was twenty-three. The *Huntress* first anchored in Hilo, Hawaii, then Maui. He absconded again in the Polynesian ‘Friendly Islands,’ (Tonga), nicknamed so by Captain Cook. This time he was more successful. He and his companions found food, their ship left without them, and the inhabitants treated them kindly.

After seventeen days Torrey left his companions on Tonga and travelled on board the brig, the *Doll*. The ship attempted to land at Magdalena (now Fatu Hiva), but the indigenous people brandished human bones at them from the beach, and so they did not go ashore. They aimed for Dominica (now Hiva Oa) and were shipwrecked in the Marquesas in February 1835.<sup>683</sup> Some of the crew died in the storm, but the inhabitants of the island welcome the remaining eight shipwrecked men.

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<sup>680</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 112.

<sup>681</sup> David Forbes, e.d., *Hawaiian National Bibliography 1780- 1900: 1831- 1850*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 538.

<sup>682</sup> “Letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, “June 1851 <http://www.melville.org/letter3.htm> [accessed 02/02/2018].

<sup>683</sup> David Forbes, e.d., *Hawaiian National Bibliography 1780- 1900: 1831- 1850*, 538.

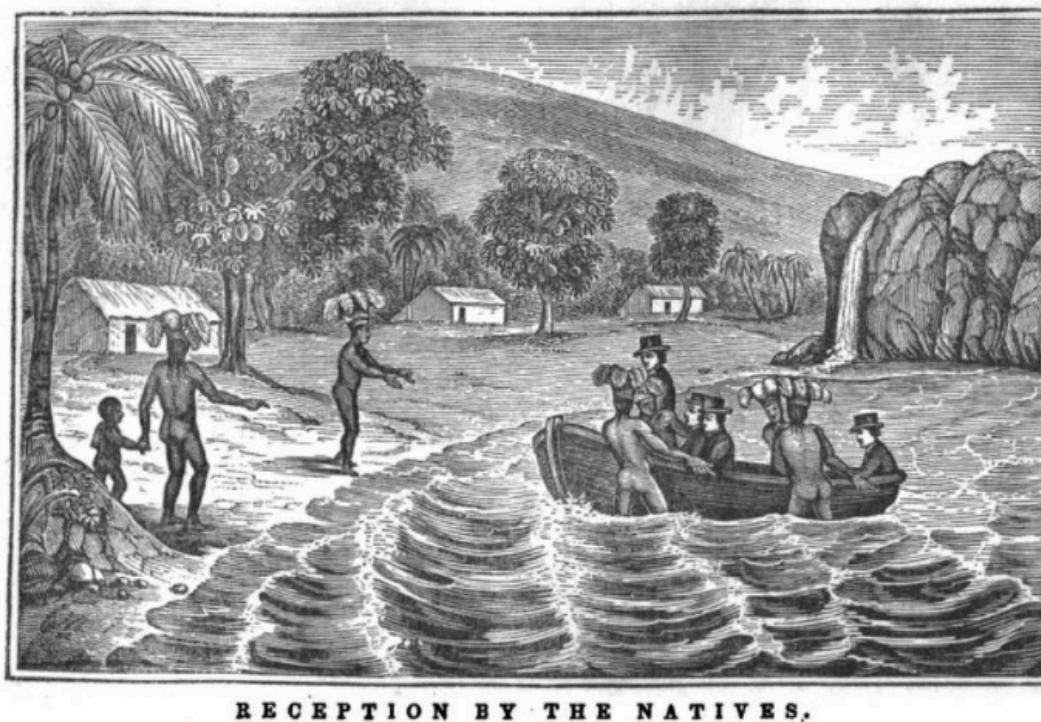


Fig. 11. "Reception by the Natives," William Torrey in *Torrey's Narrative* (Boston: A. J. Wright, 1848), 109.

An etching titled "reception by the natives" shows two black adults and a child, opening their arms to a rowing boat of white men, from the shore. Two indigenous people are helping to guide the boat, and one person holds the hand of a child. It is a gentle and welcoming image.

His text doesn't name the particular island, but it was likely Tahuata. It is the only largely inhabited land between Fatu Hiva and Hiva Ova, and Torrey mentions Resolution Bay, its largest bay and now main port.<sup>684</sup> Mono Tani also falls between Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa, but although it was once inhabited, it is now barren and is too small to have once housed several warring groups. Tahuata was the first point of contact in Polynesia for Europeans, and Álvaro de Mendaña de Neira first landed there in 1595.<sup>685</sup> Captain Cook also visited in 1774 on his first successful voyage to the Marquesas, and Admiral Abel Dupetit-Thouras

<sup>684</sup> I. C. Campbell, "Gone Native" in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 40.

<sup>685</sup> Brand, Donald D Brand, *The Pacific Basin: A History of its Geographical Explorations* The American Geographical Society (Springer: New York, 1967), 33.



established a fort there in 1842, despite some resistance from indigenous leader Chief lotete.<sup>686</sup>

Missionaries made various unsuccessful attempts to educate and/or convert the indigenous peoples of Tahuata between 1825 and 1842. In 1834 a missionary named Reverend Darling landed at Resolution Bay, and claimed to have had a friendly reception from indigenous leader Totete.<sup>687</sup> It is likely that Totete/lotete are the same person, and that this person was the king of the Teheda about whom which Torrey writes. Reverend Darling lived among the peoples of Resolution Bay at the same time that Torrey claimed that a missionary called Mr Daylia lived with the group. As their names are similar and they are apparently there at the same time I can assume that Daylia was based on Darling.

Torrey and Darling's readings of events differ greatly. Torrey claims that Daylia built upon Tabu ground, then ordered his servant to kill Torrey after a dispute, and that the indigenous leader (likely Totete or lotete) expelled Daylia for this. But in a letter to the directors of the London Missionary Society in 1834, Darling claimed to have resided with the leader Totete, and that the indigenous peoples, in particular the women, were keen to learn scripture and to read. Darling also denied that there was any cannibalism among the group.<sup>688</sup> Yet he also does not mention coming into contact with Torrey or any other beachcomber. Darling resided with the group of indigenous people who dwelled in Resolution Bay for six months, and Torrey for a year and a half. Further, Darling would have already been living on the Island when Torrey was shipwrecked; Darling wrote a letter to the London Missionary society from Tahuata in February 1835, and Torrey was shipwrecked in February 1835.<sup>689</sup> They were almost certainly in Tahuata at the same time if Torrey's timeline was accurate. Although of course they may have stayed with different indigenous groups, the similarity between the names Dalia and Darling suggest that Dalia was based on Darling, and Darling and his fellows lived with the Teheda.

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<sup>686</sup> David Stanley, *Moon Handbooks Tahiti: Including the Cook Islands* (Berkeley: Avalon Travel, 2003), 293.

<sup>687</sup> London Missionary Society, *Missionary Chronicle*, 1835.

<sup>688</sup> Letter from the Rev. D. Darling, Vaitahu or Resolution Bay, Tahuata, Marquesas, 11<sup>th</sup> December, 1834.

<sup>689</sup> Extracts of a letter from Reverend. D. Darling, dated Vaitahu, Tahuata, 27<sup>th</sup> February,, 1835.

In *Torrey's Narrative*, once shipwrecked, the crew of the *Huntress* were split into twos and taken in by different indigenous families. After a few days five of the party left on a rowboat. Torrey and two others, Dawson and Noyce, remained on Tahuata. After ten days Dawson died of what Torrey says is sunstroke. Torrey and Noyce travelled to meet other indigenous groups on Tahuata, but when returning to the group with which they would stay, the Teheda, Noyce and Torrey were separated and rarely allowed to meet. Torrey's role in the group was to gather and cook breadfruit. He was given a feminine role, and this indicated outsider status. Only once he was tattooed and fulfilled the masculine warrior role did he function as a male within the group.

War broke out between the Teheda and a neighbouring group, the Cohapha. A Cohapha king died and the Cohaphas kidnapped twelve Teheda men, three women, and two children. War is declared, and Noyce and Torrey are told that they have two options; to fight for the Teheda or die. They are tattooed and this marks their belonging to their king. Torrey is given an indigenous name; "Whooro, a good man."<sup>690</sup> Paul A Gilje states; "his [Torrey's] body was extensively tattooed to demonstrate his commitment to the South Sea islanders," however the text itself does not claim that it was any choice in the matter.<sup>691</sup> The Teheda capture ten Cohapha men, four women and two children, and at least some of the captives are eaten. Torrey and Noyce also eat the captured enemies. Despite being warriors, Torrey and Noyce manage to avoid hand-to-hand combat for five months as the war continues.

After six months on the Island an English ship docks in the Teheda bay, but Torrey and Noyce are watched carefully by the Teheda. Torrey claims that this makes him realise the extent to which he and Noyce are captive; he is afraid of being murdered if he tries to escape. He is captive, owned by and belonging to the Teheda. Just as in the factory, he is not free to leave and is presented with several opportunities before he manages to escape. This is another way that Torrey shows the similarities between indigenous and white people, though these similarities are always negative characteristics.

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<sup>690</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 67.

<sup>691</sup> Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* 244.

Torrey manages to communicate with the captain, but rather than bargaining for his escape, he bargains for a gun so as to win the war with the Cohapa, and to build his and Noyce's reputations as warriors.<sup>692</sup> A way for beachcombers to truly assimilate within Polynesian groups was to be seen as warriors.<sup>693</sup> It seems that Torrey was keener to escape the factory than he was the Teheda. Torrey and Noyce were successful warriors suitably armed and managed to earn their reputations by shooting and injuring a Cohapha chief, Cappayoho, the only indigenous person named in the text.

To lull the Teheda into a false sense of security and escape on the next passing ship, Torrey and Noyce feign indifference to the ship leaving. When the English ship leaves, Torrey builds his own hut and takes a wife, apparently so as to make it look as though he wants to stay. When yet another ship docks, they again barter for ammunition rather than passage, and remain on the island. A third ship makes contact, but its Captain, Fisher, rudely rebuffs Torrey's requests, firstly for help escaping, then for clothes. By this time, Torrey clearly has some sway within his indigenous community. He tells his king that Fisher and his men are 'bad men,' and they were driven from the bay.

In *Torrey's Narrative* the fourth ship to alight in the bay is that of the missionaries, headed by a reverend Daylia. In *Torrey's Narrative* Daylia's attempts to convert the group were unsuccessful, and Torrey and Daylia get into a dispute. Daylia asks one of his servants to kill Torrey, is unsuccessful and is made to leave by the indigenous king. Torrey has little time for religion or religious men in the text.

The fifth ship to enter the bay is commanded by Captain Coleman, a sailor who Torrey had sailed with some years previously. Coleman resolves to help Torrey escape, leaving Noyce alone on the island. Like in the factory, Torrey manages to escape at his fifth opportunity. His captivity on the island therefore offers an eerie mirroring of his captivity in the factory. William Torrey spent just over a year and a half living on Tahuata as a warrior Teheda, and

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<sup>692</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 71.

<sup>693</sup> I. C. Campbell, "Gone Native" in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 113.

thus Paul A. Gilje states that his journey was “no brief flirtation like Melville’s.”<sup>694</sup> Yet his story of his life on the Island is certainly less detailed, less romantic, and less descriptive.

After escaping the Teheda, Torrey travels around Polynesia and the Caribbean having several small adventures. He travels with a brig and absconds in Alaska with another sailor, to “try a life with the natives.”<sup>695</sup> He only stays a few days. The Alaskan indigenous people are very helpful, and he and his friend find passage to Mexico. He stays in St Josephs for some weeks, until getting into another accidental scrape by being involved, unwittingly, with a peddler (of what he does not specify). He runs from a group of officers of the law, and makes it onto another ship. This echoes the story of his time with Harris; the unwitting Torrey fell in with a criminal, quite against his wishes or character. The captain of this ship forges him a passport, and after being granted passage he joins a man-of-war-brig. After this he travels to Buenos Aires, then San Blass, where he “strikes a Spaniard” and gets into a skirmish with the police. He is placed in the stocks for twenty-four hours. He is then involved in various shady deals, for example, a ship he travels on transports cacao nuts under the Peruvian flag to avoid detection, and in San Blass he moves gold doubloons onto a ship and is bribed to be silent.

Torrey becomes ill and is stuck in “Delhouse,” (now Dalhousie) Canada, for two months. He is so ill that he nearly dies, but claimed to have saved his own life by cutting his wrists and nearly bleeding out, to cure his fever. Once aboard another ship he again nearly dies; his ship was nearly lost in a storm and afterwards Torrey is once again very ill and is hospitalized for two weeks. Once recovered he sets sail for Gibraltar then Alexandria, and visits the Red Sea. He then goes to London and then Newfoundland where he marries “a girl of Irish descent” in 1839 but promptly leaves to go back to London, then; the West Indies- Cape Town- West Bengal- China- Cape Town- and London again. He returns home to his wife several times but “he continued to sail off and on until, after a fourteen-year-absence, he returned to New England.”<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>694</sup> Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* 244.

<sup>695</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 98.

<sup>696</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 244.

Torrey's Narrative is not just based in Tahuata, the place that might suggest itself as the site of his captivity. In most of it he goes between stormy sea and foreign and homeport. He is a pinball, bouncing around the world for nearly fifteen years. He attempts to settle in Newfoundland several times but returns to sea in between having children and building his family a cottage. He does not give any detail about his family, just that they exist. He climbs the ranks of the ship and becomes first mate for Sir Henry Potting in 1844, afterwards manning his own ship and becoming an unsuccessful smuggler. He returns to his childhood home fourteen years after first leaving it, and his Irish wife and family join him. At the end of the narrative he works for a time in manufacturing (he is back at a factory), and ends the text working for the Western Railroad Company, stationed at Springfield, Massachusetts.

### ***Torrey's Narrative***

The front cover of the narrative announces, in capital letters, that unlike *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, Torrey's Narrative is "WRITTEN BY HIMSELF." Yet William Torrey the sailor and William Torrey the author are slightly different; his book is authored as William Torrey but in the text, amongst other sailors he goes by Bill. Unlike *Typee* and *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, *Torrey's Narrative* is "Illustrated with Engravings of his own Sketching." William Torrey's narrative's apparent virtue is in its empirical authenticity, as well as the events themselves. He informs the reader "there may be many startling incidents narrated in this work- incidents and circumstances which would jar, even upon the ear of credulity itself, to believe; but the author claims on merit, if nothing else, and that is truth."<sup>697</sup>

If his virtue is authenticity, he professes that his literary ability is not. In his preface he states that he has the

...almost utter inability to the task of giving it a strictly grammatical publication. We whose march is upon the mountain wave, and whose home is upon the deep, have but little opportunity, however strong the desire, to become adepts in grammatical or orthographical science. We better know the intricacies of our calling than the intricacies of scientific lore.<sup>698</sup>

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<sup>697</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 5.

<sup>698</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 5.

Unlike Stratton or Melville, Torrey has had little formal education; Melville spent his childhood learning theology, Torrey was working in a factory. Yet Torrey considers his lack of abilities in writing itself as proof of his authority. This quote suggests that he had a desire for an education that he didn't receive. Because of this he claims that his aim is to inform not to entertain.

In the preface he further suggests that his intention in publishing his story is "to give the civilized world an insight into the manners and customs of the children of the island of the sea...whose manners and customs were so indelibly fixed upon his memory as well as upon his person."<sup>699</sup> Firstly, he immediately constructs the opposition of civilized against savage, then infantilizes the indigenous people to whom he belonged. Secondly, indigenous difference lies in manners and customs, which are behaviours rather than essences. This in keeps with Marquesan ideas about gender that were defined by roles rather than something essential. Whilst infantilizing indigenous people and marking them as savage, he does not consider them intrinsically so. Thirdly, he professes his memories to be as real, as indelible as his tattoos; the "manners and customs are indelibly fixed" upon his person.<sup>700</sup> His tattoos are therefore evidence of memory. Whether or not they are expressions of freedom, they are expressions of memory. However, he does not name the island, or any of its inhabitants. In all likelihood he would remember these things- he remembers a lot of detail of other things. I would assume he did not want people to be able to fact-check. The tattoo itself becomes the proof of his experiences, much like the vial of Nantucket sands that captain Ahab carries with him so as to bring land with him to sea. Torrey is saying, you must take my word, my experience is true. This is the point of the empirical.

## Style and Structure

The style of writing is mainly simple, and may be a reason for its relative lack of success. There is scarcely a metaphor or simile. It is readable and succinct, so can sometimes read like a catalogue rather than a literary text. For example, when describing his first job with

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<sup>699</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 5.

<sup>700</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 5.

Harris, escorting passengers along the river he states; “soon they were on Board. Arrived at Middletown at 4 P.M. Having a fine breeze, we remained but a few moments; took in a boy bound to Saybrook.”<sup>701</sup> This reads much like *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, first published in 1719. In it Defoe also uses a confessional epistolary style, and makes use of short notations such as this.<sup>702</sup> It could be argued that Torrey used *Robinson Crusoe* as inspiration for his *Narrative*, an idea that I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter.

The general structure of the text is thus; the story of his early life, some of his journeys outlined briefly, his time on Tahuata, then various other adventures. After his time on Tahuata the text often reads like a travel guide. His eighteen months on the island take up only a quarter of the text. In *Typee* Tom’s time on Nuku Hiva accounts for most of the text, and in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, the period of captivity takes up around a third, but the text is still focused on this time; what lead up to it and what happened immediately after. For Torrey his time living on the island is not as significant as it is for this thesis.

Torrey gives brief facts and histories of the various places he visits. For example, when he describes Gibraltar he describes the size of its fort (a circumference of seven miles- its galleries at an elevation from three hundred to one thousand three hundred feet) and its political history (won by the English from the Spanish). When he leaves the Tahuata there is some detail of whaling, which makes the narrative somewhat halting. He recounts the details of different kinds of whales and their anatomy, and the process and equipment used to catch them. This is not done in as much detail as Melville, but is similar to *Moby Dick*, perhaps even its precursor. Torrey’s *Narrative* was published in 1848, two years after *Typee* and three years before *Moby Dick*.

Although they are in plain language, Torrey’s descriptions can be effective in explaining places. He changes tense when describing Cape Verdes, claiming, “the soil is bad, and the climate is disagreeable, and the shores are beaten with perpetual storms. Nothing but reeds and moss cover the ground. The sky is perpetually concealed from view by thick fogs.”<sup>703</sup>

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<sup>701</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 13.

<sup>702</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), ed Michael Shinagel (New York: Norton, 1994).

<sup>703</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 32.

This kind of effective though sparse description is perfectly pleasant to read. He sporadically uses a metaphor or simile, though it is a very rare occasion. When describing icebergs and ice formations, he states “the water which dashes against the mountainous ice, freezes into an infinite variety of forms, and presents to the admiring view of the voyager, ideal towns, streets, churches, steeples, and almost every form which imagination can picture to itself.”<sup>704</sup> This is particularly interesting as within the *Narrative*, Torrey does not consider such places home. Such rare passages demonstrate that Torrey is perfectly capable of using sensitive descriptions to romanticize the places he visits, but he mostly eschews such flights of sentimentality.

Paul A. Gilje considers the impact of sentimentality in nineteenth century North American culture.

With this sentimentalization was a greater emphasis on the shore-side attachments between sailors at sea and women on shore... because most seamen were young, their first line of attachment was to the mother who gave them birth... William Torrey recalled that as soon as he began his first voyage “the joys of home, a mother’s kind care, and a sister’s fond love rushed upon my mind and I half regretted the step I had taken.”<sup>705</sup>

Yet the rest of the narrative does not show he is particularly sentimental, as he goes on in life. He writes home to his mother just once, and his letter goes unanswered. He does not name or discuss his Irish Canadian wife at all, indeed, whenever he tries to settle at home with her is bored. He is more sentimental about his life as a sailor and about other sailors than he appears to be about his home. Though perhaps this is through a sentimentality that he feels unable to express. He rarely writes about his feelings.

He plainly admits not to be able truly to describe his more intense experiences in text. When writing about a storm in which he nearly loses his life, he states;

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<sup>704</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 34

<sup>705</sup> Paul A Gilje, *To Swear like a Sailor: Maritime Culture in America, 1750- 1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 27.



In giving a just and accurate description of this, as well as every storm at sea, the pen entirely fails. There can be no just conception of it, but by having vividly impressed upon the mind, by keen, sensitive reality.<sup>706</sup>

For Torrey reality is sensitive, it is sensory. Truth is feeling, it is presence. This is particularly interesting in considering that his tattoos, at least his most visible tattoos, are on his hands. He touches, moves, writes, and experiences the world through his hands, which are marked indelibly by his experience.

Stylistically, an obvious way in which Torrey's Narrative is different to my other texts is because of the amount of quotations, cited and un-cited research, and the passages borrowed from other texts. Research itself and intertextual references aren't extraordinary; Melville references other texts on whales to describe whales, though he can be critical of them. Yet Torrey uses other people's texts to describe his own experiences.

**"I would refer my readers".**

Despite his lack of formal education, William Torrey was well read. He must have read at least some of Captain Cook's accounts, and knows Cook's influence on exploration, and his history.<sup>707</sup> When in Juan Fernandez he states it is where Alexander Selkirk's adventures "gave rise to a novel known as the adventures of Robinson Crusoe."<sup>708</sup> He does not mention Defoe, the actual author of *Robinson Crusoe*, showing that he values empirical experience more than writing itself.

As a child Torrey read widely. He states;

Often have I read, when a boy, of the kindness of the North American Indian to the weary, wandering white man, even while hostilities were raging between them; and at the very time we were shown to the paths of civilization, our American Congress were legislating on the best means for their utter annihilation.<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>706</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 60.

<sup>707</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 33.

<sup>708</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 59.

<sup>709</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 100.

Torrey's readings of Indigenous North American captivity narratives are thoughtful. His claim that as a child he read "often" of "the North American Indian," suggests he likely read North American captivity narratives, which were very popular and shaped many people's thoughts about indigenous North Americans.<sup>710</sup> However he claims he read of the "kindness" of the "North American Indian," even that indigenous North Americans assisted in building the white nation. This suggests he was more selective in his reading and more informed in his perspective. He did not come to the conclusion, as did other contemporaries of his, that these narratives showed a cruelty that should be destroyed. He explicitly acknowledges the United States sanctioned genocide of indigenous North Americans; "our American Congress were legislating on the best means for their utter annihilation."<sup>711</sup> This passage alone could be held up against *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* to destabilise its white supremacist message.

Torrey gives the reader information about the different countries that he visits; he quotes Cook to talk about the mass of ice bergs (Cook encountered icebergs 5,400 feet in height) and Selkirk to give the latitudes of the Sandwich Islands. He quotes a page Selkirk to give a succinct description of some Pacific Islands in general.<sup>712</sup> Within the text he goes to over twenty countries and even more cities within the space of fifteen years, and it is unclear as to whether he took notes. Certainly he read, and as such may have found reading a good aide to memory.

Further, he was a sailor and often only saw the ports of places briefly before again setting sail. When describing Peru he claims not to have seen very much of it and so refers to other peoples information, though he does not specify whose. He often has whole paragraphs in quotation marks but does not credit the original author. In some cases, due to the technology that Torrey's contemporary readers wouldn't have had (search engines), I could find the texts he quoted without crediting. In one case the author is S.C. Stewart (whose work he appears to use more than any other), in another case he quotes an excerpt from *Lights and Shadows of Sailor Life* by Joseph Clark, which was published only a year before

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<sup>710</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 190.

<sup>711</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 190.

<sup>712</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 59.

Torrey's *Narrative*.<sup>713</sup> Interestingly, Clark's full title includes the phrase "the mountain wave" which Torrey uses in his preface.

If Torrey was indeed well read, and read several Polynesian travel narratives, it is likely that he would have read the bestseller, *Typee*, yet he does not reference it directly or quote from it at all. Bill Pearson believes that Torrey was influenced by Melville; "one can see Melville as the model for *Torrey's Narrative*."<sup>714</sup> This illusion of absence, to me, reads as though Torrey did not want to credit Melville with the story as it was too similar. It would suggest that Torrey modelled his story around Melville's, and this would suggest that it was not his true experiences. Torrey wanted his narrative to be his own because he championed individualised self-possession. This contrasts with the way he uses other peoples texts.

Torrey also employs other texts to give descriptions of scenery. Despite his protests about his writing skills, he is perfectly easy describing places, so this seems strange. He visits a volcano on Hawaii that Lord Byron (cousin to better known poet, Lord Byron) and C. S. Stewart, a London Missionary, once visited. He ends Chapter four stating; "I would refer my readers to a description given by Stewart, believing it to be the most graphic ever given."<sup>715</sup> This chapter ends with the seemingly irrelevant etching of a fountain, set upon some grass, which consists of a statue of an angel holding up a basin from which water flows. In the centre of the basin is a small ragged obelisk. The streams of water are etched in black, and appear to imprison the angel. The next chapter is a long excerpt from Stewarts travel narrative, *Journal of Residence in the Sandwich Islands* (1828).<sup>716</sup> Torrey's preface again borrowed language from the title of another book; in this case C.S Stewart claims to give "...Remarks on the Manners and Customs..." of indigenous people. Torrey's preface also claims to give insight into the "manners and customs" of the Teheda.

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<sup>713</sup> Joseph Clark, *Light and Shadows of Sailor Life, as Exemplified in Fifteen Years' Experience, Including the More Thrilling Events of the U.S Exploring Expedition and Reminiscences of an Eventful Life on the "Mountain Wave"* (Boston: John Putnam, 1947).

<sup>714</sup> Bill Pearson, *Rifled Sanctuaries: Some views of the Pacific Islands in Western Literature* (Aukland: Aukland University Press, 1984), 47.

<sup>715</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 36.

<sup>716</sup> C. S. Stewart, *Journal of a Residence in the Sandwich Islands During the Years 1823, 1824 and 1825: Including Descriptions of the Natural Scenery, and Remarks on the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants; an Account of Lord Byron's visit in the British Frigate Blonde, and an Excursion at the Great Volcano of Kirauea in Hawaii*

Later, when Torrey describes Tahuata he uses a passage of Stewart's that describes Nuku Hiva, and specifically mentions "Hapa" and "Taipi," the groups which Melville's text was based on. Melville's description of both Marquesan scenery and customs are just as in depth and insightful and Stewart's, again begging the question as to why Torrey would not use *Typee* as a reference. Further, Mary K. Bercaw Edwards claims that C. S. Stewart's narrative likely influenced *Typee*.<sup>717</sup>

The long chapter of Stewart's is particularly peculiar as Stewart's experience is so particular to him; Stuart describes his encounter with people and with nature, the incidence of crater opening, and the emotions that he feels. He descends into a huge crater and is overcome by its sublimity. Stewart considers God the Creator, and Torrey does not seem to be particularly religious or mention God at all until this point. Torrey would therefore have had much more in common with Melville, the sailor aboard a whale ship than he would have Stewart, the missionary. Indeed Torrey, like Melville, does not like missionaries very much at all.

The chapter ends with an etching of another fountain. This time the basin is held up by an S shaped, perhaps snake shaped, piece of stone. There appears to be some kind of bone next to a rock at its base. The cliff-like obelisk in the basin is much larger than that in the prior etching, and the fountain is shorter. The smaller streams of water do not obscure the base of the fountain, it does not appear to be imprisoned like the angel. The S shape is similar to that of the tattoos on Torrey's hands in the initial etching of him inside the front cover of the text. This reads to me that the angel, representing Christianity, is the prison, whereas the indigenous image of the tattoo shape and the ambiguous bone represents freedom.

### **William Torrey's Tattoos.**

Torrey's tattoos, according to Torrey, much like Oatman's, mark his insider status but also his captivity. He states that on Tahuata, "these valleys are occupied by different tribes, each bearing a mark peculiar to themselves. Some bear it upon the hands, others upon the face,

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<sup>717</sup> Mary K. Bercaw Edwards, "Questioning *Typee*." 32.

breast &c. The tribe with which I was connected bore it upon the hands, wrists and ankles. This was the largest tribe on the island called the Teheda.”<sup>718</sup>

The fact that his tattoos are on his hands and wrists (he does not specify whether he is tattooed on the ankle), means that he is marked as distinctly Tehedan whilst on the island. He is not simply marked as indigenous, but of a specific group. Yet he describes the Teheda a tribe that he is “connected with,” rather than a tribe that he is a part of. Torrey’s narrative does not indicate that he felt a real part of the group, but then neither does Oatman’s, and other evidence, particularly the tattoo, proves otherwise.

Although Torrey may not consider his tattoos as making him Tehedan, apparently the Teheda would have. Torrey is tattooed because the Teheda are at war with another group, and Torrey claims that he and Noyce are told that they should “decide whether or not we would bear the kings mark and join the tribe and assist in protecting the bay.”<sup>719</sup> The tattoo is a symbol of joining the group, not just being connected to it but connected inside it. But they are apparently given no choice in this; if he and Noyce do not become warriors and get tattooed, they will be put to death. This means that he is held captive in his identity as a part of the Teheda.

Torrey describes the tattooing process;

First an ink is made from the smoke of the *Amer nut*... the figure to be made is then traced on the desired spot, with a stick dipped in the ink. An instrument made by fastening six or eight small sharp fish bones to a stick, which in shape much resembles the gauge used in splitting straw, is dipped in the solution and driven into the flesh by means of a blow given with a short stick, thus forming a mark which cannot be obliterated.<sup>720</sup>

The permanence of the tattoo is emphasized, as is his experience of pain; “This was an operation indeed painful, especially so on the more sinewy parts of the hand. A long time

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<sup>718</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 64.

<sup>719</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 64.

<sup>720</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 67.

elapsed before I could use my hands very much.”<sup>721</sup> With this done, he considers himself to be a captive;

A person thus marked is considered as the king's own private property, subject entirely to his control and disposition, and when bearing this mark can never desert the tribe, for he would be as cruelly treated by the tribe he wishes to join, as by the deserted one, should he be taken, the penalty for which is death.<sup>722</sup>

Torrey's tattoo in this instance is certainly an expression of captivity, not to the Teheda, but to the King himself. His tattoo is apparently not a choice, just as Stratton claims that Olive Oatman's tattoo is not a choice, and Melville, with some difficulty, chooses not to be tattooed. Torrey's tattoo comes with the consequence of violence, whether it is consensual or not. Either he would be tattooed and commit violence or he would not be tattooed and be put to death. Within the text, Torrey is not free to choose to be tattooed, nor is he free to choose not to fight, or to choose not to eat human flesh. Yet there is some evidence that if these events did happen, they were very much his choice.

In *Torrey's Narrative*, when the missionaries live with the Teheda, they are told that they can stay on the premise that “should a war break out, they would be tattooed, or driven from the land.”<sup>723</sup> They are not faced with the same choice as he is; they can leave. But then, they *can* leave- they have their own ship. The missionary logs themselves mention no such thing, though they do not mention tattoos at all. In this situation however, the missionaries have a choice. They are not considered captive or a part of the group. I would argue that it is likely that Torrey chose to be tattooed, and that if that were true, he also chose to fight in the war, and to eat human flesh. Although his title professes that he spent time amongst the cannibals, he was one.

A good motivation to choose to be tattooed is that Torrey's tattoos change his status in Teheda hierarchy. Often indigenous group leaders would let white beachcombers live with them “for their amusement or to distinguish themselves in much the same way as a

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<sup>721</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 67.

<sup>722</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 67.

<sup>723</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 79.

millionaire might like to have a rare bird or dog,” but one of the ways that a white person could be taken seriously within a group was to become a warrior.<sup>724</sup> Before being tattooed he is of a lower status; he prepares bread fruit. If, as G. G. Bolich states; “Polynesians conceive gender in terms of social role rather than as a stable, inner trait,” Torrey’s ethnic status and gender role may have meant he was not considered a ‘real man.’<sup>725</sup> This was not necessarily a bad thing to the Teheda, but to Torrey it may have been.

### **Torrey’s Colonial Gaze.**

William Torrey’s gaze was certainly more rogue, more violent, and apparently more directly oppressive to indigenous people than Oatman’s or Melville’s. Like Olive his tattoos assimilated him to his indigenous group, and unlike Olive he claims that they are a mark of belonging to the indigenous ‘Other.’ He fights a war with his indigenous group, eats their enemies, and marries a child bride. He is also more trapped by the hierarchical systems of colonization. He is a working class drifter, a nobody with no formal education. Unlike Olive, whose tattoos contrasted with her identity, his tattoos do not make him or his text peculiar. As far as the text suggests, he was a working class tattooed sailor and a mediocre writer, and this did not challenge or entice the interest of the white gaze enough for it to make his text or his life well studied. He also gives a less outwardly critical commentary of the white gaze than Melville, though I think there is some anti-colonial, or even anti-white, subtext buried fairly deeply under the usual white supremacist rhetoric of his time.

In terms of his colonial gaze, on his first voyage to Equatorial Guinea, Torrey and his crew land on the island Fernando Po (now Bioko). The inhabitants, taken by surprise, run away screaming. Upon this Torrey and his fellow sailors “ransacked their huts.”<sup>726</sup> They Island hop and then alight again at St Vincent. The captain gives the crew some money and Torrey states that the crew spent it “among the natives, giving but little restraint to our passions.”<sup>727</sup> This most likely references the prostitution of indigenous peoples throughout

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<sup>724</sup> I. C. Campbell, “Gone Native” in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 112.

<sup>725</sup> G. G. Bolich, *Transgender History & Geography: Crossdressing in Context*, (North Carolina: Lulu, 2007), 61

<sup>726</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 22.

<sup>727</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 25.

the Pacific Islands. Once the crew run out of money they are not so welcome. They knock at someone's house hoping for shelter and when ignored pull a piece of wood from the side of the house and walk in. They take what they want from that house and from the old woman living there, delighting in the chaos. They are arrested the next morning, but their captain pays their bail and Torrey considers it a jolly time.

After Fernando Po and St Vincent they head for Prince's Island. Torrey and the crew offer gifts to the indigenous peoples, who are welcoming and helpful, but even then they are portrayed as less than human. He observes a man who has no hands and Torrey interprets that this is a barbaric punishment for stealing. The man promptly falls in the sea and is left to drown by his group. He observes another very ill man who is left to suffer. Torrey interprets seeing his corpse that this man was beaten to death rather than helped. Torrey considers indigenous people barbaric. When he is on Tahuata and the Teheda bring him to visit neighbouring groups, the groups, joyous to see them, are described as "almost deafening us with their confounded gibbering."<sup>728</sup> This image further dehumanizes the indigenous peoples.

On the other hand, Torrey is far more sympathetic about North American indigenous peoples, and this contradicts the ideology of the North American indigenous captivity narrative. He absconds from another ship in Alaska in 1837, and the indigenous people help him and his fellow sailor, "with the benevolence which is so justly applied to them, they set about rendering us as comfortable as possible, giving us to eat of their humble fare, after which we were nicely wrapped in skins."<sup>729</sup> Their food is good, and they are described as benevolent, a common descriptor for good. Another Alaskan indigenous person helps them reach New Archangel and as they part, the person says "me love do good."<sup>730</sup> The simplified English in this sentence emphasises the words "love" and "good."

He outlines some fairly detailed colonial histories. He explains that in Peru the Inca leaders were put to death by their Spanish invaders and then explains the recent political rifts and

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<sup>728</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 64.

<sup>729</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 18.

<sup>730</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 100.



divisions in the area. At least by the time that he wrote his narrative, he had an understanding of colonialism and its history, though not always outwardly disapproving of it. He describes the Tower of London, which “for centuries ... had been the theatre of England’s bloodiest deeds, and its grey old walls stand as the last monument of tyranny, despotism, and death.”<sup>731</sup> Here imperialism is violently performative. This performance of gore is mirrored in his description of Teheda cannibalism, as I will outline later.

Through the Teheda King he also shows the indigenous perspective, when a group of missionaries come to Tahuata after about a year, Torrey has various disagreements with them, and Mr Daylia attempts to have Torrey killed by an indigenous servant. Because of this the missionaries are driven from the island. The act shows missionaries as hypocritical, immoral and deceptive. The indigenous king tells them that they must leave or they will kill them all. Daylia holds up a baby and asks if the king would kill it. ““Yes,” says the king, “a nit will be a louse.””<sup>732</sup>

Torrey mentions only one incident of whites being massacred by indigenous Marquesan people. An English ship in a bay of Keppell island, intending to land the next day, was set upon. The indigenous people crept aboard and killed and ate every man but one boy, for seemingly no reason.<sup>733</sup> But Torrey understands the nature of colonialism; that it is not individualized. Torrey claims that the indigenous peoples suppose that all white people have a common king and this is why they massacre some people seemingly without motive. Importantly, it is because of white violence that violence against whites happens.

After leaving Tahuata with captain Coleman, Coleman lands on an unnamed island and claims he will shoot the first native he sees. A group of indigenous people run onto the shore with weapons and the captain shoots a person in the leg. Torrey observes, “to the captain [this] was much sport, but it wouldn’t be sport to the next unsuspecting crew that might touch there, who would without a doubt atone for his folly.”<sup>734</sup> In this we understand that

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<sup>731</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 139.

<sup>732</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 80.

<sup>733</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 90.

<sup>734</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 92.

for Torrey, exploitation is a part of the adventure for William. In this way his body, even before being tattooed, is a site of contested freedom.

Like Melville, and to some extent, through Royce Oatman, like Stratton, Torrey acknowledges that indigenous violence towards white people is caused by colonial violence. However, unlike Stratton and Melville who despite this think that indigenous people are barbaric, Torrey thinks white people are no better. He does not consider indigenous people ideologically threatening as Stratton does. He is not horrified and afraid of tattoos and cannibalism as Melville is. Indeed, while Torrey is ambivalent to the violent treatment of indigenous people, he thinks that white people perpetrate and deserve violence. His sentiment is similar perhaps to Ishmael's in *Moby Dick*; better a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian.

### **Cannibalism; 'delicious morsels.'**

Bill Pearson believes that Torrey was partly influenced by Melville; "like Melville, [Torrey] lives with a Marquesan tribe, takes part in a war, but goes better than Melville in sharing in a cannibal - and confesses to liking the food."<sup>735</sup> In this and other ways, Torrey supersedes Melville through crossing the boundaries that Melville did not; he participates in a way that Melville does not. Melville is happy to partake in sexual relationships, perhaps queered sexual relationships, but being tattooed and eating people are a step too far.

Before arriving in Tahuata, Torrey teases the reader with the possibility of cannibalism, and the possibility that he could be a cannibal. The *Huntress* arrives in Hawaii in April 1833, and Torrey and the crew are granted some time ashore. They bargain with an indigenous person for a meal and Torrey states that the men are "particularly fond of the meat."<sup>736</sup> They enquire as to what kind of meat it is, and the response is a "knowing laugh." The indigenous person eventually says that it is dog, and many of the sailors vomit, but Torrey "relished it,

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<sup>735</sup> Bill Pearson, *Rifled Sanctuaries: Some views of the Pacific Islands in Western Literature* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1984), 47.

<sup>736</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 35.

while supposing it something else.”<sup>737</sup> He does not clarify what he imagines it to be; perhaps chicken but perhaps he is already fantasizing about human flesh.

Although he does not always directly refer to cannibalism, he implies that the meat eating habits of people of colour are strange. For example, he writes, “such is the immense population of China, that nothing that can be eaten is thrown away. Puppies and rats are carried about the streets for sale.”<sup>738</sup>

On visiting South Africa he states; “almost any kind of food is acceptable to Hottentots; they eat roots, ants, grass, mice, toads &c.”<sup>739</sup> He notes this as if it is peculiar but is outwardly non-judgemental as to whether or not it is right or wrong to eat ‘Other’ meats. He can be deeply racist, though he does acknowledge the bias of his gaze. On describing black people in Cape Town he states; “Their women are, to European eyes, very repulsive objects.”<sup>740</sup> By acknowledging his European perspective he considers himself objective, not realizing that this perspective itself is racist. Nevertheless, although he is repulsed by black women, he is not repulsed by unusual food.

Immediately after leaving Tahuata Torrey provides a chapter of information about whaling, in which he describes the whale as having a gullet “large enough to admit a man.”<sup>741</sup> He is in awe of this. The whale is an ultimate man-eater- it can consume an entire human body. Torrey finishes the chapter discussing how the whale is carved up. “It is taken on deck, and cut in pieces for the pots, when it is tried out, and put in casks. After the bone has been secured, the carcass is allowed to sink.”<sup>742</sup> This mirrors the cooking and dividing of the human bodies of the on Tahuata; after being cooked in ovens the human bodies are cut into pieces, then put into pots. This draws a parallel between western practises and indigenous ones; Teheda eating habits are not so peculiar to Torrey. Torrey was at times a whaler, and does not seem to be critical of whaling. This parallel excuses or even normalizes cannibalism.

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<sup>737</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 36.

<sup>738</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 135.

<sup>739</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 132.

<sup>740</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 132.

<sup>741</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 86.

<sup>742</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 88.

It would seem that he entices the reader to consider how they treat bodies, to challenge them into considering their appetite for violence or cruelty.

When he and the crew of the *Huntress* visit the Galapagos in 1835. They come across a turtle;

We turned him over upon his back, to see his agility in turning himself back; he ran out his long neck, which was not less than two feet and a half long, and with his short legs laboured most assiduously; he at length accomplished his object; this done we laid hold of his legs, which were not more than six inches long, and started for the boat; when we came to a steep point in the path, we would place him upon the edge of his shell, and set him rolling- many times a long way.<sup>743</sup>

This kind of cruelty for sport firstly confronts the white gaze with its own brutality. And in this way too, Torrey seems to consider cannibalism and barbarism human desires rather than indigenous ones.

Cannibalism is a part of Torrey's indigenous initiation as much as tattooing is, though it seems that he is more willing to eat the enemy than to be tattooed by the ally. After the war for which Torrey is tattooed, the captured members of the rival group, the Cohapha, are tied to stakes and mocked, then a group elder and the group leader perform a ceremony of chanting. The prisoners are then killed with a blow to the head, and then the Teheda perform a war dance.

Cannibalism is connected to spirituality and ideology. Before the feast and as a part of the ceremony, the group place some of the human stew on Tabu ground. Torrey observes that "in and around the houses of the gods, are bones of all shapes and kinds, of men, beasts, fowls, and fishes."<sup>744</sup> These may be the same fish bones that are used to tattoo Torrey, but there is no indication from Torrey's description of tattooing that his tattooing was ceremonial or 'tabu.' He does not describe who tattooed him or where, just that it was done with fish bones. Further, these ritualized practises are queered. Ellis also tells us that after

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<sup>743</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 53.

<sup>744</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 68.

such tattoos were completed there was a ceremony, “shocked observers declare that sexual revelry may have accompanied these feasts. The public displays suggest that neither tattoo patterns nor sexuality were personal matters.”<sup>745</sup>

After butchering the bodies, the Teheda then “prepare the oven.” Torrey employs similar imagery to that constructed in *Typee*; the sinister oven, the calabash, the ceremony, the dancing, and then the feast. However, this is not ambiguous as it is in *Typee*, wherein Melville states a “slight glimpse” of a human skeleton “sufficed.”<sup>746</sup> Eyewitness accounts of cannibalism were “guaranteed an audience,” and as such Torrey gives the reader more than a glimpse.<sup>747</sup> Torrey describes the process in gruesome detail;

Breadfruit, and other things collected in great abundance; the bodies were brought forward, having the entrails removed, the legs bent upon the back, and fastened to the neck. Small hot stones were placed in the body, and the whole then placed in the ovens, as described. The time required for baking a body in that manner, does not exceed forty minutes...they are removed from the oven to a table, where they are disjointed...a person selected for the purpose then follows with a calabash, filled with a portion of the body, also of the other articles prepared for the occasion.”<sup>748</sup>

The bodies are contorted, opened, gutted, disjointed, portioned out and incorporated.

Torrey describes it in the same detached detail as he does his tattoo, and the weather.

Cooking a human does not exceed forty minutes. He is not judgemental, but he is factual. In this way he leaves it up to his reader to be revolted, or not.

Torrey acknowledges that white people will only eat other people out of necessity, but expresses that there is some longing and enjoyment involved. The difference between civilization and heathenism or barbarity is in truth; the Teheda enact their desires without shame, white people only enact their desires in disaster situations. When Torrey is in a dire situation in a storm, he considers another ship, which his then captain, Francis Spade, was in charge of. After a terrible storm the crew were left to drift upon the wreck.

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<sup>745</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 176.

<sup>746</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 271.

<sup>747</sup> Andrew Delbanco, *Melville: His World and Work* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2006), 84.

<sup>748</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 68.

They at last resorted to the horrible extreme of casting lots, to see which should fall a victim to satisfy the hunger of the rest. The first lot fell upon a boy 12 or 15 years of age. Knowing his fate, with that degree of fortitude that characterized the martyrs of other days, he set about putting an end to his own life by bleeding... no sooner had the pulse ceased to beat than the body was divided among the half famished crew, who with the rapacity of tigers fell to devouring it. Two other boys afterwards fell victims to the same fate.<sup>749</sup>

This description is just as graphic and shameless as when Torrey writes of Teheda cannibalism. That the bodies consumed were of young or teenage boys reads as perverse. In fact, Torrey often emphasizes age differences to show the patriarchal power, both in indigenous society and white society.

To return to the cannibal feast, whilst not passing any apparent judgement as to the kind of meat, he describes the process as sinful through gluttony.

They eat as long as they can, when they join in the dance or sink away in a senseless stupor, the cause of which, is, that on such occasions, they drink very freely indeed. This lasts from one half to an hour, when they again eat and drink, until the second and third stupor seizes upon them, which continues until the last morsel is eaten.<sup>750</sup>

The Teheda are likely drinking Kava “freely.” Further, this Othering “They” is deceptive. Noyce and Torrey are as much a part of the feast as they are a part of the war. They are not among the cannibals, they are also cannibals.

In those feasts we were compelled to partake, which was greatly against our wishes; yet had we been unconscious of what the feast consisted, I think we would have called it a most delicious morsel; and should any of my readers sit down to a dish nicely prepared, without knowing what it was, or supposing it something different, I think they would join me in declaring it of the richest flavour.”<sup>751</sup>

There certainly seems to be far less of a penalty for not partaking in the feast than for not being tattooed. Indeed, the cannibal feast was a far more pleasant experience. Torrey claims that he is captive, but quite enjoys eating people, a thing he likely wouldn’t have done as a

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<sup>749</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 120.

<sup>750</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 69.

<sup>751</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 69.

‘free’ person. With being tattooed and therefore already marked as belonging to the group, he is freer to break the taboos of Western society.

It is possible also, that the description of cannibalism was purely fiction. Reverend Darling, the missionary on whom Torrey’s Daylia was likely based, claimed in a letter to the London Missionary Society, that:

The people of these islands are in a most degraded state indeed at present. Every thing that is filthy and vile is practised at present; and although wars have ceased for years, the eating of human flesh has never been practised on this island, since Tetupu, the great chief on the other side of the island, died. Yet there are very many hateful customs remaining.<sup>752</sup>

The Teheda may have been hiding the practise from the missionaries, but it is unlikely they could have hidden a loud and large ceremonial feast from the group that were living among them for six months. Torrey likely invented the cannibal banquet as it would sell his book. This begs the question; what were the unnamed ‘hateful customs?’ What practises did the missionaries find ‘filthy and vile?’ I would argue that Darling refers to what he perceived as deviant sexual practises as well as ‘heathen’ spirituality. Cannibalism did not exist but queered sexualities and genders did. Cannibalism can therefore be read as a metaphor for these other, unspoken deviances.

## **Gender/Sexuality**

When discussing gender in the various places that he visits, Torrey writes the invariably racist and sexist ideology of his time. In Alexandria he claims that,

The beard is worn and the hair shaven. The men wear petticoats, and the women trowsers. Fingers supply the place of forks; a cushion is used instead of a chair, and a tray instead of a table is set upon the floor. Females hide their faces and display their bosoms... the females are often married at fifteen, and sometimes at an earlier age.<sup>753</sup>

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<sup>752</sup> Extracts of a letter from Reverend. D. Darling, dated Vaitahu, Tahuata, 27<sup>th</sup> February,, 1835.

<sup>753</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 127.

He queers the bodies, clothes, and eating habits of the Egyptian peoples, linking strange eating to queerness. He also notes that women marry at fifteen as if this is something peculiar, though his own indigenous wife was thirteen.

Clothes, or the lack thereof, represent Torrey's sexual and gendered incorporation into the indigenous group. After five months on Tahuata an English ship lands in the bay. Torrey and Noyce are closely watched, and Torrey claims that there was no chance to escape. Feigning indifference Torrey manages to talk to the captain. Torrey states; "The scanty allowance of clothes with which I left the wreck, had long before fallen off, leaving me entirely naked, and exposed to the sun's scorching rays; besides, my long beard, and uncombed hair, rendered me in appearance scarce less than a savage."<sup>754</sup> At this time Torrey would also have been tattooed. It seems counter intuitive that, naked, he would appear less white, but naked and tattooed perhaps he would have. Nakedness and therefore sexuality are linked to appearing like an indigenous person, and tattoos are linked to nakedness.

Torrey and Noyce are permitted to board the fourth ship that lands in the bay, the missionary ship. They crawl up the bulwark and find themselves "as naked as we when born, before two or three English ladies. We instantly jumped overboard, seized a canoe and pulled for the shore, when, Adam-like, we procured leaves and made aprons for ourselves."<sup>755</sup> Their nakedness is not so much of a shame amongst male sailors, but among ladies it is. Nakedness itself is therefore regarded as homosocial. Their attempts at clothing themselves are also queered and naturalized- they wear aprons, but like Adam, not like Eve.

Torrey does seem to desire clothes and in turn civilization. When a third ship docks in the bay, the captain, Fisher will not grant them passage without full permission from the indigenous group, which Torrey knows he will not get. Downcast, Torrey asks that if he cannot be rescued, at least he could be clothed. Fisher replies, "I do not carry clothes around for such a miserable fellow as you are."<sup>756</sup> He is denied clothes because he has betrayed

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<sup>754</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 69.

<sup>755</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 78.

<sup>756</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 77.



whiteness. Beachcombers were often scorned in this way because they were “deemed traitors” to civilization.<sup>757</sup>

Thus, it is not just the indigenous people who are holding Torrey captive, but the people of power on the various European ships who deny Torrey escape. It is only when a person who he sailed with, a person likely one of the same class as him, lands that he is rescued. When finally rescued by captain Coleman,

...the first kind offer of the captain as I came on board was to give me clothes to cover my nakedness. Awkward, indeed I felt as well as acted, when clothed again, having been naked eighteen months. And as I tasted of the salt meats and other articles found on ship board, cooked so different from what I had been accustomed to so long, I could scarcely eat them.”<sup>758</sup>

Whiteness and civilization is linked with clothing and with food. After eighteen months Torrey is more at home being naked and eating people than he is clothed and eating salt meat. This draws attention to the arbitrariness of civilization/ the indigenous ‘Other’; Torrey is white but he finds the things he links to whiteness awkward and unpalatable. Missing the English language is difficult for Torrey, as is what he describes as the “deprivation, change of diet, and the probability of our being forever doomed to dwell among them, tended much to impair our health.”<sup>759</sup> This changes; when he escapes he finds European clothes and meat uneatable.

Sodomy and other now-queered sex acts were a fairly usual occurrence among sailors. When Torrey and his two companions abscond in Peru they are forced to drink their own urine, Torrey does not specify how. It would have been easiest to drink directly from the source so to speak. Torrey apparently lived with an indigenous group for eighteen months, and was probably considered a part of the Teheda by the Teheda people themselves. This is shown by his tattoos. This would have been a long enough time for Torrey to learn,

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<sup>757</sup> “Performing on the Beaches of the Mind,” in *The Nature of History Reader* e.d, Keith Jenkins and Alun Munslow (London: Routledge, 2004), 115-134, 125.

<sup>758</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 80.

<sup>759</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 65.

understand and even experience what the white gaze now considers queer or gender queer situations.

Torrey does not go into much detail as to the gender roles in the group. He states, like Melville, that women are not allowed to use canoes, and that women are not allowed to partake in consuming Kava, the medicinal and mildly psychotropic root. These rules are apparently 'tabu' laws; "I have no recollection of the law's ever being enforced, and in fact I cannot say as I ever knew of its being broken, voluntarily, or otherwise than by accident, which, except by severely reprimanding the offender, was overlooked."<sup>760</sup> He later said that in two instances women violated the rule of kava and consumed it but does not mention them being punished.

To feign assimilation into the Teheda, Torrey finds a wife. He sees a group of women and gestures for an unnamed sixteen year old to follow him to his hut. "She instantly left her business, and accompanied me to my hut."<sup>761</sup> However, he finds that this wife is unsuitable.

A man at any time getting dissatisfied with his wife, has only to lead her from the house, bid her go elsewhere, and take himself another more suited to his fancy. Finding the one I had first chosen differing entirely from what I supposed, I made use of this prerogative, drove her from the house, and chose for myself a daughter of one of the chiefs, a girl of only thirteen years of age, with whom I lived during my residence on the island."<sup>762</sup>

Torrey is certainly shown to be the dominant patriarch in this situation, which is quite the opposite to the polygamous situation that Melville outlines wherein it is the woman who is freer in her choices. He finds his sixteen-year-old wife unsuitable after he has taken her to his hut, suggesting that he finds her unsuitable sexually. He casts her aside for a thirteen year old who is acceptable. She is a chief's daughter, which gives Torrey importance, and also shows that the marriage of such a young person was culturally sanctioned. Thus we find that Teheda are also patriarchal.

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<sup>760</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 61.

<sup>761</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 70.

<sup>762</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 70.

His thirteen-year-old wife is protective of him, and warns him when he is threatened by another member of the group. Yet he does not name or describe his wife at all. Fayaway, the romantic interest of Melville, is described, over and over, in a flowing, overly romantic and varied way. Her tattoos are described in thorough detail. Olive Oatman's indigenous sister Nowereha is also described in some romanticized detail. Torrey does not name or characterize any indigenous people but one, the enemy chief that he shoots. This appears to be very dismissive, as if he did not think them worthy of attention. In some ways this liberates them; the people he must have been very close to, the people who he fought beside and lived with for eighteen months have privacy, they are not to be looked at by the imperial gaze.

He also does not go into any detail about his white wife. Torrey claims that in 1839 he, "became acquainted with a girl of Irish descent, whom I married; I procured me a house and necessary stores and was in a way to live."<sup>763</sup> Even for Torrey this is a colloquial way of writing. This wife is even more of a footnote than his indigenous wife, even though he has a family with his Irish wife. By contrast, several of his sailor companions are named and described, meaning that it is mostly only his indigenous and female relationships that are completely mysterious. This absence can be considered to create aporia; his sexual relationships and therefore sexuality is uncertain.

"there is also evidence that a large portion of the population of boys and young men from whom seamen were drawn would have been individuals who already had homosexual experience. In 17<sup>th</sup> Century England numerous bands of youths composed of sons of poor families, orphans, runaways, seasonal workers or former apprentices roamed the countryside of England. Disparaging accounts of them by contemporary writers portrayed them as sinister gangs of miscreants with dissolute habits who were a threat to the survival of the nation."<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>763</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 129.

<sup>764</sup> James Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2011), 408.

Further, the incident that I read to be most sexually exploitative is against Torrey as a youth, not committed on his voyages. Notably cryptic about a particular event of punishment in his youth, Torrey is desperate to leave home and the factory, and on his fourth attempt to run away from the factory and find work at sea, he is taken back to the factory. He is punished by a man from the Manufacturing Corporation who he calls Agent. Torrey states;

His tyranny I felt to be far more oppressive than that of any other power I was ever doomed to submit to. The remembrance of that morning scene will cling closely to my mind, when all others have been obliterated. Years have passed since its transaction, yet my blood almost ceases to flow when by memory I am carried back to those days. I went into the mill, but I went with a heart thirsting for revenge.”<sup>765</sup>

I would argue that the description of this incident suggests sexual violence. For a man who describes in gory detail his sufferings at the hands of others as well as of himself, there is no good reason why he would not mention what this incident was. Any queer or sodomitical practises were omitted from the text though they existed. It was also an incident terrible enough to keep him away from his home for fourteen years. Upon his first return to England states that he; “I stepped on my own native soil, than home with all its allurements presented itself to my mind...I was almost persuaded to forsake the sailors hard and bitter lot and turn again to the home of my youth, and wander no more. But then my mind would revert to the reception I met with on my last return...”<sup>766</sup> His family home in the United States is defined by what I read as sexual violence, whereas his home in Tahuata is defined by cannibalism. Both situations are written as gory and perverse. Both are situations he manages to escape. Torrey’s rugged self possession are the things that make his tattoos expressions of freedom.

### **“Home is Upon the Deep.”**

In *Torrey’s Narrative* Torrey feels most at home *neither* with the indigenous group who he was tattooed to be a member of, *nor*, mostly, with his North American family. He calls each place ‘home’ at some point in the text, but in his preface states his “home is upon the

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<sup>765</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 20.

<sup>766</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 26.

deep.”<sup>767</sup> The tattoo for Torrey is a mark of the sailor rather than a mark of the Teheda, indicating that it is a sign of home, and the tattoo travels with him between all his homes. Although it is a ‘mark peculiar’ to the Teheda, as soon as it is taken out of that context it is a ‘mark peculiar’ to Torrey, as a sailor. Even though his tattoo was a mark of ownership, it becomes a stable mark of the self. Even though its meaning is unstable, even though it shows aporia, it marks his self as his own. Wherever he is, his tattoo is too.

North American older women are a homely part of North America for Torrey. As shown by his choice of indigenous wife, he has a taste sexually for young girls, but is often looked after by older women. As a youth when he finally boards a whaling brig bound for West Africa, he sits on deck and watches “the breach forever increasing between me and my native land. Then the joys of home, a mother’s kind care, and sister’s fond love rushed upon my mind and I half regretted the step I had taken.”<sup>768</sup> It is the feminine family that gave him feelings of love. He does not appear to share a similar sentiment about his Canadian/Irish wife within the text.

As a thirteen, then fourteen, then fifteen year old he leaves his home in Massachusetts to search for work and when he fails he relies on the charity and goodwill of strangers, mainly older women. When he is dreadfully ill he is looked after by an unnamed French lady, who does her best to nurse him (though she is paid to do so). This is a small dose of the nineteenth Century sentimentality that Paul Gilje mentions; “because most seamen were young, their first line of attachment was to the mother who gave them birth.”<sup>769</sup> Torrey links sentimentality about home to the older woman, though they only play a minor role in his text.

In Tahuata he claims to be a captive, and this lends a particular complexity to whether or not he is at home. In reality he may well have chosen to stay with the Teheda and to be tattooed, but this is only informed speculation rather than empirically confirmed. However,

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<sup>767</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 5.

<sup>768</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 22.

<sup>769</sup> Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution*, 13.

his tattoo is a symbol of belonging to himself, whether or not it was a belonging or a tattoo chosen by Torrey.

His adoption of the language and other customs of the Teheda show that he was at home with them. Within three months he and Noyce can speak their language, at least a little, and when he meets the English captain who thinks that he appears as a “savage,” the captain is surprised that Torrey can speak English. His national identity is linked to his language, and he has a full command of both English and his indigenous language. When a hog chases him he gives the “war whoop,” and the Teheda think that it is the whoop of the Cohaphas having captured Torrey. Even when taken by surprise and in some danger, he expresses himself as Teheda, and after the altercation with the hog he states he “started for home.”<sup>770</sup>

He and Noyce know the Teheda and their customs well. When reverend Daylia and his fellows enquire about setting about a base there, Torrey claims to have acted as an interpreter; “knowing as we did of the hatred with which they were accustomed to look upon all not belonging to their own tribe, especially should they differ from them, we said much to dissuade them from the attempt.”<sup>771</sup> Here he acknowledges that he and Noyce do belong to the Teheda. Because of the tattoo they do not differ from them.

However, although there is some subtext of belonging, both within the narrative itself and with Torrey’s tattoo, he considers himself and his identity white, and his home to some extent in North America. Despite his decision through most of his early life not to return to his childhood home, it is where he settles with his family. When the war with the Cohapha is over, life becomes dull. Noyce and Torrey retire to private spaces in the forest to talk, and “home, with all its allurements, would rush before us, and our untold grief could scarcely be borne. Suddenly some native would come upon us, perhaps when we were weeping, when we would feign that degree of contentedness which made them believe we were truly so.”<sup>772</sup> The indigenous people themselves, due to Torrey’s deliberate deception, believe that Torrey and Noyce feel at home, even though they apparently do not. This deception itself

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<sup>770</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 75.

<sup>771</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 79.

<sup>772</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 80.

however shows Torrey to be dishonest. Perhaps the converse was true and they did feel at home and it is the imperial gaze of the reader that is being misled.

When he escapes from Taheda, returns West, and attempts to have a family, he is drawn to sea again and again. In 1840 he attempts to settle down with his Irish wife in New Brunswick. But he is not afforded the same opportunities as Melville or Oatman who wrote and lectured. He is of a lower class than them, life ashore is dull, and it is difficult for Torrey to find work. After four months working rigging vessels “tired and uneasy of the monotony of such a life,” he shipped as a mate of a brig bound for Ireland.<sup>773</sup>

In 1841 he claims,

Again I resolved to leave the sea altogether and live with my family which were now growing up around me, and needed me very much at home. I hired or leased a piece of land and built a small cottage. This occupied six or eight months. Again time passed tediously, probably more so from the fact that all of the men belonging to the middle and lower classes are mariners and generally gone from home so that a person of those classes finds but few associates.<sup>774</sup>

Thus, although older women are framed as the sentimental home, practically and perhaps sexually, home for Torrey is among working class men. He lived most of his life in lower class homosocial, often queer, environments. While in his youth he considers the women of his family home, as a man he does not. He is a separate self.

At the end of his narrative, however, it is his childhood home that he chooses to return to. He states that it was his “privilege” to take a seat at the thanksgiving table of which he had been absent fourteen years. His tattoos, as a sailor, are not brought up amongst white people within the text. He has the possibility of sitting at the thanksgiving table with his family, just as he had the possibility to go to sea. As a white tattooed man, he has the possibility to be at home anywhere.

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<sup>773</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 140-141

<sup>774</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 145.

## Conclusion.

William Torrey's tattoos can be considered expressions of freedom because they show his self-possession. They show the enactment of desire. They are linked with cannibalism, the most forbidden of body-consumptions. Because cannibalism can be queered and viewed as queer in nineteenth Century captivity narratives, the tattoo is an expression of queerness to the Western gaze.

Yet life on board a ship offered its own kind of confinement and its own laws, if not captivity. Once working on a ship, a person was bound by it; a person desiring to "go native" would have to escape from rather than walk away from their crew, and there were consequences for doing so. Torrey however is a true deviant. Just as the fateful morning with Agent does not deter him from running away from the factory, he gets flogged and imprisoned for absconding from a ship near Payata and this does not stop him from absconding from future ships or from committing other crimes.

Paul A. Gilje states; "locked into a world of authority and deference at sea, sailors enjoyed flaunting social barriers and relationships while at liberty on shore."<sup>775</sup> It is precisely his lack of freedom on board ships as a sailor that contrasts with the freedom he felt ashore among indigenous people. The Teheda did not have laws, only tabus which are rarely broken and go mostly unpunished. The same is not to be said for white systems of discipline. When in San Blass he hits a Spanish man around the head and is arrested and placed in the stocks:

I had my hands, feet, and neck, placed in the stocks, which was in the hot sun, upon the burning sand, during the day; I had to look continually up to the sun, and ere night was almost blind; my face badly swollen, and almost blistered... crowds of natives gathered around, offering me every insult they were capable of doing."<sup>776</sup>

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<sup>775</sup> Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution*, 13.

<sup>776</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 105.



Here indigenous people as well as whites perpetuate the white gaze of the law. When a ship docks he barter for a gun rather than passage “home” for where is his home? A year after they were first shipwrecked, another ship docks but yet again they barter for ammunition without managing to escape; “no pen can describe with any degree of accuracy our feelings at that time, deserted as it were by our fellowmen, and shut out from the world, perhaps forever!”<sup>777</sup> He feels captive of the white men who will not aide him, as much as the indigenous group which keeps him. White men are keeping him in his island prison too.

Torrey is not very peculiar and in this he is both free and captive. As a working class tattooed sailor, his tattoos are not peculiar, but he has trouble keeping to the rules of the ship. Torrey fits nowhere but in his own tattooed body, a body that carries his peculiar marks all over the earth. They are peculiar to him, as are his experiences, as is the truth, whatever it may be.

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<sup>777</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey’s Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 74.

## Conclusion.



"Inside hut, Nukahiva, Marquesas Islands, Oceania," by Willhelm Gottlieb Tilesius von Tilenau, between 1803 and 1807, in *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World, during the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806, and 1807* by G. H. von Langsdorff, (London: Henry Colburn, 1813), 138.

The image shows a woman breastfeeding while being tattooed, inside a hut in Nuku Hiva. The walls of the hut are elaborately carved, the thatched roof is neat, and the floor appears to be paved with stones, though a large mat covers most of the floor. Along the floor by the left wall blankets are scattered, on which the woman and another child recline. The heavily tattooed tattoo artist crouches over the woman's arm. He is naked but his back is rounded tucking in his pelvis, and he is side on; his nakedness is obvious but his genitals are not on show. A person walks through the door of the hut holding a hog's head. The online archive of California claims that the person is the woman's partner, and the hog head represents a

feast thrown as a part of the tattoo ritual.<sup>778</sup> She is being tattooed on the hand. William Torrey was tattooed on the hand as a warrior in Tahuata though it seems more likely this image represents a marriage ritual; Melville claims in *Typee* that in Nuku Hiva *Typee* women are tattooed on the hand when married.<sup>779</sup>

The image is by the same artist who drew the image opening this thesis, yet it is very different. The “Young Noukahiwan man” (1813) is voluptuous, his tattoos emphasize his buttocks and invite the white gaze to stare at them. Although the woman’s breasts in “Inside Hut Nukuhiva” are remarkably pert and nipples pointed, she is breastfeeding and relaxed. Her nakedness is natural and de-sexualized. She reaches towards the tattoo artist rather than presents herself to the viewer, and her partner, coming into the hut, is relaxed about her nakedness and vulnerability with the tattoo artist. The two men are also not sexualized, they are doing things for her rather than standing exposed to be viewed. Rather than portraying the Imperial gaze, that tattooing was queered, sexual, and cannibal, this image creates aporia; the tattoo can be nurturing, safe, and gentle.

The image from inside the hut predates the “Young Noukahiwan Man” by ten or fifteen years. This suggests to me that it is the ‘truer’ image of tattoos, that they were not so eroticised and were non-violent, became unrepresented as the century wore on. The three men’s tattoos in both images are made up of the same elements, circles, lines and cross hatching. However they appear to tell different stories. The “Young Noukahiwan Man” is linked with nature, he is on the beach among the scrub, looking at the sea. The image of tattooing takes place in a hut that is well constructed and ornately carved, showing the Nuku Hivans to be skilled and cultured. The natural, relaxed, image of the people in the hut juxtapose the sexualized, objectified tattooed cannibal warrior depicted by the “Young Noukahiwan Man” and by William Torrey and Herman Melville.

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<sup>778</sup> “Inside hut, Nukahiva, Marquesas Islands, Oceania,” by Tilesius von Tilenau, Wilhelm Gottlieb, between 1803 and 1807, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

<http://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf7c60117t/?layout=metadata&brand=oac4>.

<sup>779</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 221.

The image within the hut links indigenous tattoos to belonging. Belonging, like peculiarity, is an unstable term that shows the aporia in reading tattoos in captivity narratives. Ellis states; “tattoo is a primary form of signification that indicates who does and does not belong.”<sup>780</sup> Tattoos can signify belonging and peculiarity in several ways; belonging to a group is captivity, but it is also homely. Being defined as abnormal (peculiar, queer) and being defined against the neutral centre creates oppressive situations that can be linked to captivity, however, there is community on the margins. The expression of peculiarity and queerness is a freedom; for me queerness is home. Home, like the tattoo, is peculiar. It is contextual. What feels like home is peculiar to a person but whether a person is peculiar also depends on the norms of their home. In the hut, ‘home’ juxtaposes marginalisation and captivity.

The white captives in my texts can traverse the boundaries of home in ways that indigenous people could not; they could be at home among indigenous people, but they could be at home among whites. This is a guiding principle of colonialism; a place can be a part of a white nation if whites control it and live there. A white person can be at home in a white society because of the white supremacy that defined nineteenth century colonialism.

As we found in chapter three, in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, although the Mohave land that Mary Ann is buried in is not technically different from the land two hundred miles away at Fort Yuma, Olive wishes she were buried “in the soil of her own countrymen.”<sup>781</sup> When the Oatmans see the roadside graves Stratton writes that “common humanity and nationality; are written upon the rude graves of our countrymen and kin.”<sup>782</sup> This shows that the designation of home can be arbitrary outside of the imperial gaze.

Home is not geographic or essential, it is constructed by peculiarity or lack thereof. That which is the same is home, that which is peculiar depends on whether a person is, or who a person is, in their home. Queered people were queered to the margins by the imperial gaze, but not in their indigenous homes, wherein queered people could be peculiar, but accepted.

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<sup>780</sup> Juniper Ellis, *Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Skin and Print*, 31.

<sup>781</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 193

<sup>782</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 41.

In *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* Oatman's tattoo is apparently a sign of slavery, ownership and captivity. The girls are given the tattoo so as to coerce belonging:

...they knew why we objected to it; that we expected to return to the whites, and we would be ashamed of it then...They said further, that if we should get away, and they should find us among other tribes, or, if some other tribe should steal us, they would by this means know us.<sup>783</sup>

The text acknowledges that peculiarity is contextual. The girls are given the tattoo precisely to make them peculiar among whites, and peculiar to the Mohave. The tattoo was intended to mark them as strange in their white home but the norm in their Mohave home. Just as William Torrey states that his tattoo is a "mark peculiar" to the Teheda, Oatman's tattoo is a "mark peculiar" to the Mohave.<sup>784</sup> It is not a mark peculiar to indigenous people in general but to the group with which she belongs.

Contextual research shows that Oatman's tattoo was not a mark of captivity. The truth and meaning of her tattoos were held captive by her narrative, but are perhaps liberated by context. In interviews that took place immediately after she returned to white society she claimed that the Mohave treated her well, like family.<sup>785</sup> There is evidence that Oatman could have tried to escape when the Mohave assisted the Whipple party in 1854 but chose not to.<sup>786</sup> The tattoo was a sign of acceptance and belonging to the Mohave, either so that Oatman could reach her Mohave family in the afterlife (her white family were not tattooed), or it was a sign of marriage. She belonged with them; she was not peculiar among them but to them. Rumours that she had a Mohave family, a husband and children, were scandalous precisely because they suggested that a white person could build a home with the Mohave.<sup>787</sup>

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<sup>783</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 134-135.

<sup>784</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative: or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 120.

<sup>785</sup> "Olive Oatman the Apache Captive," *Los Angeles Star*, 19/04/1856, accessed 10/10/17.

<sup>786</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 83.

<sup>787</sup> Brian McGinty, *The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival*, 89.

However, the peculiar mark that was meant to designate Olive as Mohave does not fulfil its function. Stratton presents whiteness as home. Despite the assimilation shown by Olive's tattoos, she claims she did not consent to them and did not want to be with the Mohave. Therefore, her whiteness is essential. When she returns to Fort Yuma tattooed and tanned Lorenzo "could read the assuring evidences of her family identity."<sup>788</sup> This is destabilized by contemporary sources that were disbelieving that she was a white girl, showing that the ideology of white nation=home was intentional in the text.<sup>789</sup>

Further, her tattoo actually helped her re-assimilate into her former home. She was accepted into her white home by making herself visible, by inviting the gaze. In her lectures she asked the audience to "look upon" her tattoos.<sup>790</sup> This invitation did not subvert the gaze, it reaffirmed it. She claimed that her tattoos were expressions of captivity rather than home. Whilst Olive told the ladies of her audience to appreciate the word 'home', her Mohave home had dissipated.<sup>791</sup>

The effects of the imperial gaze, of how indigenous people were seen, meant that the Mohave lost their homes. In 1857 the Mohave lost sixty out of their two hundred warriors in a battle with the Pimas and Maricopas, and in the following five years were met with various white attempts to settle the valley. By 1859 Mohave valley was identified as Fort Mohave on the map due to the United States fort built there; half of the Mohave left to live on a reservation and those that remained did so under United States rule.<sup>792</sup> Margot Mifflin states; "during the years Olive travelled the lecture circuit describing her life among the Mohave, the very foundations of the Mohave life she had known were crumbling."<sup>793</sup>

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<sup>788</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 201.

<sup>789</sup> Susan Thompson Lewis, "Following the Pot of Gold at the Rainbow's End in the Days of 1850," The Huntington Library Collection, San Marino, California.

<sup>790</sup> Jennifer Putzi, *Identifying Marks: Race, Gender, and the Marked Body in Nineteenth Century Literature*, 44.

<sup>791</sup> Kroeber, A. L., and Clifton B. Kroeber. "Olive Oatman's First Account of Her Captivity Among the Mohave," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (1962): 309-17, 312.

<sup>792</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 173-182.

<sup>793</sup> Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo- the Life of Olive Oatman*, 173.

In *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* a Mohave person tells Olive that whites “want to possess the earth, but you will not be able.”<sup>794</sup> This is both true and not; in many ways whites possessed and possess the United States; they drew the maps, owned and own the guns and slaves, and held (and hold) most of the positions of power. By the nineteenth century white colonists made “freedom, happiness and property holding” nearly impossible for the Mohave and other indigenous groups.<sup>795</sup> In this way the earth itself is captive of imperial systems. Of course, the earth is also finite and disastrous and cannot be truly controlled.

Thus, in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* the contextuality and aporia of peculiarity destabilizes the idea of home. Her tattoo is both a sign of home among the Mohave and a sign of her home in whiteness; even though she is tattooed she can return to being white.

In *Typee* home is an unstable category because of Melville’s beachcomber status, but a more stable category, precisely because Tom resists being tattooed. Unlike Oatman he is not white despite his tattoos; he is not tattooed at all. He is also more ‘white’ because he was less likely to have been integrated into Typee society than Oatman was with the Mohave or Torrey was with the Teheda; his stay with the Typees was around three weeks whereas Torrey’s was eighteen months and Oatman’s was nearly five years.

In Oatman’s narrative, because of her gender and because the boundary of her skin had been crossed through tattooing, it was important to maintain that she was chaste. Her account links her unassailable whiteness to her chastity. Melville, as a man and a beachcomber had freedom that Olive did not. Both manipulations reflect the imperial gaze, though for different purposes.

Captives in North America tended to be respectable Christians who had little choice as to their captivity, and their narratives reflected this. They could take on true victimhood because they were taken captive from their white homes or, like Oatman, while trying to

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<sup>794</sup> R. B. Stratton, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 128.

<sup>795</sup> Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873*, 3.

find or establish one. Beachcombers had usually willingly broken the rules by absconding from ships. This idea of free choice is the particular difference between North American and Polynesian captivity narratives.

An 1853 article in the Honolulu *Friend* reads; “It is an undoubted fact that when a white man becomes an outcast, lives with savages, and adopts their manner of life, he soon sinks into such a state of barbarism that he becomes the greater savage of the two.”<sup>796</sup> The beachcomber was viewed as at home with indigenous people. I. C. Campbell states; “Contemporary observers had both a fascination and a horror for the tattooed white man, regarding the native tattoo as a sign of extreme degradation and depravity.”<sup>797</sup>

Of the three main people/characters written in my primary texts, Tom is the person who resists getting tattooed. He is also the character who considers the tattoo a barrier to his white home. He thinks that if his face is tattooed he would “...never more to have the face to return to my countrymen...”.<sup>798</sup> Jennifer Putzi considers his success in resisting being tattooed as showing his masculine agency as opposed to Oatman’s feminine submissiveness, however their gender is only a very small aspect of the differences between their stories.<sup>799</sup> Olive was taken captive as a child; her whole family was massacred and this was based in a true event; Melville was a lone man on a mostly fictionalized temporary sojourn. Because he had an agency over the manipulation of his story that Oatman did not, least of all because Oatman did not write her own story, he more directly points and discusses the gaze his text creates.

Whilst in *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls* whiteness is portrayed as unassailable, tattooing in *Typee* makes whiteness visible; when the tattoo artist Karky sets his sights on Tom it is partly because of his whiteness; “The idea of engrafting his tattooing upon my white skin

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<sup>796</sup> *The Friend*, (Honolulu, 1853), 17.

<sup>797</sup> I. C. Campbell, “Gone Native” in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, 100.

<sup>798</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months’ Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 248

<sup>799</sup> Jennifer Putzi, *Identifying Marks: Race, Gender, and the Marked Body in Nineteenth Century Literature*, 8.



filled him with all a painter's enthusiasm..."<sup>800</sup> This visibility subverts the logocentrism of whiteness as the standard centre or norm. Tom is peculiar for being white, and peculiar for not having tattoos.

However, Tom is mostly the looker on and this queers tattoos in *Typee*. Tom's perspective as an observer providing a "peep" at Polynesian life, means that he can look, and therefore allow his audience to look, in ways that others could not. Missionaries and other religious observers, such as Royal B. Stratton, were usually disgusted by gender variance and queerness in indigenous cultures. Naturalists could objectify indigenous people; "The naturalist's gaze can loiter over this body without betraying intent..."<sup>801</sup> The beachcomber gets an even better 'look,' for example, because Marnoo is tattooed on the back, Tom can gaze upon him with desire.

Further, the hand tattoos that signify marriage for the Typees signify a queered marriage. This shows that the peculiarity and queerness of the tattoo is contextual. The threesome marriage of the Typees is the norm in Typee valley, but not to the imperial gaze. However, this fragile gaze is undermined by the link between tattooing and cannibalism and Melville's horror at being tattooed himself, and as such the aporic gaze falls back into the imperial. Melville's horror of the tattoo is itself a mark peculiar as it singles him out from the Typees, and demands he leave his indigenous home.

In *Moby Dick* tattoos are further queered, but rather in a way that makes them peculiar and exotic, it is in a way that makes them homely. As Ishmael and Queequeg recline in bed, Ishmael observes:

You had almost thought I had been his wife. The counterpane was of patchwork, full of odd little parti-coloured squares and triangles; and this arm of his tattooed all over with an interminable Cretan labyrinth of a figure, looked for all the world like a strip of that same patchwork quilt.<sup>802</sup>

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<sup>800</sup> Herman Melville, *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 247-248.

<sup>801</sup> Lee Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities*, 75.

<sup>802</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 29.

This image of the patchwork quilt likens Queequeg's tattoos to comfort and home. On the other hand, in some ways Queequeg is more exoticised than the Typees. Queequeg does not have a real home. "Queequeg was a native of Rokovoko, an island far away to the West and South. It is not down in any map; true places never are."<sup>803</sup> That Queequeg's home is not on a map means it "presumably is not possessed, colonized, or even known by imperial powers."<sup>804</sup> This means that the fictional home, Rokovoko, is free. Queequeg's tattoos are expressions of his indigenous identity and therefore freedom.

This is supported by the fact that neither Ishmael nor the reader can know the meaning of Queequeg's tattoos. Queequeg's tattoos are "a complete theory of the heavens and earth and a mystical on the art of attaining truth; so that Queequeg in his own proper person was a riddle to unfold; a wondrous work in one volume."<sup>805</sup> Queequeg knows the meaning of life in a way neither the reader, nor Ishmael, nor Melville do. The illegibility of the tattoos means that they are an expression of freedom from the imperial gaze. They are an expression of aporia because they are variable. However, Queequeg's home and Queequeg's tattoos are fictional. *Moby Dick* does not hold the meaning of the tattoos captive because they are fictional.

William Torrey's narrative is perhaps the most different and the most aporic text, even if it seems the most crude. Olive Oatman and Herman Melville's much studied texts were some of the best-known captivity narratives published at the time, they came from relatively privileged backgrounds. William Torrey's text was comparatively poorly written and ran one edition. He was poor and had no formal education; but this means he was probably a better representation of the average sailor. His text also shows a self-possession that the other two narratives do not. This is because he is not peculiar; he was not tattooed enough to be shown in the way that Oatman was; further, his gender and role as a beachcomber meant that his tattoos were less strange. Oatman's tattoos juxtaposed her image of the pious Christian girl, his were not peculiar in his body context.

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<sup>803</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 52.

<sup>804</sup> Birgit Brander Rasmussen, *Queequeg's Coffin: Indigenous Literacies and Early American Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 15.

<sup>805</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 208.

Torrey is less deviant in his indigenous home than in his white home. He is often disciplined for breaking the rules of white society; he is put in the stocks for fighting, however his indigenous name was "Whooro, a good man."<sup>806</sup> The Teheda value his morality more than the whites do. Perhaps this is a reason that Torrey wanted to be known as the man who lived among the cannibals, whilst Melville did not.<sup>807</sup>

In fact, in his narrative Torrey is a cannibal. Though the Typees try to hide their cannibalism from Tom, the Teheda compel Torrey to partake. This shows that he was considered more integrated than Melville was, which is also shown by his tattoos. This is confirmed by his awkwardness when returning to whites.

Awkward, indeed I felt as well as acted, when clothed again, having been naked eighteen months. And as I tasted of the salt meats and other articles found on ship board, cooked so different from what I had been accustomed to so long, I could scarcely eat them."<sup>808</sup>

Torrey's attitude to food shows that both whiteness and home is contextual and malleable. Torrey has a more ambivalent notion of home, he views it with an aporic gaze rather than an imperial one. He considers his home to be "upon the deep" rather than with his Marquesan or North American society.<sup>809</sup> This is linked to the idea that he is at home with people like him, he is at home where he is least peculiar. As he tries to settle down with his white wife, time "passed tediously, probably more so from the fact that all of the men belonging to the middle and lower classes are mariners and generally gone from home so that a person of those classes finds but few associates."<sup>810</sup> His home is among working class men, namely sailors, more than anyone else.

Although his tattoo is a 'mark peculiar' to the Teheda, as soon as it is taken out of that context it is a 'mark peculiar' to Torrey, as a sailor. Even though his tattoo was a mark of

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<sup>806</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 67.

<sup>807</sup> "Letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, "June 1851 <http://www.melville.org/letter3.htm> [accessed 02/02/2018].

<sup>808</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 80.

<sup>809</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 5.

<sup>810</sup> William Torrey, *Torrey's Narrative, or, the Life and Adventures of William Torrey*, 145.

ownership to the Teheda, it becomes a stable mark of the self. Even though its meaning is unstable, even though it shows aporia, it marks his self as his own. Wherever he is, his tattoo is too. This self-possession could be linked to aporia rather than the imperial gaze. Torrey values self-possession and individuality over community or home.

The captivity narratives I studied disrupt to some extent the idea that tattoos are marks of captivity; however as sexuality became medicalised as deviant, so did tattoos. In *The Birth of the Clinic* Michel Foucault outlined the idea of the medical gaze, a part of a change in knowledge production that occurred at the end of the eighteenth century. Foucault claimed that the medical gaze considered identity to be understood and categorized by looking at the body.<sup>811</sup> He claimed that a new empiricism “based on the rediscovery of the absolute values of the visible” was established.<sup>812</sup>

With the rise of sexology in the nineteenth century, queer sexuality was refocused on in the realms of the scientific. Sexual acts had been regarded as immoral behaviour that anyone was capable of, but, as Rebecca Jennings states, “sexologists argued that specific types of people were likely to commit these types of acts.”<sup>813</sup> This was linked to clothing and gender presentation.<sup>814</sup> Deviant acts began being conceived in terms of identity and linked with various other kinds of act or identity. As Heike Bauer states:

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the varied discourses together extended the Enlightenment focus on ‘sex’ understood as the differences between men and women to modern bioethical concerns that defined ‘sex’ in terms of sexual acts as well as questions of gender and considered ‘sex’ the marker of socio-politically configured binaries between the natural/unnatural, normal/abnormal, and healthy/degenerate.<sup>815</sup>

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<sup>811</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (London, 1973), p. xii.

<sup>812</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (London, 1973), p. xii.

<sup>813</sup> Rebecca Jennings, *A Lesbian History of Britain: Love and Sex Since 1500* (Oxford: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 76,

<sup>814</sup> In *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) Richard von Krafft-Ebing stated that inversion, “may nearly always be suspected in females wearing their hair short, or who dress in the fashion of men...” In doing this he suggested that although the inversion is biological (essential), it expresses itself through dress, through culture (it is constructed). Through dress the body expresses to the gaze that it is queer. Richard Von Krafft-Ebbing, *Psychopathia Sexualis* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013), 398.

<sup>815</sup> Heike Bauer *English Literary Sexology, Translations of Inversion, 1860-1930* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 4.

Tattoos were also medicalised in this context. Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), the so-called 'father of criminology,' and I would argue influential sexologist, considered tattoos signs of biological and hereditary criminality. As Paul Knepper states, Lombroso "popularized the body-centred social-scientific study of aberrant behaviour," which included what he considered sexual deviance.<sup>816</sup> His ideas were influential. Mary Gibson states; "... his ideas were carried into Parliament, public administration, and the universities by his followers...[his ideas] dominated criminological discussions in Europe, North and South America, and parts of Asia from the 1880's into the early twentieth century."<sup>817</sup> His work was rooted in scientific racism and inspired North American eugenicists, such as Earnest Hooton.<sup>818</sup> In some ways he changed how tattooing was considered, but mostly his work was the logical conclusion of how tattoos had been used and understood for millennia.

Tattooing may be a chosen act made by a person upon their own body, yet in his text *The Criminal Woman, the Prostitute and the Normal Woman*, Lombroso argued that it was nevertheless a sign of biological determinism. He claims that tattooing amongst criminal women is rarer than amongst criminal men, but that tattooed women, particularly tattooed prostitutes, are the more immoral than those without tattoos.<sup>819</sup> It seems that they are also queerer:

Prof. Filippi studied a dissolute lesbian, fifteen years old, daughter of a pimp, who bore on her shoulders two pierced hearts under which was another heart and the initials of her mistress. Elderly lesbians of Paris often tattoo the name of their mistresses between their genitals and the navel, thus confirming their obscene habits...Elderly prostitutes prefer to tattoo themselves with the names of women. De Albertis, too, observed that among prostitutes, those who tattoo themselves are the most depraved.<sup>820</sup>

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<sup>816</sup> Paul Knepper and P. J. Ystehede, *The Cesare Lombroso Handbook* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 4.

<sup>817</sup> Mary Gibson, *Born to Crime- Cesare Lombroso and the Origins of Biological Criminology* (London: Praeger Press, 2002), 4.

<sup>818</sup> Nichole Rafter, "Apes, Men and Teeth: Earnest A. Hooton and Eugenic Decay" in *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s*, edited by Susan Currell and Christina Cogdell (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006) 249-269, 265.

<sup>819</sup> Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, *The Criminal Woman, the Prostitute and the Normal Woman*, 152.

<sup>820</sup> Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, *The Criminal Woman, the Prostitute and the Normal Woman*, 152.

The inherent contradiction here is that he refers to sexualities as ‘obscene habits’ rather than ‘obscene natures’, confirming queerness as a practice or habit rather than an identity. Yet the practice of tattooing confirms the inherent deviant character of women, as tattooed prostitutes are the “most depraved” by nature, not habit. Although this thesis shows why Lombroso’s works considered tattoos along with queerness in this way, it remains open for future research the effects of his research on how tattooing was and is still considered. Does the tattoo still signify queerness? Or captivity? Or the foreign ‘Other’?

Tattoos are a major theme or feature of various literary works over the last one hundred and sixty years; for example, “In the Penal Colony” (1914 in German and 1941 in English) by Franz Kafka, *Survival in Auschwitz* (1947) by Primo Levi, *The Tattoo Murder Case* (1948) by Akimitsu Takagi, *The Rose Tattoo* (1951) by Tennessee Williams, *The Illustrated Man* (1951) by Ray Bradbury, *The Stars My Destination* (1957) by Alfred Bester, “The Fifteen Dollar Eagle” (1960) by Sylvia Plath, “Parker’s Back” (1965) by Flannery O’Connor, *Landscapes of Memory: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered* (1992) by Ruth Klüger, “The Tonto Woman” (1998) by Elmore Leonard, *7 Tattoos: A Memoir in the Flesh* (1998) by Peter Trachtenberg, *The Tattooed Map* (1995) by Barbara Hodgson, *The Illustrated Mum* (1999) by Jacqueline Wilson, *The Electric Michelangelo* (2004) by Sarah Hall, *The Tattoo Artist* (2005) by Jill Ciment, *Until I find You* (2005) by John Irving, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2005) by Stieg Larsson, *Imperium* (2012) by Christian Kracht and *The Girl with the Lower Back Tattoo* (2016) by Amy Schumer.

It would be useful in a future study to read all of these works considering the legacy of captivity, colonialism, captivity narratives and Lombroso’s works described here. Is this century of novels concerning tattoos a direct legacy of these captivity narratives? Tattoos have as many meanings as there are bodies and eyes to see them, but do these meanings exist only within systems of marginalization? Are they expressions of freedom? The aporic gaze upon the tattoo suggests that each of these texts would be worth exploring as a mark peculiar, in context.

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