



## Transnationalism and Multiculturalism: Towards Re-Reading Herman Melville's *Mardi*

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**Abstract:** Transnationalism and multiculturalism are concepts that tend to collocate, as the occurrence of one undoubtedly calls in the other. This is because when people go across their national boundaries to other localities, they go with their culture and come in contact with other cultures which when merged, gives rise to a multicultural society in which several cultures or ethnic groups co-exist within the same geographical space. This paper aims at analyzing trans- border migration and its consequences on the culture of those involved in the process. The paper therefore sets out to examine the assertion that in Herman Melville's *Mardi*, the movement or migration of characters beyond national frontiers results in multiculturalism. The study proves that there exist some relationship between Transnationalism and Multiculturalism and that these two concepts have been used in Herman Melville's *Mardi* to buttress the fact that the cosmopolitan nature of man gives him the opportunity to be associated with travels and a mixture of cultures. Theories of Transnationalism and Multiculturalism will be used in the analysis of the work under study. The former refers to the rise of new communities and the formation of new social identities and relations that cannot be defined through the traditional reference point of nation-states. The later, closely associated, denotes a range of social, cultural and political practices and states brought about by the sheer increase in social connectivity across borders. These theories will help in establishing the fact that transnationalism enhances multiculturalism in Melville's fiction.

**Keywords:** Transnationalism, multiculturalism, Re-reading.

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## INTRODUCTION

Transnationalism is referred to more generally in the globalization literature as an umbrella concept encompassing a wide variety of transformative processes, practices and developments that take place simultaneously at a local and global level. Transnational processes and practices are defined broadly as the multiple ties and interactions – economic, political, social and cultural – that link people, communities, and institutions across the borders of nation- states.

William I. Robinson asserts that within the field of immigration studies, transnationalism came to refer to the activities of immigrants to forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link their societies of origin and settlement as a single unified field of social action (Quoted in *Theories of Globalization* 136). Multiculturalism started gathering steam as far back as the migration history began gaining grounds. Man, by nature, is a migratory being, always wanting to move from place to place to explore new avenues. When man moves he does not leave his culture behind; he takes his

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culture along with him and when he comes in contact with other cultures there is bound to be a mixture of cultures that results in diversity. The way people respond and react to this diversity is the focus of this paper. As a nation, America is not left out of this transnational and multicultural phenomenon. According to historical narratives, America is born of a voyage. The first known contact between the Americas and the rest of the world began with the famous voyage of an Italian explorer, Christopher Columbus, funded by the Spanish rulers Ferdinand and Isabella (*Outline of the US Literature* 7). In 1492 Columbus discovered America, and shortly after that, Spain, France and later England started colonies in the Americas. After 1680, in addition to the British, there was a lot of immigration from many countries to North America. Large numbers of people came from France, Germany and Holland and other countries, particularly in Northern Europe (*An Outline of American History* 10). Each of these powers came spreading their language and culture among the native Indians, which was already the beginning of multiculturalism in America. Herman Melville's ancestors had come into America on board the ship that broad in immigrants from England. Herman Melville by virtue of his upbringing is unarguably one of the writers in American Literature that has had exposure to multiculturalism. His working in a bank and teaching at a school has opened him to meeting people from different cultural backgrounds. In addition, his working on the ship has given him the opportunity to see foreign parts and interact with foreign cultures. This is evident in the many novels he wrote about his sailing and whaling experiences. This paper purports that more often than not, such transnational movements are channels through which multiculturalism travels. This is because the role of migration in the mixing of people from different cultural and geographical backgrounds cannot be down play, as migration enhances the exchange of cultural values between the migrants and their adoptive countries. Melville attempts to establish the relationship between the migrants of his work and those they come across in the course of their odysseys.

#### **Transnationalism and Multiculturalism in *Mardi***

In *Mardi*, we are presented to one of Herman Melville's shipping and sailing experience that involves the sea and sailors of different nationalities and cultures, and the inter-relationship among people of different communities. As the story unfolds, the narrator (an American sailor) informs us that from Ravavai they sail for the Gallipagos, otherwise called the Enchanted Islands, by reason of the many wild currents and eddies there met. And on their way, they came across two or three noosefuls of runaway convicts from Chili. The narrator

reveals that among the crew was a fine old seaman, one Jarl; how old, no one could tell, not even him. This Jarl, he says hailed from the Isle of Skye, one of the constellated Hebrides and hence, they often called him the Skyeman. Originating from the Island of Skye, the narrator adds that Jarl is a Norseman, which means he speaks Norwegian or the Scandinavian language or has relations to that area. More insights about Jarl is revealed when the narrator emphatically affirms that the old crew member's ancestors must have been Vikings, and we know that Viking denotes any of the Scandinavian seafaring pirates and traders who crossed their national borders, raided and settled in many parts of Northwest Europe in the 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries. When they invaded Northwest Europe, they certainly when along with their customs and traditions which they normally imposed on the Europeans and also intermarry with them so that that area did not only become a melting pot of cultures, but equally a place whereby transnational migration made it possible for people of different cultures to live freely and peacefully with one another in love and happiness in the same area, and hence multiculturalism.

Furthermore, it is said that Jarl, the descendant of heroes and kings, was a lone, friendless mariner on the main, only true to his origin in the sea-life that he led. But the narrator wonders aloud and rhetorically asked: "What yeoman shall swear that he is not descended from Alfred? What dunce, that he is not sprung of old Homer?" (*Mardi* 24). The questions presuppose that we are interconnected and should live together with other people in the society because we all have one ancestry and not try to live in isolation or friendlessness like Jarl among the crew members. This is so because when we relate with other people, we unconsciously become a bit of them culture-wise, and may even find out that we have the same lineage as them. The narrator reinforces this theme of ancestry and interconnectivity when he emphasizes the following:

*All of us have monarchs and sages for kinsmen; nay, angels and archangels for cousins; since in antediluvian days, the sons of God did verily wed with our mothers, the irresistible daughters of Eve. Thus all generations are blended: and heaven and earth of one kin: the hierarchies of seraphs in the uttermost skies; the thrones and principalities in the zodiac; the shades that roam throughout space; the nations and families, flocks and folds of the earth; one and all, brothers in essence--oh, be we then brothers indeed! All things form but one whole; the universe a Judea, and God Jehovah its head (Mardi 24-25).*

What catches our interest here is the assertion that "all generations are blended: and heaven and earth of one kin." This means that we are

a mixture of different people, a form of harmonious combination and must therefore behave as people who are blended and not separated by cultural, political, social, economic, and geographical boundaries. This theme of oneness with one another in the world is further reiterated by the statement "all things form but one whole." This is true because the biblical allusion to Adam and Eve (the first race) reveals that we are all descended of one ancestry and are therefore one people with different cultures but who nevertheless should live together as brethren wherever we find ourselves. It is even far more pronounced with the phrase that says that heaven and earth is one kin. This phrase opens up the idea that whether Hausa, Bororo, Ewondo, Bulu, English, French, American, Vengo, Bakweri, Spaniard, Chinese, Portuguese, Indian, Bamileke, Baka, Sawa, in fact no matter one's tribe here on earth, in heaven we will all be considered as children of the same father – God; and as such we must show proof of that here on earth by accepting fellow brethren even with their diverse beliefs and philosophies.

The narrator submits that we must not snub and look down on other cultures with disdain, but receive and welcome them in happiness because "no custom is strange; no creed is absurd; no foe, but who will in the end prove a friend. In heaven, at last, our good, old, white-haired father Adam will greet all alike, and sociality forever prevails" (24). He even hyperbolized it when he urges us to welcome "even ghosts when they rise." Ghosts here might not necessarily be people who die and resurrect but could be those cultures we consider as ghostly. The West has for long considered the African cultures as ghostly, that is, strange; frightening, unnatural, savage, primitive, pagan, and heathen. But the take home message from here is that we have to welcome all cultures and do so in a cautious manner, or if we must reject them we must not scorn and abuse them from a distance. Similarly, the allusion made to the world explorers, Magellan and Drake adds more force to the promotion of multiculturalism. "Then shall we list to no shallow gossip of Magellans and Drakes; but give ear to the voyagers who have circumnavigated the Ecliptic; who rounded the Polar Star as Cape Horn" (ibid). Biographical and historical information reveals that Ferdinand Magellan was a Portuguese explorer who is best known for having planned and led the 1519 Spanish expedition to the East Indies across the Pacific Ocean to open maritime trade route during which he discovered the interoceanic passage bearing thereafter his name and achieved the first European navigation from Atlantic to Asia. As for Francis Drake, it is said that he is best known for his circumnavigation of the world in a single expedition, from 1577 to 1580. This included his incursion into Pacific Ocean, which was

until then an area of exclusive Spanish interest and also his claim to New Albion for England, an area in what is now the US state of California. These explorations made multiculturalism possible as the two explorers of different cultural backgrounds moved around and disseminated their customs and traditions throughout the different localities and tribes they passed through. For instance, we are told that after several weeks in the Philippines, Magellan converted more than 2200 of them to Christianity. That was an attempt to impose his own Christian culture on the Filipino. And we doubt not that as the two explorers sail across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans they encounter and mix with so many groups of people during which they learned the ways of life one another and thus multiculturalism. *Mardi* is a novel by Melville that has sailing and navigating as motif, and hence multiculturalism.

In addition, it said that in old Jarl's lingo there was never an idiom and the aboriginal tar is too much of a cosmopolitan for that. The narrator confirms that there exists companionship with seamen of all tribes: Manilla-men, Anglo-Saxons, Cholos, Lascars, and Danes, wear away in good time all mother-tongue stammerings. You sink your clan; down goes your nation; you speak a world's language, jovially jabbering in the Lingua-Franca of the forecastle. This companionship that is enjoyed by the seamen bespeaks the multicultural tendency they share. The narrator reminds that at sea, and in the fellowship of sailors, all men appear as they are. He says that in sea-parlance, the crew members are chummies, meaning a form of friendship with someone. He then states that this chummying among sailors is like the brotherhood subsisting between a brace of collegians (chums) rooming together. It is a Fidas-Achates-ship, a league of offense and defense, a co-partnership of chests and toilets, a bond of love and good feeling, and a mutual championship of the absent one. It is therefore clear that a ship is all friendship, brotherhood, chummying, and co-partnership which connote living together and mutual love and respect for one another, which are the distinctive features of a multicultural society.

Again, the narrator continues that, plucking up a heart, with the dawn of the day his Viking looked bold as a lion; and soon, with the instinct of an old seaman cast his eyes up aloft and directly; he touched his arm and said: "Look: what stirs in the main-top?" Sure enough, something alive was there. Fingering their arms, they watched it; till as the day came on, a crouching stranger was beheld, and presenting his piece, the narrator hailed him to descend or be shot. There was silence for a space, when the black barrel of a musket was thrust forth, leveled at his head. Instantly, Jarl's harpoon was presented at a dart;--

two to one;--and the narrator's hail was repeated, but no reply. And on insistence, the following conversation ensued:

"Who are you?"

"Samoa," at length said a clear, firm voice.

"Come down from the rigging. We are friends."

Another pause; when, rising to his feet, the stranger slowly descended, holding on by one hand to the rigging, for but one did he have; his musket partly slung from his back, and partly griped under the stump of his mutilated arm. He alighted about six paces from where the narrator and his Viking stood; and balancing his weapon, eyed them bravely as the Cid. The narrator recounts that Samoa was a tall, dark Islander, a very devil to behold, theatrically arrayed in kilt and turban; the kilt of a gay calico print, the turban of a red China silk. His neck was jingling with strings of beads. And the dialogue continued thus:

"Who else is on board?" I asked; while Jarl, thus far covering the stranger with his weapon, now dropped it to the deck.

"Look there:--Annatoo!" was his reply in broken English, pointing aloft to the fore-top. And lo! a woman, also an Islander; and barring her skirts, dressed very much like Samoa, was beheld descending.

"Any more?"

"No more."

"Who are you then; and what craft is this?"

"Ah, ah--you are no ghost;--but are you my friend?" he cried, advancing nearer as he spoke; while the woman having gained the deck, also approached, eagerly glancing.

We said we were friends; that we meant no harm; but desired to know what craft this was; and what disaster had befallen her; for that something untoward had occurred, we were certain.

Whereto, Samoa made answer, that it was true that something dreadful had happened; and that he would gladly tell us all, and tell us the truth. And about it he went. Now, this story of his was related in the mixed phraseology of a Polynesian sailor.

What catches our attention in the above dialogue is the meticulous friendship that establishes between the two sailors and the Samoan they met. It is clear that Samoa is a Polynesian who has come and contact with a young American sailor and a Norse or a Danish chief, or better stills a Viking. In spite of their cultural diversity, they befriend one another and travel together in the surrounding island. Samoa by every indication is a perfect example of a multicultural man from his

dressing and language. In describing him, the narrator says "Samoa was a tall, dark Islander, a very devil to behold, theatrically arrayed in kilt and turban; the kilt of a gay calico print, the turban of a red China silk. His neck was jingling with strings of beads" (*Mardi* 99). Though dark and devilish to look at, he is dressed in the fashion of Scottish, Muslims, Sikhs, Indians, and Chinese. The silt itself is said to be a calico print, which means it is multicoloured and symbolizes multiculturalism. Again, though his language is Polynesian, he manages to express himself in "broken English" to the understanding of the American and English sailor. And talking about friendly ties that cement multiculturalism, we see in *Mardi* that the type of companionship and relationship that develops between the young American sailor, who also doubles as the narrator and Jarl is a kind of Ishmael-Queequeg friendship seen in Melville's *Moby Dick*.

Then, in answering the question asked him by the narrator as to what craft that was; and what disaster had befallen her Samoa recounts that the ship's name, the Parki, has been named in honour of a Lahina high chief and we are aware of the fact that it is the culture of most people to give names to their belongings in order to identify and distinguish it from other identities. And so, on board the ship are people from different cultures, most specifically the Lahineese, Samoan, European and Annatoo, whose identity they don't even know. The different people from different cultural backgrounds on the Parki must have certainly discovered the mismatch that exist among them in language, dressing, dish, skin colour, and morphology; but all those divergence did not stop them from accepting one another's difference and to become crew members with one and the same goal and with one and the same vision and mission in mind. In brief, the narrator submits that "no school likes a ship for studying human nature" (*Mardi* 28). Meaning that since there are all categories of people ship with their different backgrounds, the ship provides a soothing environment for learning how people of different upbringing behave.

To add, it has earlier been indicated that multiculturalism can be enhanced by travelling, sailing, and visiting new places and seeing new ways of doing things and then making a critique of their life styles. The narrator who is American who has been brought up in a different culture of treating injuries comes to Samoa and sees a new way and presents it thus:

*More yet. In Polynesia, every man is his own barber and surgeon, cutting off his beard or arm, as occasion demands. No unusual thing, for the warriors of Varvoo to saw off their own limbs, desperately wounded in battle. But owing to the clumsiness of the instrument*

*employed--a flinty, serrated shell--the operation has been known to last several days. Nor will they suffer any friend to help them; maintaining, that a matter so nearly concerning a warrior is far better attended to by himself. Hence it may be said, that they amputate themselves at their leisure, and hang up their tools when tired. But, though thus beholden to no one for aught connected with the practice of surgery, they never cut off their own heads, that ever I heard; a species of amputation to which, metaphorically speaking, many would-be independent sort of people in civilized lands are addicted (Mardi 114).*

And so the narrator is introduced to the culture of auto-treatment when it comes to handling injuries, and also a barber when it comes to shaving. He watches this culture practiced by Samoa with keen interest and does not jump in to intervene and stop the process as being barbaric, primitive or savagery because he has understood that that is the culture of the people. His intervention to stop the practice might have caused some quarrel and conflict which might have resulted in deaths and more injuries, but he only watches with attention and nods his head as one of the things he has learned in the culture of the people he has come across. And so after the traditional surgery process was over, the wound was then scorched, and held over the smoke of the fire, till all signs of blood vanished. From that day forward it healed, and troubled Samoa but little. This is a culture that he will certainly recount to his fellow Americans upon his return and some may want to practice which of course will enhance multiculturalism.

As they sailed on and came across more groups of people, the narrator becomes more and more like the Islanders in his dressing. He mentions that from the various gay cloths and other things provided for barter by the captain of the Parki, he had very strikingly improved his costume; making it free, flowing, and eastern. He states that he looked like an Emir. He goes ahead to saying that neither had his Viking neglected to follow his example; though with some few modifications of his own. With his long tangled hair and harpoon, he looked like the sea-god that boards ships, for the first time crossing the Equator. And for tattooed Samoa, he yet sported both kilt and turban, reminding one of a tawny leopard, though his spots were all in one place. The American has not only graduated to wearing the traditional dresses of the people there. He has learned their language and uses it to communicate with them. This is evident in the confrontation he had with the snow-white skin beautiful maiden he rescues from the natives' ship. He says that impatient to learn the beautiful girl's story, he questioned her in Polynesian. But with much earnestness, she signed him to address her in

English. Soon perceiving, however, that without comprehending the meaning of the words he employed, she seemed merely touched by something pleasing in their sound, he once more addressed her in Polynesian; saying that he was all eagerness to hear her history. The girl on her part is eager to learn the language of the young American, as the narrator says that most of the times he speaks to her, she often entreated him to repeat over and over again certain syllables of his language. These she would chant to herself, pausing now and then, as if striving to discover wherein lay their charm. In her accent, there was something very different from that of the people of the canoe. Wherein lay the difference the narrator knew not; but that accent enabled her to pronounce with readiness all the words which he taught her; even as if recalling sounds long forgotten.

Furthermore, the narrator announces that as they sailed the waters of the island they came across some Islanders. The American sailor remarked that when the natives came across them, their actions bespoke that of those that have had but little or no intercourse with whites; and most probably knew not how to account for their appearance among them. In spite of this, the natives were not hostile to them, and neither were they lukewarm to receiving them. It is said that the natives received them so warmly and enthusiastically with some carrying Jarl and Samoa on their backs while others went as far as deep into the sea to carry their chamois and came and kept it at a safe and comfortable place on land. And as they come together there is bound to be a mixture of cultures as the whites and the native are going to enter into some friendly relationship that will have a catalytic effect on their cultural *mélange*. And to further consolidate the friendly and warm reception given the strangers, the natives of Mardi – for by this collective appellation, the people informed the strangers, their islands were known – look up to the American navigator as a superior being, some sort of a demi-god and treated him accordingly as he tells us that Samoa made him to understand, that from all he could learn, the Islanders regarded the American as a superior being. And that they had inquired of him, whether he was not white Taji, a sort of half-and-half deity, now and then an Avatar among them, and ranking among their inferior exofficio demi-gods. To this, Samoa had given an affirmative answer; adding, moreover, all he could to encourage the idea.

To cement their cordial relationship with the natives of Mardi, Samoa advises the white stranger to announce himself as Taji, declaring that if once received under that title, the unbounded hospitality of their final reception would be certain;

and their persons fenced about from all harm. The white sailor heeds this advice and behaves as such when the chiefs of Mardi arrive. He declares thus: "Men of Mardi, I come from the sun. When this morning it rose and touched the wave, I pushed my shallop from its golden beach, and hither sailed before its level rays. I am Taji" (*Mardi* 247). The acceptance of the fact that he is a god is proving that he has become superstitious like the natives and also an idolater. All this because he wants to be gainfully integrated in the culture of the Islanders and learn new ways of viewing the world, hence multiculturalism. To make his godly attribute even more believable and frightening, he tells the multitude of Islanders gathered there that the gentle Yillah was a seraph from the sun; Samoa he had picked off a reef in his route from that orb; and as for the Skyeman, why, as his name imported, he came from above. In a word, he made them believe that they were all strolling divinities. As a consequence, and in order to show their acceptance of him, one of the kings of Mardi submits thus: "I am Media, the son of Media. Thrice welcome, Taji. On my island of Odo hast thou an altar. I claim thee for my guest" (248). He then reminded the rest, that the strangers had voyaged far, and needed repose. And, furthermore, that he proposed escorting them forthwith to his own dominions; where, next day, he would be happy to welcome all visitants.

At the palace of Media, the voyagers learn so much about the custom of gods and kings in the Archipelago Island. The narrator sums up what he discovers in the land in the following lines: "Upon the whole, so numerous were living and breathing gods in Mardi, that I held my divinity but cheaply. And seeing such a host of immortals, and hearing of multitudes more, purely spiritual in their nature, haunting woodlands and streams; my views of theology grew strangely confused; I began to bethink me of the Jew that rejected the Talmud, and his all-permeating principle, to which Goethe and others have subscribed" (261). He discovers with great satisfaction that they Medians are so spiritual to the extent that their practice of polytheism makes him to question his own views on theology. He has come into a culture where there is great respect for the kings and the worship of many gods. But to show respect for the customs and tradition of the people, he willfully pretends to be seen as a god so as to live in peace and unity among the people of Mardi as he tells us that weighing all things well, and himself severely, he resolved to follow his Mentor's wise counsel; neither arrogating aught, nor abating of just dues; but circulating freely, sociably, and frankly, among the gods, heroes, high priests, kings, and gentlemen, that made up the principalities of Mardi. The narrator reveals that with the exception of certain islands out of sight and at an indefinite

distance, the Medians had no certain knowledge of any isles but their own. Receiving the strangers therefore in their land and communing with them is telling of their desire to open up their land to multiculturalism.

The narrator witnesses something very interesting in the culture of the natives of Mardi that entices him so much to the extent that he makes comparison with his own country's political system and made allusions to what holds in other places. He speaks thus in the lines below:

*Now, for all the rant of your democrats, a fine king on a throne is a very fine sight to behold. He looks very much like a god. No wonder that his more dutiful subjects so swore that their good lord and master King Media was demi-divine. A king on his throne! Ah, believe me, ye Gracchi, ye Acephali, ye Levelers, it is something worth seeing, be sure; whether beheld at Babylon the Tremendous, when Nebuchadnezzar was crowned; at old Scone in the days of Macbeth; at Rheims, among Oriflammes, at the coronation of Louis le Grand; at Westminster Abbey, when the gentlemanly George doffed his beaver for a diadem; or under the soft shade of palm trees on an isle in the sea. Man lording it over man, man kneeling to man, is a spectacle that Gabriel might well travel hitherward to behold; for never did he behold it in heaven. But Darius giving laws to the Medes and the Persians, or the conqueror of Bactria with king-cattle yoked to his car was not a whit more sublime, than Beau Brummel magnificently ringing for his valet. A king on his throne! It is Jupiter nodding in the councils of Olympus; Satan, seen among the coronets in Hell. A king on his throne! It is the sun over a mountain; the sun over law-giving Sinai; the sun in our system: planets, duke-like, dancing attendance, and baronial satellites in waiting. A king on his throne! After all, but a gentleman seated. And thus sat the good lord, King Media (*Mardi* 271).*

The narrator reveals that democracy is the system of government that holds in his country of origin and goes on to admire the monarchical system of government he sees in Mardi. This admiration is seen in the repetition of the exclamatory phrase "a king on his throne!" He notes that a king, no matter where he is found, is worshipped and adored by his subjects who hold him in very high esteem. In Mardi for example he discovers that a king is viewed as a demi-god whose decision is final. He metaphorically compares the king with Jupiter, the sun, and Satan to show that the king is lord in his jurisdiction and over his subject whose adoration of him is capable of causing angel Gabriel to leave Heaven to come behold such a manner of worship. The divine authority of the King in Mardi is seen in the following statement by King Media: "Subjects! So long as I live, I will rule you and judge you alone. And

though you here kneeled before me till you grew into the ground, and there took root, no yea to your petition will you get from this throne. I am king; ye are slaves. Mine to command: yours to obey. And this hour I decree, that henceforth no gibberish of bulwarks and bulkheads be heard in this land. For a dead bulwark and a bulkhead, to dam off sedition, will I make of that man, who again but breathes those bulky words. Ho! spears! see that these knee-pans here kneel till set of sun" (275). This method of ruling is contrasted to the democratic regime of his country, America, where the people have a voice in the exercise of power and can therefore remove any ruler from power at any time if they feel that he or she is not doing the right thing according to their will. He also realizes that in Mardi rulership is hereditary while in his own culture, the people elect those to rule them. This is a new culture he has learned that will impact his way of viewing leadership when he regains his country.

And finally, when Yillah (the sacrificial maiden that the narrator earlier on rescues from the Islanders and falls in love with) gets missing, Taji, Jarl, and Samoa get three more new acquaintances and set out with King Media in search of her in all the nook and cranny of Mardi. This is when the full significance and meaning of the title *Mardi and A Voyage Thither* is made manifest. The three new acquaintances were: Mohi, or Braid-Beard, so called from the manner in which he wore that appendage, exceedingly long and gray. He was a venerable teller of stories and legends, one of the Keepers of the Chronicles of the Kings of Mardi; the second was Babbalanja, a man of a mystical aspect, habited in a voluminous robe. He was learned in Mardian lore; much given to quotations from ancient and obsolete authorities: the Ponderings of Old Bardianna: the Pandects of Alla-Malolla; and third and last, was Yoomy, or the Warbler. A youthful, long-haired, blue-eyed minstrel; all fits and starts; at times, absent of mind, and wan of cheek; but always very neat and pretty in his apparel; wearing the most becoming of turbans, a Bird of Paradise feather its plume, and sporting the gayest of sashes.

Their search takes them to many other surrounding isles of Mardi where they meet new peoples and new cultures and interact with so many other races and learn different ways of life of the peoples they came across in their search for the charming maiden. To begin with, from Odo where Media is king, they are exposed to the fact that a king is demi-divine and the people believe so much in the divine powers of their lord. From Odo, they move to Valapee or the Isle of yams where Little Peepi is king. There, they are told that Peepi had been proclaimed king before he was born; his sire dying some few weeks previous to that event; and vacating

his divan, declared that he left a monarch behind. It is also said of Peepi that along with the royal dignity, and superadded to the soul possessed in his own proper person, the infant monarch was supposed to have inherited the valiant spirits of some twenty heroes, sages, simpletons, and demi-gods, previously lodged in his sire. After Valapee, the crew crossed the lagoon to Juam; a name bestowed upon one of the largest islands hereabout; and also, collectively, upon several wooded isles engulfing it, which together were known as the dominions of one monarch. That monarch was Donjalolo. Just turned of twenty-five, he was accounted not only the handsomest man in his dominions, but throughout the lagoon. His comeliness, however, was so feminine, that he was sometimes called "Fonoo," or the Girl. Here, Mohi recounts that many ages ago, there reigned in Juam a king called Teei, and this Teei's succession to the sovereignty was long disputed by his brother Marjora; who at last rallying round him an army, after many vicissitudes, defeated the unfortunate monarch in a stout fight of clubs on the beach. We learn here that succession dispute is something that pervades every culture of the world. In addition, they are told several other legends and myths surrounding Juam. Furthermore, when they could not find Yillah in Willamilla, on the third day they took leave of Donjalolo; who lavished upon them many caresses and, somewhat reluctantly on Media's part, they quitted the vale. And one by one, they visited the outer villages of Juam; and crossing the waters, wandered several days among its tributary isles. There they saw the viceroys of him who reigned in the hollow: chieftains of whom Donjalolo was proud; so honest, humble, and faithful; so bent upon ameliorating the condition of those under their rule. Then, they made a stopover at Nora-Bamma, Isle of Nods in which they discover that its dwellers were dreamers, hypochondriacs, somnambulists; who, from the care and care of outer Mardi fleeing, in the poppy's jaded odors, seek oblivion for the past, and ecstasies to come.

Again, in the chapter "Braid-Beard Rehearses the Origin of the Isle of Rogues", they come across Ohonoo, in other words the Land of Rogues. In the land of Rogues, the maxim "Judge not things by their names" become so relevant as the travellers discover that ironically, the men of Ohonoo were as honest as any in Mardi. They had a suspicious appellation for their island, true; but not thus seemed it to them. For, upon nothing did they so much plume themselves as upon this very name. Why? Its origin went back to old times; and being venerable they gloried therein; though they disclaimed its present applicability to any of their race; showing, that words are but algebraic signs, conveying no meaning except what you please. And

to be called one thing, is oftentimes to be another. Landing at another quarter of the island, they journeyed up a valley called Monlova where Uhia was their king. The chronicler recounts that one object of interest in Ohonoo was the original image of Keevi, the god of Thieves; hence, from time immemorial, the tutelary deity of the isle. According to the legend, Keevi fell from a golden cloud, burying himself to the thighs in the earth, tearing up the soil all round. Three meditative mortals, strolling by at the time, had a narrow escape. And finally, drawing near Mondoldo, their next place of destination, they were greeted by six fine canoes, gayly tricked out with streamers, and all alive with the gestures of their occupants. King Borabolla and court were hastening to welcome their approach; Media, unbeknown to all, having notified him at the Banquet of the Five-and-Twenty Kings, of their intention to visit his dominions. It is in Mondoldo that they had the first-hand experience of how funeral rite is conducted in Mardi with that performed in honour of a deceased diver. The chapter entitled "Marnee Ora, Ora Marnee" paints a vivid picture of the obsequies of that diver. All these places they went to supplied them with volumes upon volumes of cultural practices among the different Archipelago tribes. The mélange between these different races and the young American go on without any conflicting resistances from both parties as to the way of life of each other. This aspect very much promotes multiculturalism and to a larger extent globalization.

## CONCLUSION

This study has made an x-ray of Herman Melville's preoccupation with transnationalism and multiculturalism. The examination and analysis done on Melville's *Mardi* show beyond any contradiction that Melville, among other things, was concerned with how different cultures could live together in peace and unity in the same community. *Mardi* establishes the fact that a stranger or foreigner can conveniently integrate himself in every community permitted he establishes friendly ties with the people he meets in his adoptive land. The work highlights the fact that there are thematic concerns that project the author's preoccupation with migration and multiculturalism. It explores and exposes transnationalistic and multiculturalistic tendencies in Melville which confirm him as a promoter of multiculturalism. The novel can therefore be read as Melville's attempt at bringing together the peoples of the world into living as brethren of the same ancestry, especially as we may be of different colours, different races, but are undoubtedly one people.

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