



THE HEATHEN

Fayaway and Yillah.

Toward an understanding of distance.

She wept disconsolately. The Savage wept disconsolately.
Fayaway. Fadeaway, Away.

One might conjecture upon the heart throbs and turgidity of the ancient Gods (Godesses, esp.) whom we project symbolically, having made them in the metaphor of our own longings. Our poets often allude to Psyche and Eros, Echo and Narcissus, Sappho, Orpheus and Eurydice.

Helen and Paris; Jason and Medea; Paolo and Francesca; Dante and Beatrice. Mr. Abel and Rima. Adam and Eve.

Herman and Fayaway. Reality palpable, and seductive; yet somehow, too divergent.

Hence the projection of Taji and Yillah? If Only.

Fayaway provided gaiety, and whatever else. When she ate raw fish like a kingfisher or an heron, she displayed a delicate touch, exhibiting more refinement than the other savage beauties. Beauty confused, but providing its best performance. Still a heathen.

Amongst the poetic allusions one finds no reference to the disposal of bodily wastes. A distasteful subject relegated to the Public Works Department. Rabelais and Swift were not poets.

Nor do our poets allude to the manner in which the mythicals dispatched raw fish. Herman's sensibilities were disturbed. His intolerance was moderately affected by his entrancement. One wonders what else Fayaway might have lacked. Since her culture did not possess a written language, there existed no alphabet. While she might have become a spirited conversationalist in her own tongue from out some enthusiasm, she could not deliver her own tongue into script. Almost as though communicating with the deaf and dumb one accessed sign language with some audible tonality, and some expressive grunting, and much repetition. Yet, what was lacking when the essential and vital embrace ensued? Was it not fervid, passionate and loving? What further transports? More than Elizabeth? Was one able to communicate to Elizabeth what it was that ailed one? One did



not discuss improprieties. A White American Anglo-Saxon mate.

While Fayaway becomes the raw product of her culture, Yillah, though of the same origin (however unreal), becomes enshrined in the author's need to elevate the 'savage' (a word he found the inescapable need to use often, even in the description of Fayaway, although his description of a disconsolate 'entity' omitted such usage; e.g. 'the savage wept disconsolately'). Yillah acquires an aura, perhaps somewhat imbued with mystical properties like the Greek Goddesses, with a little of the Green Mansions thrown in. Rima was not so much a 'savage' as a spirit-nymph. Savagery erased with a touch of poesy. How did the ancients escape the derogatory lexicon?

What was Eve? Eve seems more primitive than Rima, or Yillah. The Old Testament tended not to rhapsodize; Eve, therefore, may suffer some orthepy, inept philology, or an unworded fate. A gender exclusion. A Rib.

At some point it was inferred if she lost her spirituality, Yillah might become desolate without Taji; there existing some ambivalence between the two with regard to mortality and spirituality. Alas!, the juggling of bloodless spirituality and turgid mortality. E'er hear of a tumescent schmoo? Surely of the flaccid spirit. Poetic license?!?

One could not deny himself the palpable reality, the touch of Yillah; one could not exist alongside the phantom without desire; that crashing-to-earth feeling.

Other obvious limitations existed. Perhaps Fayaway presented little challenge. Hers were not favors one wooed; they belonged to the landscape and the palate as much as breadfruit; something of which one partook as he does food and sleep; no taboos prevailed above her (sexual encounters).

However, Home was elsewhere, where it was believed Mother lived; not in the Island Paradise. Satiation and little challenge, or fear? One might not wish to conform to and mirror one societal aegis, one he imagines he understands, but to be expected to conform to and mirror another, alien aegis (I recall the 'savage's' growing imperative and demand with regard to tattooing), despite all the pleasurable favors of Fayaway, therein lies a rub.

What then is the lure of the Island Paradise? Once one regained the familiar shore, he reminisced from afar.

Having eaten of the Fruit (losing his innocence in a state of nature?), did Elizabeth eventually prove a dry fig within the civilized artifice? An 1850's Proper New England White Anglo.

Not only was Fayaway disconsolate. And one would never return. Hence Yillah remains not only a figment, but must also



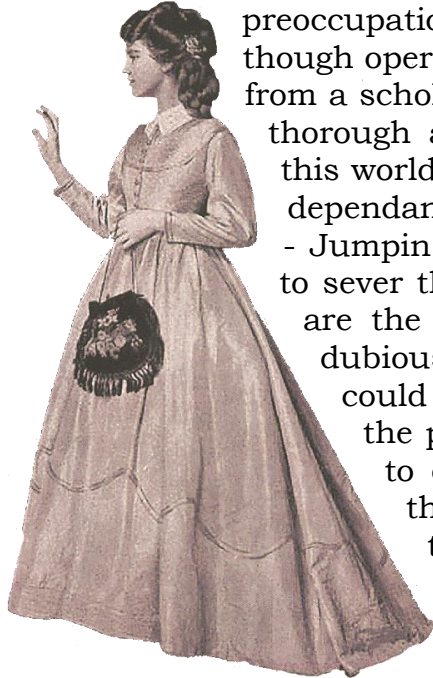
run away in order to remove all temptation; though one would search everywhere for her. Lost Innocence.

Paradisiacal Islands are not the only source of these flagellant memories. They appear somehow more tantalizing and romantic. It is odd though, how we do omit the smell of the animal. While in some ways it may mostly resemble real life, because when one is in love he tends to be discreet with respect to offering offense. The animal is offensive; nearly as closely as it approaches the savage. Since one does not read of the taboo (perhaps etiquette) with regard to bodily functions, our perceptions remain biased. 'Savage' circumspection may be more elevated than that of a jesting Rabelais (or the flickering sit-coms), and may remain undiminished in the eye of the Public Works Department.

We have been cautioned not to view the innocent (he or she not exposed to civilization [as we are apt to regard it]), i.e., the savage, as noble, as somehow imbued with a purity of ethic and person. We are more instructed to regard these as barbarians, and so we do because they do not live as we do. In the same way we regard ideological differences with suspicion, we view those others who are not like us. And was it not Herman who asked "Is civilization a thing distinct, or merely an advanced stage of barbarism?"

I'm not of the mind to say much about what I believe civilization has done to the heathen or pagan world. Since I am under a particular spell, I am more of a mind to admit that civilization is as much the kiss of death as anything else. What I might want to idealize about the benefits, I am too aware of the deficiencies to even consider a lip service to the other. We are in need of anything but congratulations. Do not mistake me, I am grateful for all the kindnesses extended, and return as much the same and more, but I will not accept these presumptions to good manners or affected refinements as advancements over something we are inclined to view with repugnance and disdain. Such is the spell that o'erhangs me.

Fayaway is as taboo-abiding as any civilized entity is law-abiding; whether any more fearfully or complaisantly may not be measurable. Her teeth are white without evidence of having brushed them. Her other personal habits with regard to cleanliness may be attributable to her leisure, that of bathing several times a day, and with much attention given to grooming, the habit of the young 'savage' females. She is mentioned to have always exuded a perfumed air. Perhaps we are speaking of a civilized entity after all; more than most - by definition.



Still, it may be a luxury, and an extravagance, to be able to read Herman, and feel literate and confident enough to comprehend something of the man's mind and soul (out of time and place). And to sense how impractical and irrelevant a preoccupation it is to consider these things; as though operating in a vacuum. I am the remotest thing from a scholar, and even though I might be the most thorough and precise a one, what would it avail in this world of ours that hangs by a thread, totally dependant upon some unclear imperative (or ethic - Jumpin' Jehosophat!)? Many amongst us attempt to sever the thread, anywhere in time, so saturated are the billions by an argument containing such dubious meaning. Although, at this late date I could not entirely dispose of this part of myself, the part I have acquired through long exposure to our way, that compels me to delve in this manner with this attendant rationale, the primitive existence (innocence) is not without its compelling attractions. They say you can't go back; we aint going forward either.

We all seek some relief from and remedy for a botched job. It may be of consequence to assess a culpability for the botching, at least give some recognition to whom or what is responsible; regardless whether or not there is hope of relief or remedy.



She'll get over it!

