Synopsis of Herman Melville’s Typee

This Novel is written from the perspective of Tom, the protagonist, who does the Adventure of Nukuheva Bay in the South Seas. Nukuheva at Marquesas island consists of two tribes, which are separated by the mountain, Happar and Typee. Happar is a most friendly savage meanwhile Typee is cruel. The people choose to avoid to visit Typee because they are well known as Cannibals.

Tom’s ship arrives at Nukuheva bay, the largest of the Marquesas islands. Tom runaways from the ship and does the adventure. In his journey, he meets with two savages of Typee who lead him to their village.

In Typee valley, Tom gets kind and hospitable treatment. Every day they give their attention to Tom such as feeding him, take care, take a walk and protect him. After Tom receives their goodness, step by step he likes to stay with them.

Tom also sees that the social life of Typee is comfortable. In their village, there is no violence, no money, no wicked person. They treat each other as brother and sister and they always keep their good relationship. They also have the spirit of unanimity.

Typee likes Tom to live with them so they ask him to be tattooed. But he refuses. In daylight, he sees the mysterious package which is filled with three heads. One of the three heads is white man’s. After Tom has seen it, he runaways
from their village because he is afraid to be killed. In the end of the story, he kills one of the natives.

**Biography of Herman Melville**

On August 1, 1819, Herman Melville was born in New York City. His father was a prosperous importer and his mother was the daughter of a military hero of the American Revolution. At Albany, Herman Melville worked as a bank clerk, farmer, bookkeeper, and as a teacher in Pittsfield. In 1839, he signed as a crew member on the trading ship *St. Lawrence*, sailing from New York to Liverpool and back to New York. Upon his return he resumed teaching, but two years later went to sea again aboard the whaling ship *Acushnet*.

When the Acushnet was in the Marquesas, Melville jumped ship and spent a month in the Typee valley on Nukuheva. Brought back to Tahiti by an Australian whaler, Melville was taken ashore as a mutineer but escaped. For a time he worked in Honolulu before enlisting in 1843 in the U.S. Navy; he sailed to Boston on the frigate *United States* and was discharged upon arrival. Once back home to his family, he began writing on his Nukuheva adventures. In 1846, *Typee* became an instant success.

His other works are *Omoo, Mardi* in 1849, *Redburn* (1849), and *White-Jacket* (1850). In Massachusetts Melville wrote *Moby Dick*, which was published in 1851, *Pierre, or the Ambiguities* (1852), *Israel Potter* in 1855, *The Piazza Tales* (1856), and *The Confidence-Man* (1857).
During the Civil War, Melville wrote the poem *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* in 1866. At that time Melville worked as deputy inspector of customs at the port of New York. Melville died on September 28, 1891.