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Review of Herman Melville's *Typee*. A Fluid-Text Edition

Abstract

Herman Melville's *Typee*. A Fluid-Text Edition is a digital edition by John Bryant which aims to recreate Melville's revision process and compositional stages of his first published book, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (1846). In doing so, Bryant shows the implications of his radical theory of textual fluidity to the readers, effectively creating a precious and innovative milestone in American literature studies.

The project, published in 2006, is indeed a meticulous attempt to intertwine textual criticism and digital environment, offering digital images, transcriptions and a dynamic reading text with revision sequences and narratives, ultimately providing an enthralling experience to both the common reader and the scholar. Nonetheless, a lack of updates threatens to undermine the sustainability of the project.

The goal of this review is to verify whether this project can be classified as a Scholarly Digital Edition (SDE) following Patrick Sahle's criteria[1].

Introduction

Herman Melville (New York, 1 August 1819 – New York, 28 September 1891) was an American novelist and poet, widely recognised as one of the greatest American writers for his whaling novel *Moby-Dick* (1851).

Typee (1846), his first book and most popular work during his lifetime, was « […] neither literal autobiography nor pure fiction»[2], based on an imaginative reconstruction of the author's seafaring experience on the island Nuku Hiva in the Marquesas Islands in 1842[3]. Printed the same year in

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[1] Cf. *Criteria for Reviewing Scholarly Digital Editions, version 1.1* at https://www.i-d-e.de/publikationen/weitereschriften/criteria-version-1-1/.
[2] Howard, Leon, "Historical Note", in Melville, Herman, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life*, 2003, p. 291.
[3] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typee.

London and New York, *Typee* raised a mixed feeling of scandal and morbid curiosity, offering Victorian readers seductive tales of earthly paradises and Pacific voyeurism. Following the so-called "Melville Revival" of the late 1920s, Melville's work saw renewed appreciation. Recently, *Typee* has captured the interest of scholars due to its narrative of Western imperialism and colonialism, American identity, ethnology and sexuality. Moreover, existing in extremely different authorial, editorial and cultural versions, this text embodies Bryant's theory of fluid-textuality.

Herman Melville's *Typee*. A Fluid-Text Edition tries to offer, through digital editorial features, an unprecedented and interactive reading of this startling fluid-text[4].

1. Opening the review

1.1 Bibliographic identification

Herman Melville's *Typee*. A Fluid-Text Edition is available at the URL https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/melville/default.xqy.

Browsing through the homepage (Fig. 1), information about the project can be found in the footer, including the following:

• Responsible institution: University of Virginia Press.
• The project lifespan, including the first publication (2006) and the last global revision (2009).
• The edition's ISBN code is 978-0-8139-2565-3.

The name of the editor is located under the title. The *Acknowledgments* link at the bottom of the "Welcome" paragraph details academic information about the editor and his team, while a *Revision Log* collects all the changes made during the revision stage in 2009.

Fig. 1 – The homepage of Herman Melville's *Typee*. A Fluid-Text Edition.

1.2 General parameters

The team started the writing of the project in 2003 under the academic supervision of John Bryant, Professor of English at Hofstra University (New York), with the collaboration of John Unsworth and Daniel Pitti of the University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH).

In a struggle to find the grant funding needed, the stillborn project caught the interest of Michael Gusinde-Duffy of the University of Virginia Press that accepted it as part of the Rotunda's

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[4] Cf. https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/melville/site.xqy.

Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture series, supported by the Press' director Penny Kaiserlian and Electronic Imprint manager Mark Saunders.

Moreover, editing issues (i.e. copyediting, re-editing) concerning Bryant's drafts transformation into the electronic edition itself and problems concerning consistency, hypertext structure and image design have been tackled by talented scholars like David Sewell, Mary Ann Lugo, Tim Finney, Oludotun Akinola and Bill Covert.

In 2006, as a result of the shared efforts of the team, the first edition of the project was published[5].

In April 2009, the project was awarded the seal of approval from the MLA's (Modern Language Association) Committee on Scholarly Editions.

In July 2009, Bryant made several emendations and additions to the edition, in consultation with Rotunda's David Sewell and the Committee on Scholarly Editions.

In particular, the revision added a section explaining the relationship among the manuscript and subsequent print editions and improved the diplomatic transcription[6].

1.3 Transparency

Editorial guidelines, text encoding and introductive essays are reachable through the top navbar, whereas information about the institutions with their hypertextual links are collected in the footer. Although the necessary data are present, they are not immediately reachable (e.g. the footer only appears in the homepage) nor properly introduced (e.g. absence of contextual or thematic boxes) and could initially confuse the user.

Both the site and the manuscript viewer (see § 4.3) are hosted by University of Virginia Press' Rotunda series, a framework designed for the publication and dissemination of original digital scholarship and documentary editions spacing through American literature and history.

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[5] Cf. https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/melville/acks.html.
[6] Cf. https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/melville/revision-log.html.

2. Subject and content of the edition

2.1 Selection and content

Following the discovery made in 1983 of a heavily-revised working draft of *Typee*[7], the project offers:

a) High-quality digital reproductions of the manuscript.
b) Diplomatic transcription of the manuscript.
c) Melville's final draft constructed from the manuscript evidence.

Moreover, a dedicated page on the site contains the freely available text of the first British edition of *Typee*, published under the title *The Marquesas Islands; Or, A Peep at Polynesian Life* in February 1846, as part of John Murray's *Home and Colonial Library*[8] series (see § 2.2).

Although the project provides a three-chapter segment of the manuscript, each page has been made available in a high-quality image enriched with a detailed transcription and editorial annotations. It is noteworthy that Bryant's editorial efforts have converged into the creation of more than one thousand revision sites within the transcription, each accompanied by a sequential evolution of the revision and a narrative that theorises its history[9]. Three sets of revision sites are provided, allowing the reader to inspect what Bryant calls the «invisible text of revision»[10]:

1) Sites evident in the manuscript.
2) Revisions of later drafts.
3) Merged revisions.

These features expand and demonstrate what Bryant has collected in four comprehensive introductory essays[11] that, among other topics, consider the evolution of Melville's *Typee* from manuscript to book and provide a rationale for fluid-text editing (see § 3.2). Furthermore, the online site comes with a print companion, *Melville Unfolding*, that enriches the manuscript study and the revision narrative with cultural implications of politics and sexuality in the *Typee*.

2.2 Previous and project's achievements

Melville's *Typee* had an intricate and rich publishing history. The first British edition was published in London by John Murray on February 26, 1846 and successively an American edition was published in New York by Wiley & Putnam (later of Harper & Brothers) the same year. Melville's brother and agent, Gansevoort, handed himself a fair copy of the manuscript to Murray first and Putnam later, negotiating a deal. Several corrections were made to the text, most of them by Gansevoort and the editors. As Leon Howard writes, there are:

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[7] Now deposited in the New York Public Library.

[8] Herman Melville, *Narrative of a four months' residence among the natives of a valley of the Marquesas Islands; Or, A Peep at Polynesian Life*, London: John Murray, 1846. The text of chapters 12, 13 and 14 corresponds to the manuscript chapters 10, 11 and 12 featured on the site.

[9] Where appropriate, Bryant states the author of the revision – Melville, his brother Gansevoort, his publisher John Murray, or copy editor Henry Milton.

[10] Cf. https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/melville/site.xqy#revision.

[11] Cf. https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/melville/intro.xqy.

several important variations between the two texts [the English and the American] where physical evidence on the American pages shows that the American setting originally included the English reading, which was then altered before the first American impression was issued[12].

Moreover, textual alterations may have been the consequence of bowdlerisations of the American edition. While achieving immediate success, the book received complaints due to parts containing negative references to South Pacific missionaries: a "revised" American edition was published in August 1846 with the removal of those parts and the addition of a chapter (*Sequel: The Story of Toby*). The British publisher chose to add only *The Story of Toby* to his version, creating *de facto* a disparity between English and American readers, and two remarkably different *Typee*s. In 1892, following Melville's deathbed instructions, his wife and his friend Arthur Stedman published a posthumous edition based on the British version but with significant emendations. Other notable editions are the Constable edition of 1924 and the 1968 eclectic critical Northwestern-Newberry edition[13].

In this project, Bryant offers a transcription of the first British edition, a diplomatic transcription of the manuscript and a base version built on Melville's emendations.

3. Aims and methods

3.1 Documentation

The project's documentation consists of four introductive essays (see § 2.1) and a site guide enriched with manuscript viewer functionalities and some technical notes about the coding (*This Site*, accessible through the top navbar; Fig. 2). It should be emphasized that the four essays are comprehensive enough to provide a complete and crystal-clear picture of the work done. The documentation is entirely accessible in the *Introduction* page (Fig. 2) located on the top navbar:

Fig. 2 – *Introduction* (highlighted in red) refers to the page containing four introductive essays; *This Site* (highlighted in green) refers to the page containing the site guide.

1. *Editing a Fluid Text* deals with fluid-text theoretical rationale.
2. *Navigating the Typee Manuscript* mainly describes the features concerning the manuscript, its transcription and the reading text.
3. *Writing Typee* features an in-depth biographical and historical study that follows *Typee*'s growth from manuscript to book.
4. *Scenes of Revision: Expansion and Collaboration* offers a brief reconstruction of the text publishing history and the revision narrative behind it.

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[12] Howard, Leon, "Historical Note", in Melville, Herman, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life*, 2003, p. 282.
[13] Ibid.

3.2 Scholarly objectives and mission

The edition has a strong theoretical framework and is therefore dedicated primarily to an audience made of Melville's scholars[14]. However, the breadth of Bryant's critical view and his explanations about the evolution of the text do not require the reader to be a textual editor and they are indeed compelling even for a non-specialised public. In fact, the most significant part of Bryant's approach concerns the notion of *fluid text*. As Bryant writes:

> The goals of editing a fluid text are to display a full range of textual moments and, more importantly, to make the invisible distances between versions visible and readable[15].

Thus, the mission of a fluid-text edition is closing the gap between the fixed, final published edition and the sparkling dynamic of earlier revisions, disclosing the invisible patterns of authorial intentions to the careful reader. *Typee* represents an ideal fluid-text through its different versions, as a result of several moments of intentionality, collaborative revisions and external pressures. Following this concept, we may find the very purpose of this edition:

> Just as there is a powerful desire to experience the pleasures of a fixed and invariant text, there is also a submerged but no less compelling desire to experience the pleasures of a fluid text. This online edition of Melville's *Typee* manuscript is designed to exercise this other pleasure[16].

3.3 Representation of documents and texts

The transcription is a typographic representation of Melville's calligraphy, including deletions and insertions. The editor also attempted to reproduce doodles, pen marks and editorial signs to return a representation as close as possible to the original manuscript. In general, Melville's erratic spellings have been preserved. As Bryant states in *Navigating the Typee manuscript*:

> No effort has been made in the transcription to go beyond a visual representation of the document itself and indicate, through arcane genetic transcription symbols and the like, the process of revision. The chief value of the transcription is that it enhances the document's legibility; it enables readers to read Melville's scrawl and to discern his cancelled words[17].

In case of unfinished words or dropping of letters, Bryant tried to give the full word intended, whereas undecipherable words are followed by a question mark. The transcription page also contains information about the page number and the leaf (that has been numbered consecutively). Moreover, Bryant provides various editorial markings (Fig. 3) to mimic Melville's inscription

26 sition of these ∧ savages. ⁋ The path was obviously
27 the most beaten one in the valley, several others
28 leading from either side into it ∧& yet despite
29 these circumstances it was until I grew more
30 familiar with its impediments, it seemed as difficult
31 to travel as the recesses of a wilderness. Part of it
32 swept round an abrupt rise of ground ∧ whose

Fig. 3 – Editorial markings used in the diplomatic transcription.

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practices and material aspects of the document, among which[18]:

- A paragraph mark (¶) designates Melville's own paragraph mark.
- A caret (^) replicates Melville's insertion mark.
- An equal sign (=) indicates hyphen.
- A circle (•) designates a marginal pencil dot.
- Cancelled words are shown in blue with strikethrough lines while inserted words appear in smaller red type positioned to correspond their manuscript position.

3.4 Text criticism, indexing and commentary

The theoretical core of the project is the creation of a base version, that is a reading text based on the manuscript's final reading which includes Melville's indications on insertions and deletions. In fact, as Bryant argues:

> the diplomatic transcription of the manuscript, by itself, cannot possibly represent Melville's revision processes. […] It does not show what Melville did to create the mess, nor what he did after he tried to clean it up, nor how he continued to revise while making his fair copy and preparing his text for publication[19].

Thus, the base version, used as a starting point to explore previous acts of revision, serves as a final map for the reader. The major concern is to choose, from the available versions of the text, the most useful one as copy-text – either a fair-copy manuscript or a first-edition text. The dilemma of choosing copy-text is even more significant here if we consider that the *Typee* fair-copy manuscript is missing and the first two editions (British and American) present several emendations made by publishers. In addition, more than five hundred revision sites can be found in the final manuscript and another five hundred or so when comparing Melville's manuscript text to the text published in the first British edition, indicating a gargantuan amount of changes among versions.
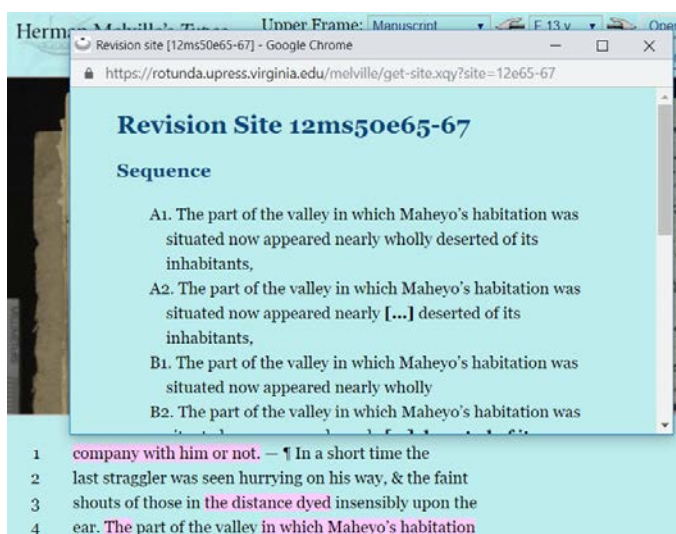

Fig. 4 – An example of revision site with sequential history.

Concerning authorial intention in Melville's *Typee*, Tanselle argues that «there is no evidence, internal or external, to suggest that [the publishers' emendations] are the kinds of changes Melville would have made without pressure from someone else»[20]. For the same reason, Bryant decided to avoid collaborative text as a foundation to build his reading – he instead chose the "final" manuscript version, following Melville's indications. The final goal is to create a dynamic and interactive set of revisions and variants. This attempt converges in the creation of revision sites that contain

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Cf. https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/melville/intro-navigating.xqy#i2fn03.

[20] Tanselle, G. Thomas, "The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention", *Studies in Bibliography* 29, p. 194.

sequential reconstruction and narrative (Fig. 4), ranging from manuscript revision to subsequent stages. Revision sequences display the actual wording of the author in numbered steps, so that every reader can decode it: «in fluid-text editing, the editor is obliged to work out the sequences for the reader, and to tell their stories»[21], differently from what happens in a printed textual apparatus. As a consequence, Bryant writes: «what diverges from an eclectic critical edition, which features a text derived from a conflation of authorial variants and editorial invention, is the absence of one privileged set of variants»[22]. Furthermore, Bryant manages to intertwine genetic criticism (focusing on revision sequences and drafting stages) and fluid-text editing in order to show the variations between the phases of textuality and intentionality in *Typee*.

Finally, this project offers a wide variety of editorial practices. For example, high-quality scans of the manuscript reproduce a facsimile edition, whereas the transcription of the manuscript can be considered diplomatic (i.e. a representation as close as possible to the original source). However, Bryant's base reading could also be considered an interpretative endeavour as the revision narratives and the sequences cannot happen without hermeneutical and critical effort.

3.5 Data modelling

The XML transcription file of the *Typee*'s manuscript follows TEI P4 Guidelines, encoded using a light-weight version of the TEI P4 DTD. No additional information about the guidelines followed or the encoding are given, nor the encoding is available (see § 4.5).

In TEI P4, the header is typically composed by four major parts, similarly to P5 Guidelines (with the exception of `<xenoData>` element for non-TEI metadata). Of these, only `<fileDesc>` is mandatory[23]:

- File description (`<fileDesc>`)
- Encoding description (`<encodingDesc>`)
- Text profile (`<profileDesc>`)
- Revision history (`<revisionDesc>`)

Typee's TEI Header also adopts `<handList>` (Fig. 5a), a tag set for transcription of primary sources that lists the different hands (the writers) of the source (Herman and his brother).

```
15 ▽        <profileDesc>
16 ▽          <handList>
17               <hand id="HM" scribe="Herman Melville"/>
18               <hand id="GM" scribe="Gansevoort Melville"/>
19          </handList>
20        </profileDesc>
```

Fig. 5a – a section of the teiHeader.

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[21] Cf. https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/melville/intro-navigating.xqy
[22] Ibid.
[23] As per https://tei-c.org/Vault/P4/doc/html/HD.html

Textual phenomena that involve the substitution of one word or phrase are typically specified with the `<add>` and `<del>` elements, used within an `<app>` (critical apparatus) structure. This method allows precise declaration of how the deletion and insertion are managed and explicit indication that one text is a substitute for another. Furthermore, `<rend>` and `<place>` attributes are used to define the editorial markings and their spatial location within the text, while `<rdg>` (reading) contains a single reading within a textual variation (Fig. 5b).

```
371 ▽    <app>
372 ▽        <rdg hand="HM" type="MSonly">
373 ▽            <del rend="strikethrough"><anchor type="RS" id="RS10ms48a1"/>beneath which <del rend="strikethrough">edifices perhaps</del> were
374                putrefying the</del>
375            <lb n="37"/>
376 ▽            <del rend="strikethrough">relics of some recent
377                sacrifice<anchor type="RS" id="RS10ms48a2"/></del>
378        </rdg>
379 ▽        <rdg type="RTonly">within which might be seen in various
380            stages of decay offerings of bread fruit &amp; cocoa
381            nuts and the putrefying<lb n="37"/>relics of some recent
382        sacrifice</rdg>
383    </app>
```

Fig. 5b – an example of critical apparatus in TEI.

While the transcription is sufficient for treating a critical edition, scholars may be disappointed about the absence of more detailed documentation.

4. Publication and presentation

4.1 Technical infrastructure

The project was published into the Rotunda Series and therefore uses its infrastructure. To access the core of the edition, the user must register to Rotunda website and successively log in. As stated in "Images and XML Coding: a technical note", digital scans of the *Typee*'s manuscript were created by the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the New York Public Library in 2003 and then converted to *.jpg* format.

Manuscript transcription, revision sequences and revision narratives were originally prepared as word processing files and then encoded in consultation with the Press and the editor, whereas presentation and conversion in HTML was managed by Rotunda staff.

4.2 Browse and Search

The manuscript can be accessed via the *Search* or *Edition* links in the navbar. While the first link allows the user to search the entire manuscript by means of a dedicated search box, the second one provides direct access to the edition itself. Although the default search includes the full text, the query can be refined by selecting *deleted text only*, *added text only* and *added or deleted text only* (Fig. 6). Searching for deleted and added text gives the user the option to find specific words or parts of text that could not otherwise be found in printed critical editions. It is worth noticing that searches use stemming and wildcards to overcome Melville's erratic spelling.

Fig. 6 – Searchbox and radiobuttons.

Once a query has been made, the user gets a list of manuscript pages. Each page also contains a raw transcription of the text, with paragraph breaks, line breaks and deleted parts.

For example, searching for the term *ch??f* (using wildcard query) in all text, the user gets to a page similar to the one in Fig. 7. Clicking on "view in Edition" allows the user to move to the manuscript viewer.

Fig. 7 – Example search result for the word *ch??f*.

4.3 Manuscript viewer

The manuscript viewer consists of two – upper and lower – viewing frames and a navigation bar. Once logged in – either by searching or through the *Edition* link – the user finds a multi-frame window that stacks the scanned manuscript on top of the diplomatic transcription. The scroll bars could be synced by clicking on the "Coordination" checkbox (Fig. 8).
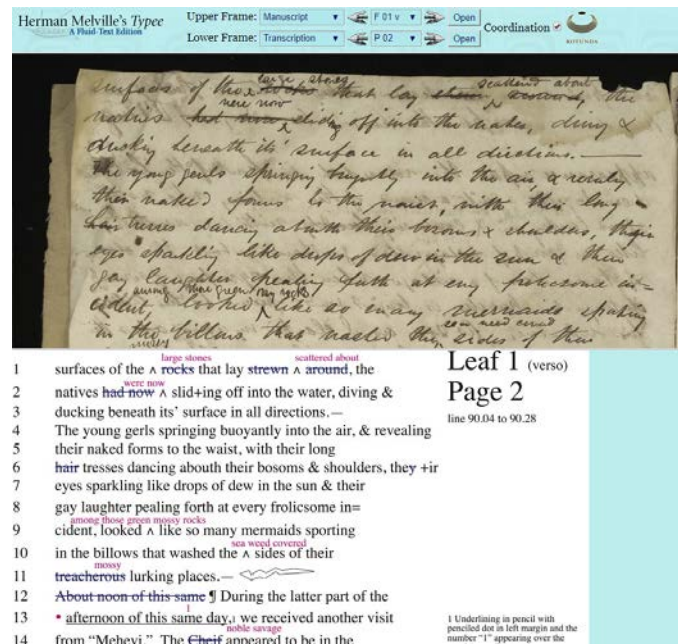
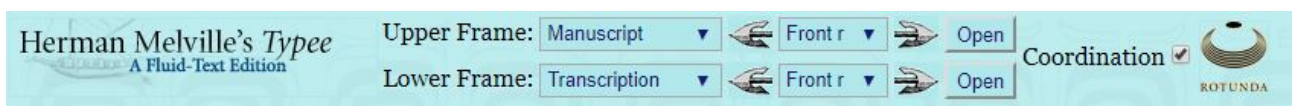Fig. 8 – Comparative view with manuscript (upper frame) and transcription (lower frame).

Fig. 8a – Navigation menu.

The navigation menu (Fig. 8a) includes a dropdown menu (Fig. 8b; Fig. 8c) for each frame through which alternate views of the text can be selected, in particular:
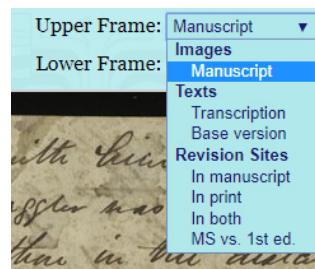

Fig. 8b – Dropdown menu for upper frame containing images, texts and revision sites options.

Fig. 8c – Dropdown menu for lower frame containing images, texts and revision sites options.

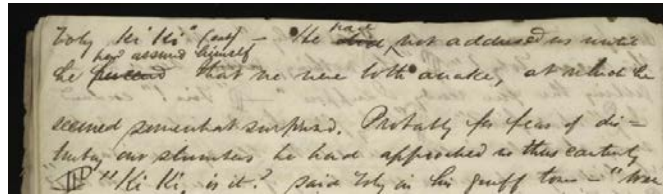1) *Images* – digital scans of the manuscript (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9 – Excerpt from the manuscript.

2) *Texts* – two different texts are available:
   a. *Transcription* (Fig. 10a): a diplomatic rendering of the manuscript. Leaf (*verso* or *recto*), page number, as well as Northwestern-Newberry edition reference are present in the top right corner;

Fig. 10a – Transcription with editorial markings.

   b. *Base version* (Fig. 10b): a reading text of the Melville's final draft, as evident from the manuscript;

Fig. 10b – Base version.

3) *Revision sites* – the base reading is used as a map for linking Melville's revision sites. Each site is colour-coded and clicking on it opens a pop-up window with the accurate sequence and narrative of the revision:
   a. *In manuscript* (Fig. 11a): this setting shows revisions in the manuscript. Revisions are highlighted in yellow and marked with the prefix *ms*.

Fig. 11a – Colour-coded revision sites in the manuscript.

   b. *In print* (Fig. 11b): this setting shows revisions in later stages. Revisions are highlighted in pink and marked with the prefix *e* in the tooltip.

Fig. 11b – Colour-coded revision sites in print.

c. *In both* (Fig. 11c): this setting shows merged revisions in both the manuscript and later stages. Revisions are highlighted in orange and marked with both prefixes.

Fig. 11c – Colour-coded merged revision sites.

d. *Manuscript vs. first edition* (Fig. 11d): this setting shows a comparison between the manuscript and the first edition with altered text highlighted in pink.

Fig. 11d – Manuscript vs. first edition.

e. *Revision Sequence and Narrative*: the Revision Site window is accessible by clicking directly on a highlighted section in the text. Each class of possible sequences is indicated with an uppercase alphabetical letter, whereas numbers denote diachronic succession of the revision stages. The revision narrative concisely explains the strategies of revision by reconstructing the authorial (or collaborative) process behind each step (Fig. 12).

Revision Site 10ms109-110e92

Sequence

1. He did not address
2. He [...] **had not addressed** us until he perceived that we were both awake
3. He had not addressed us until he [...] **had assured himself** that we were both awake
4. He had **waited to address** us until he perceived that we were both awake [RN10e92]

Narrative

HM has been telling his tale in the simple past tense, and a shift here to the past perfect distinguishes Mehevi's point of view from Toby and Tommo's. Initially, he had retained the simple past of "He did not address" [step 1], but it seems by the uncrowded spacing in the MS between "address{ed}" and "us" that HM stops himself as soon as he writes "not address" and altered "did" to "had" to effect his shift to the past perfect, at which point he added "-ed" to "address" to give "had not addressed" [2] and continues on. In a proofreading phase, HM revised "perceived" to "had assured himself" [3]. The shift lessens the anxiety we have about Mehevi's intentions.

The revision of "had not addressed" to "had waited to address" [4] in the fair-copy stage furthers HM's strategy of reducing Mehevi's potentially threatening posture.

Fig. 12 – Pop-up window with revision sequence and narrative.

Finally, the navigation menu offers a dropdown menu (and arrows) for selecting a page or folio (*verso* or *recto*) number and an *Open* button used to create a pop-up window for the selected item (Fig. 8a).

4.5 Access to basic data

TEI P4 XML transcription file of the *Typee* manuscript is reachable by clicking on a – not easily accessible – link in the "Images and XML Coding: a technical note" section of *This Site* page. No additional information about the TEI transcription is given. Unfortunately, the site does not provide archival packages for the images, but every image is nonetheless downloadable as a single high-quality *.jpg*.

4.6 Long term use

The last documented revision of the project dates back to 2009 (see § 1.2) and no update has been made since then. Although the project can be considered complete, since it follows and lives up to its own goals, the lack of updates involves obsolescence of the technological part (e.g. TEI P4 is superseded) and isolationism (e.g. no social involvement).

Moreover, another project that ideally incorporates the legacy of this edition, called Melville Electronic Library – A critical archive (MEL) and curated by John Bryant, claims to fully automate «the making and display of the kinds of editorial features found in the Rotunda edition»[24]. As a side note, MEL looks lively enough and, regarding Melville's *Typee*, the site claims to « […] have acquired images of the three-chapter manuscript, which we plan to mount in early 2018. Scanning of the first British editions and three revised American editions of Typee will also begin in 2018»[25].

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[24] Cf. https://mel.hofstra.edu/versions-of-typee.html
[25] Ibid.

5. Conclusion

Herman Melville's *Typee*. A Fluid-Text Edition meets all the requirements suggested by Patrick Sahle and must therefore be considered an SDE. The edition manages to give a critical representation of the text, addressing both visual and intentional dimensions.

As Sahle points out, the digital edition «is developed gradually from the material documents, from visual evidence through the transcription and through the application of critical, historical, stylistic and philological knowledge. In the digital edition there is little reason to hide these other layers of textual representation from the user»[26]. This pluralistic notion of text fits perfectly with Bryant's theory of fluid-textuality. Moreover, the edition «cannot be given in print without significant loss of content and functionality»[27] and as such embraces a fully digital paradigm both in method and application.

Ironically, this fluid-text edition, although complete, is likely to become stagnant. As pointed out in § 4.6, a lack of updates undermines its sustainability and produces technological obsolescence. Ultimately, the edition would seem abandoned if it were not for the presence of MEL digital archive that collects its legacy.

A question arises: when can we define a digital edition truly complete? Perhaps, after all, completeness is not important as liveliness. In the end, a digital edition should be «more like a workplace or a laboratory»[28] in constant interaction with users and collaborators.

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[26] Driscoll, Matthew James, and Elena Pierazzo, eds. *Digital Scholarly Editing: Theories and Practices*, p. 31.
[27] Ibid., p. 27.
[28] Ibid., p. 30.

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