

*The Fluid Text*

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*The Fluid Text: A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen*, by John Bryant

# *The Fluid Text*

A Theory of Revision and Editing for  
Book and Screen



*John Bryant*

*Ann Arbor*

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*In Memory of Doris H. Bryant*  
*(1924–2001)*  
*and*  
*Some of the Women She Touched*  
*Paula, Cerise, Emma, Eliza, and Liana*



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## Acknowledgments



My first inkling that literary works are fluid texts came in college at the University of Chicago while studying Whitman with James E. Miller Jr., whose parallel text edition of “Song of Myself” continues to inspire me in finding ways of giving readers access to textual fluidity. Later, in 1973 and still at Chicago, I found myself unexpectedly entangled in a textual project involving Swinburne manuscripts under the direction of Jerome J. McGann, himself newly entangled in editing Byron. Later still, while researching Melville, I would drift uptown to the Newberry Library to confer with Harrison Hayford, who from time to time would drift down from Northwestern to conduct the making of his magisterial edition of *The Writings of Herman Melville*. These scholars and friends—along with others, including Walter Blair and Hamlin Hill—shaped and encouraged my early respect and interest in textual editing. But it was not until the discovery in 1983 of the *Typee* manuscript that I was able to find a textual project of my own, and one that would take me deeper into Melville manuscripts and the problem of textual fluidity in general. At this point and for years to come, I received the generous guidance and encouragement from Hayford as well as manuscript specialist Robert C. Ryan and textual scholar and theorist G. Thomas Tanselle. I am also indebted to Leslie Morris of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and especially Mimi Bowling, former head of the manuscripts division at the New York Public Library, whose warmth of spirit and generosity in giving me access to the *Typee* manuscript and other papers surely hastened my labors in transcription and manuscript analysis.

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