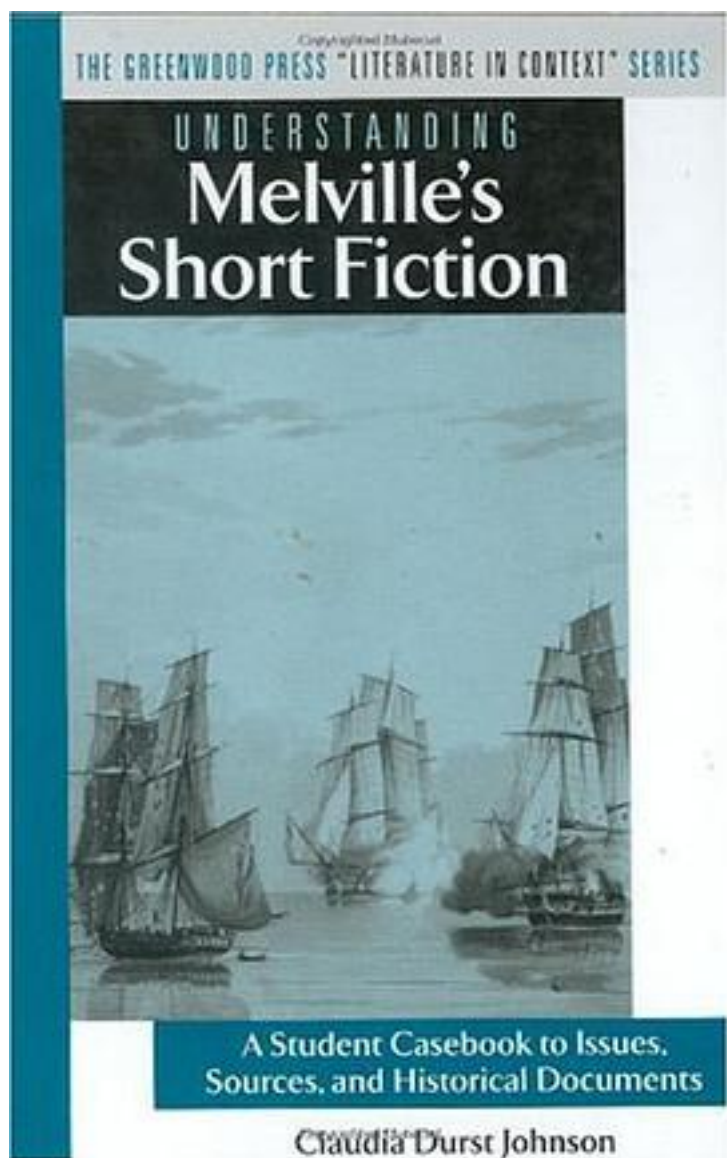


Understanding Melville's Short Fiction



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出版者:Greenwood Pub Group

出版时间:2005-2

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780313331299

Primary documents and thoughtful commentary locate Melville's shorter works in their contexts and relate his works to contemporary issues Herman Melville is best known as the author of Moby-Dick, a novel which reveals his epic powers of observation and analysis, but most students first become acquainted with his works by reading Bartleby the Scrivener and Billy Budd, two enduring works of short fiction that have secured a lasting place in the American literary canon. Like Moby-Dick, these shorter works reflect many of the issues central to 19th-century society and continue to illuminate contemporary social concerns. This reference work is a helpful guide to understanding Billy Budd and Bartleby. Through insightful literary and historical commentary and a generous selection of primary documents, this companion locates these works in their economic, social, and cultural contexts. The first part of the book discusses Bartleby, while the second examines Billy Budd. Each section includes chapters on specific issues, accompanied by a wide range of documents. These include the will of John Jacob Astor, 19th-century newspaper articles, excerpts from the works of Charles Dickens and other writers, and modern historical, psychological, and political works, including the Patriot Act. The volume relates Melville's works to contemporary social concerns, lists works for further reading, and suggests topics for papers and classroom discussions. Part of The Greenwood Press "Literature in Context" Series Examines two of Melville's most widely studied works of short fiction Provides thoughtful commentary on the issues of Melville's era Includes a generous selection of primary documents Relates Melville's works to modern social and political issues Suggests works for further reading and topics for papers and classroom discussions

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