

# Melville's Short Fiction, 1853-1856



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This study treats comprehensively the sixteen short works of fiction that Herman Melville wrote between 1853 and 1856, most of which were published in "Harper's" and "Putnam's" magazines. Concentrating on the writer's two basic motivations for writing as he did in these stories, Dillingham argues that Melville created a surface of almost inane congeniality in many of the works, an illusion of vapidty that camouflages a profundity often missed by his readers. He sought to to hide disturbing themes because the magazines for which he was writing would almost certainly have rejected his attempts to be more direct. Dillingham's method is not, however, confined to a reading of the texts. Melville's stories contain so many allusions to the contemporary scene that they constitute in themselves a cultural study. An important contribution of "Melville's Short Fiction" is its discussion of these allusions. Finally, Dillingham examines the relationship between the short fiction and Melville's own life. Much of the writer's frustration and struggle is concealed in these early works. Melville's friendship with Hawthorne, for example, an intense and yet in some ways disappointing relationship for both men, is explored as an important influence on several of the stories.

作者介绍:

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