



Melville Biography: An Inside Narrative

Hershel Parker

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Melville Biography: An Inside Narrative is Hershel Parker's history of the writing of Melville biographies, enriched by his intimate working relationships with great Melvilleans, dead and living. The first part is a mesmerizing autobiographical account of what went into creating his award-winning two-volume life of Herman Melville. Next, Parker traces six decades the persistent war New Critics have waged against biographical scholarship on Melville. American literary critics, he finds, impose New Critical theories of organic unity on Melville's disrupted career even while truncating his body of work and minimizing his aesthetic interests. Parker celebrates the "divine amateurs" who use new technology to discover dazzling Melville stories and also lauds the writers of literature blogs as potential redeemers of academic and mainstream media reviewing. In the third part, Parker invites readers into his biographical workshop and challenges them with ambitious research assignments. Throughout this bold book, Parker seeks to reinvigorate the all-but-lost art of scholarly literary criticism and biography.

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