



# **The Characteristic Theology of Herman Melville: Aesthetics, Politics, Duplicity**

*Bradley A. Johnson*

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What becomes of theology when we think of it aesthetically? What becomes of aesthetics when we think of it theologically? These are the guiding questions that inform both the method and the conclusions of this volume's exploration into the literary world of Herman Melville's "characteristic theology" Far from a specialist work that simply seeks to flesh out the religious disposition and myriad influences of one particular literary giant, Johnson's focus in this volume is instead the identification of a philosophically robust aesthetic conception of theology at its most politically and contemporarily relevant. By way of the Masquerade it sets in motion and in which it fully participates, from its beginning to its very end, this book uses Melville's fiction as vehicle for a radical aesthetic engagement with the theological bases of subjectivity and sovereignty. Through this exploration Johnson conceives the creatively duplicitous character of a materialistic theology whose aim is nothing less than the fashioning of a new heaven and a new earth.



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