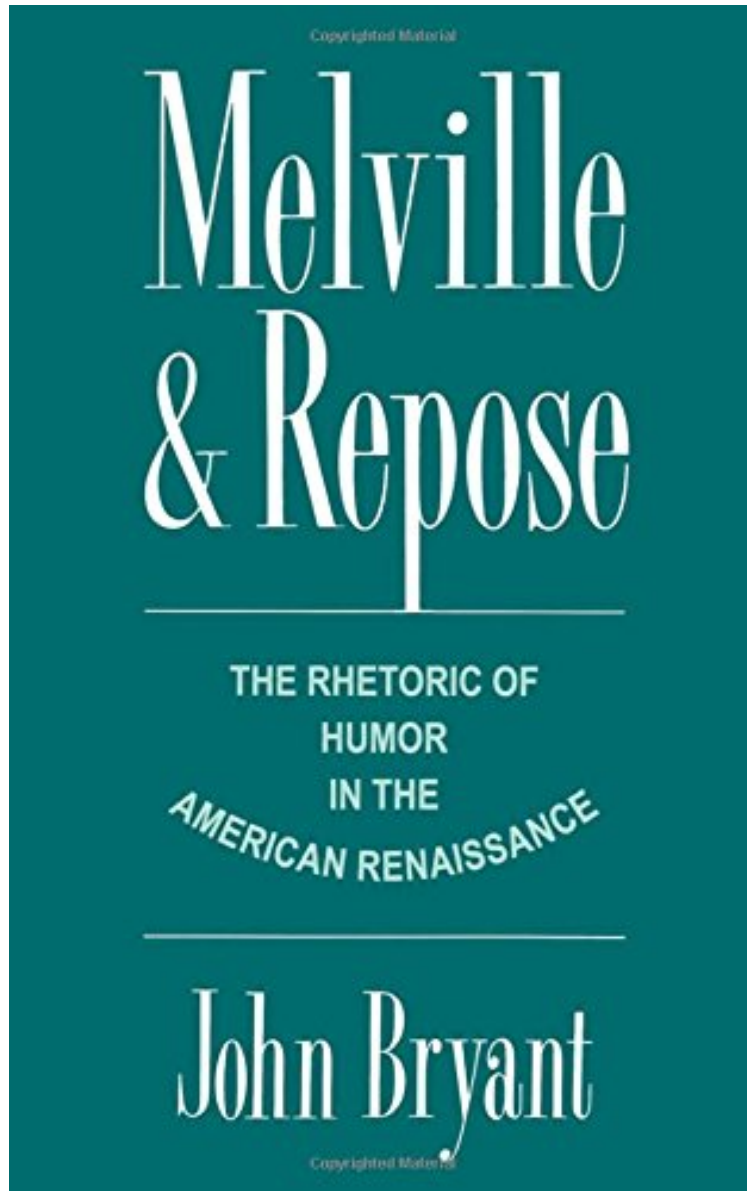


Melville and Repose: The Rhetoric of Humor in the American Renaissance

John Bryant

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in the American Renaissance:

John Bryant's book is a strong and significant argument for the centrality of the comic and repose in Melville's novels. The purpose of *Melville and Repose* is dual: to ground the uses of romantic humor in Melville in sensitive readings of contemporaneous European and American writings, and to offer a definitive account of the comic as the shaping force of Melville's narrative voice throughout the major phase of his literary career. Bryant argues that Melville fused a "rhetoric of geniality" and "picturesque sensibility" adopted from the British with a "rhetoric of deceit" borrowed from the American tall tale in order to create his own amiably cosmopolitan "rhetoric of aesthetic repose." Thorough research into American culture and recent Melville manuscript findings, an engaging style, and full, scholarly readings combine to make this historicist study a welcome addition to the libraries of Americanists and Melville scholars and enthusiasts.