



The Confidence-Man

Herman Melville

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In Herman Melville's *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade*, a group of steamboat passengers paddle to New Orleans on April Fool's Day. As the Mississippi carries them down river, everyone is selling something: quack remedies; stock in a mining company about to fail; a fraudulent charity for widows and orphans. Set on the eve of the Civil War, as the frontier rapidly expands and Native Americans are driven to near-extinction, Melville's narrative poses the question: "In which institution does one place one's faith?"

A satire on the works of Manifest Destiny, *The Confidence-Man* was Herman Melville's last novel before he retired from writing.

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