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# Satirical Apocalypse: An Anatomy of Melville's "The Confidence-Man"

*Jonathan A. Cook*

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## SATIRICAL APOCALYPSE

An Anatomy of Melville's  
*The Confidence-Man*

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**Jonathan A. Cook : Satirical Apocalypse: An Anatomy of Melville's "The Confidence-Man"** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Satirical Apocalypse: An Anatomy of

## Melville's "The Confidence-Man":

This valuable new addition to Melville studies offers a ground-breaking interpretation of Melville's last published novel, one of the most complex texts in American literature and a work that has long been noted for the divergent critical views it has elicited. Reading the novel as a generic hybrid of narrative satire and apocalyptic vision, Cook situates the novel in its implicit theological, historical, and biographical contexts: he examines the novel's relation to Melville's heterodox ideas of the deity, to the increasingly commercialized cultural milieu of antebellum America, and to Melville's own life and literary career. Uncovering a wealth of new data on the novel's satirical applications, including its covert use of Melville's friends and family for character models, Cook offers a compelling reading of *The Confidence-Man* - one that is sure to influence our future conception of its creator.

"In this exhaustive study, Cook examines an impressive array of contextual material. Eschewing theory and jargon, Cook offers straightforward, persuasive, and impressively informed readings of characters and scenes as satires of political, religious, social, literary, and familial issues and events....Cook's study is invaluable as a guide to a complex and elusive novel....the book will be immensely valuable to Melville scholars and students of 19th-century America because it clearly summarizes all relevant historical and biographical material. All subsequent commentary on *The Confidence-Man* will have to consider Cook's work."-Choice?In this exhaustive study, Cook examines an impressive array of contextual material. Eschewing theory and jargon, Cook offers straightforward, persuasive, and impressively informed readings of characters and scenes as satires of political, religious, social, literary, and familial issues and events....Cook's study is invaluable as a guide to a complex and elusive novel....the book will be immensely valuable to Melville scholars and students of 19th-century America because it clearly summarizes all relevant historical and biographical material. All subsequent commentary on *The Confidence-Man* will have to consider Cook's work.?-Choice"Jonathan Cook has written a lucid and useful study, one all readers of Melville will be glad to have. *Satirical Apocalypse* provides a rich, historically informed reading of Melville's most enigmatic novel, *The Confidence-Man*. Cook's discussions of Melville's satirical purposes and allegorical structure are especially illuminating."-Larry J. Reynolds, Thomas Franklin Mayo Professor in Liberal Arts, Texas AM UniversityAbout the AuthorJONATHAN A. COOK has a Ph.D. from Columbia University. He has been a lecturer at Boston University and has published articles on Irving, Hawthorne, and Melville.